Virtual Classroom Instruction:
Strategies for Keeping Participants Engaged
TH106

Presenters

Georgianna Marie, President
The GMarie Group
gmarie@gmariegroup.com
602.795.8374

Stacy Orgill, Instructional Designer
The GMarie Group
sorgill@gmariegroup.com
623.935.7937
Introduction

Using synchronous learning techniques via technology like WebEx, Citrix, Elluminate and Net Meeting is a relatively low-cost way of reaching distance learners simultaneously. Yet, as we all have experienced, keeping distance learners engaged in the session can be challenging. While learners are checking e-mail, talking to others in the office, reheating their coffee and multi-tasking in any number of ways, how much can they really be learning and retaining? Probably not much!

To respond to the challenges of synchronous virtual instruction, we have developed some easy-to-use “tips and tricks” for engaging the audience and making the most of technology.

Using sound adult learning and motivation theory and our experience in designing, developing and delivering these types of sessions, we share with you methods for creating more dynamic and engaging learning sessions…and deterring multi-taskers!

In this session, we not only discuss and demonstrate those methods, but we demonstrate them to teach the session. Through an in-person experience of the tips and tricks for effective virtual instruction, you’ll learn how to use them in your next virtual learning event.

Objectives

By the end of this workshop, instructional designers, trainers and facilitators should be able to:

- Foster and maintain distance learners’ motivation during synchronous virtual instruction.
- Describe virtual tools commonly available with virtual classroom technology.
- Apply effective strategies to enhance learner motivation in design and delivery of distance courses.
- Apply the tips and tricks to a work project to increase its effectiveness.
What is VILT?

*Virtual Instructor Led Training* (VILT) refers to the synchronous delivery of training content in a simulated classroom environment, typically over the Internet and phone.

Effective VILT delivers the learning benefits of traditional instructor-led training to the desktop, giving you the cost benefits of e-learning.

Expert-led training over the Web can achieve the same level of knowledge transfer and interactivity as traditional ILT while offering additional advantages learners cannot get with any other training.

Many organizations employ VILT as part of their delivery strategy.

Icebreaker

Mark “Yes” or “No” to each question below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Have you designed or developed a VILT course?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Have you facilitated a VILT course?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Have you attended a VILT course?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group Activity

List key challenges of VILT sessions you have designed or developed, facilitated or attended. If applicable, also explain how you addressed those challenges in the past.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.
Tour of Tools

A variety of virtual classroom technologies are available, such as WebEx, Citrix, Elluminate and Net Meeting. Today’s session is delivered via iLinc, which offers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool / Feature</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation Meter</td>
<td>To gauge class participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand Raise</td>
<td>To get facilitator attention or to provide feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling / Feedback</td>
<td>To solicit participant feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q &amp; A</td>
<td>To ask multiple-choice questions (note: questions can be created before class or on-the-fly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Chat</td>
<td>To send instant messages to some or all participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>To display some or all of your desktop, or to share an application on your computer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakout</td>
<td>To conduct small group activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whiteboard</td>
<td>To type or draw collaboratively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key VILT Strategies

Plan ahead. When designing and developing VILT courses, incorporate strategies to:

- Capture and maintain learners’ attention
- Ignite learners’ motivation

Refer to The GMarie Group VILT Strategies Job Aid to review strategies for overcoming VILT challenges—particularly engaging multi-taskers!
Action Plan

Put your knowledge of successful VILT strategies to work by completing the steps below:

- Choose one challenge identified at the beginning of the workshop that you want to address for your next VILT design, development and/or delivery project.
- Review the VILT Strategies Job Aid. Identify strategies that address your targeted VILT challenge.
- Determine when and how you will use the strategy.
- Choose an implementation partner.
- Implement the strategy.
- Share your experience with your partner:
  - What worked?
  - What was challenging?
  - What will you do differently next time?
  - How you will use this strategy again?

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<td>Frequently changing visuals</td>
<td>Developing fast-paced, media-rich presentation (music, video, etc.)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1. 

2. 

3. 

My Implementation Partner is:
- Name:
- E-mail:
- Phone:
Wrap-up

The design and development of VILT can provide the following benefits:

- Flexible class times
- Low cost
- Interactive classroom-like experience
- Engaging participant materials and resources
- Engaging graphical content
- Effective after-class “homework”
- Unique small or large group learning

Below are a few areas that are easily adaptable to this format.

- **Classroom style learning**
  Participants engage in a live interaction with a qualified trainer to complete a course or program. The content can include scenario-based learning, real-world examples, hands on or small group interactions, live question and answer sessions, and other learning activities.

- **Reflection sessions**
  Participants review key learnings, assess their application of learned knowledge and skills, and evaluate behavioral impact. As a group, participants share their experiences and leverage each others’ learning. These sessions help develop a learning community that supports critical skills transfer back on the job.

- **Application sessions**
  The group debriefs a specific learning event and practices newly gained skills in a safe, non-threatening environment. Participants discuss newly acquired skills, approaches for implementing them and solutions for overcoming foreseeable roadblocks.
Perhaps our company tagline, “Performance happens. Plan for it.” best describes the services and products we offer at The GMarie Group. We are a full service organization focused on performance improvement. Our services include comprehensive performance analysis, instructional design and creation of cost effective performance support solutions.

Our team has a firm foundation in performance support and instructional design. Our production specialists are skilled in the development of creative learning solutions in all delivery channels; e-learning, instructor-led and virtual instructor-led, and blended approaches. Our project managers are skilled professionals who partner with our clients to ensure that projects are completed on time, on budget and according to specifications.

The GMarie Group consists of 27 associates and a unique network of world-class, talented, dedicated associates whose expertise and training focus on instructional technology, adult learning theory, education evaluation, educational media production, employee development and performance improvement.

Please visit our Web site at  www.gmariegroup.com
Co-speakers

Georgianna Marie
602.795.8374
gmarie@gmariegroup.com

Georgianna Marie is the President and Owner of The GMarie Group, a training and development consulting firm headquartered in Phoenix, AZ. In her role as leader of The GMarie Group, Ms. Marie oversees the design and development of large- and small-scale performance improvement projects, many of which include learning deliverables.

Ms. Marie has a BA in English and Philosophy, an MA in Psychology and an M.Ed in Instructional Technology. Georgianna and The GMarie Group team utilize principles of human behavior and adult learning to help individuals and teams excel. Specifically, The GMarie Group's work focuses on how to structure effective and efficient interventions to address specific performance issues.

Stacy Orgill
623.935.7937
sorgill@gmariegroup.com

Stacy Orgill is an instructional designer and performance consultant at The GMarie Group. She has worked extensively with the development of distance learning courses in the corporate setting as well as in higher education.

Stacy has experience in performance consulting, facilitation, instructional design, technical writing, learning and development management and relationship management. She is a native Phoenician and enjoys spending time with her husband and her three children.
Virtual Classroom Instruction
Strategies for Keeping Participants Engaged

Objectives

- Foster and maintain distance learners’ motivation during synchronous virtual instruction.
- Describe virtual tools commonly available with virtual classroom technology.
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What is VILT?

synchronous delivery of training content in a simulated classroom environment, typically over the Internet and phone

Virtual Classroom Environment

Key VILT Strategies

Plan ahead. Incorporate strategies to motivate VILT learners.
Refer to The GMarie Group VILT Strategies Job Aid.
Jon Keller synthesized existing research on psychological motivation and created the ARCS Model of Learner Motivation.

**John Keller’s ARCS Model**

- **Attention**: +
- **Relevance**: +
- **Confidence**: +
- **Satisfaction**: =
- **Motivated Learners**

### Design/Develop Considerations:
- Limit VILT sessions to 2 hours maximum
- Allow learners to use virtual tools (e.g., drawing tools, chat with facilitator)
- Use a mix of rich media (music, video)
- Use breakout feature to conduct group activities

### Delivery Considerations:
- Call on people, by name, frequently
- Enable learners to use virtual tools
- Disable “chat” features between learners
- Use a Web Cam so learners can see you
- Use arrows to point to on-screen content
1. Form groups of 2 – 3 people.
   Note: Virtual participants will breakout into team workspaces.

2. In five minutes, develop a unique “attention-getting” activity that could be incorporated into a VILT training session. Your activity should include at least one tool or feature listed on page 4 of your workshop handout (not the job aid).

3. Share your activity with the group, and we may test it out!

Design/develop considerations:
• Poll participants to gauge existing knowledge of the training content
• Take the class on a Web tour; visit sites or play Online media that illustrates the training content in realistic situations
• Use the Whiteboard to collaboratively brainstorm solutions to case studies or actual work issues

Delivery considerations:
• Use a Web Cam to display guest speakers that share “real-world” experiences
• Show videos that illustrate or explain best practices
• Use podcasts with visuals to share messages from key stakeholders

RELEVANCE
### Design/develop considerations:
- Conduct a brief tutorial and practice session on virtual tools
- Use the Q&A tool to ask knowledge checks throughout the session
- Incorporate multimedia games that offer feedback
- Pass controls to participants to facilitate

### Delivery considerations:
- Coordinate support to help learners with technical issues
- Build rapport with learners by using personal questions as ice-breakers and using the chat feature for responses
- Use soft background music to indicate when practice time has started/ended
- Use graphics and sound effects to "award" those who do well

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**Tools: How Do I....**

1. **Ask Multiple Choice Questions**

<table>
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<tr>
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<td>Participation</td>
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Tools: How Do I....

2. Conduct Small Group Activities?
- Hand Raise
- Polling
- Breakout
- Q&A
- Online Chat
- Sharing
- Whiteboard
- Pass Controls
- Participation

Tools: How Do I....

3. Display My Computer Desktop to the Class?
- Hand Raise
- Polling
- Breakout
- Q&A
- Online Chat
- Sharing
- Whiteboard
- Pass Controls
- Participation
Tools: How Do I....

4. Allow Participants to Control My Desktop?

- Hand Raise
- Q&A
- Whiteboard
- Polling
- Online Chat
- Pass Controls
- Breakout
- Sharing
- Participation

Tools: How Do I....

5. Send Instant Messages to Participants?

- Hand Raise
- Q&A
- Whiteboard
- Polling
- Online Chat
- Pass Controls
- Breakout
- Sharing
- Participation
Tools: How Do I....

6. Get Facilitator Attention or Provide Feedback?

- Hand Raise
- Q&A
- Whiteboard
- Polling
- Online Chat
- Pass Controls
- Breakout
- Sharing
- Participation

CORRECT!

Click the Next Numbered Question
Design/develop considerations:
- Use participation tracking technology and reward participants for their contributions to the training
- Use the Whiteboard to collaborate on action plans

Delivery considerations:
- Post recorded VILT sessions for learner reference
- Conduct group post-tests and share results with the group

SATISFACTION
Action Plan

- Choose one challenge to address for your next VILT design project
- Review VILT Strategies Job Aid & identify strategies for your challenge
- Determine when & how to use the strategy
- Choose an implementation partner
- Implement the strategy
- Share experience with your partner

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WRAP UP: VILT Benefits

- Flexible class times
- Low cost
- Interactive classroom-like experience
- Engaging materials & resources
- Engaging graphical content
- Effective after-class “homework”
- Unique small or large group learning

WRAP UP: Adapting Training

Certain training formats are easily adaptable to VILT

Classroom style learning → Reflection sessions → Application sessions
QUESTIONS

Think of one later? E-mail:
gmarie@gmariegroupl.com
sorgill@gmariegroupl.com