

LESSONS LEARNED: WHAT WE'VE LEARNED IN 30+ YEARS OF VIRTUAL TRAINING

CINDY HUGGETT & KASSY LABORIE

Online Learning Conference
Session 404

A SELECTION OF TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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Worksheet: Start-Before-the-Start Activity Planner*

When does a virtual training program begin? For participants, their learning experience starts the moment they log in to the virtual classroom. Therefore, to set the stage for interactivity, have something on screen for them to do when they join.

Use this worksheet to plan your soft opening activity:

1. What type of start-before-the-start activity do you want to plan?

- Icebreaker
- Opener
- Both

2. What is your training topic? _____

3. What virtual classroom tools will you have available on the opening screen?

- Slide share (either static or rotating, to share information)
- Chat
- Poll
- Whiteboard
- Drawing tools
- File share (to distribute handouts or reference material)
- Other: _____
- Other: _____
- Other: _____

* Worksheet adapted from *Virtual Training Tools and Templates: An Action Guide to Live Online Learning* © ATD Press 2017, by Cindy Huggett

Worksheet: A 4-Step Virtual Design Process to Create Activities *

Virtual classroom activities need to be more than fun and interactive. They help gauge level of participation, attentiveness, and learning transfer. To ensure each activity delivered meets these three criteria, design each one with purpose.

Use this 4-step process to develop purpose:

1. What is the **Goal** of your program? The Goal is what the organization/company sees as the outcome of the entire training event.

Example: Develop the training team into virtual trainers.

_____.

2. A program will have multiple **Objectives**, or specific actions participants will take to meet the Goal. List your action-oriented objectives below.

Example: Identify the available features of the live online platform.

Example: Practice using virtual vocal techniques to engage a virtual audience.

Objective _____.

Objective _____.

Objective _____.

3. From the list above, which objectives are **Social**? Which of the objectives above are best learned with other people, live, in a group, all together?

Example: From the 2 above, the first one could be learned independently, the second one benefits from having an audience.

Social, together live online _____.

Social, together live online _____.

4. **Map** the interactions to the available platform **features**. Which of the features below will best support the interactions?

Example: Slide Share, Audio, Webcam, & Feedback to practice vocal techniques.

Slide share

Audio

Chat

Poll

Webcam

Feedback (icons like green checks, etc.)

Whiteboard

Breakout

* Worksheet adapted from *Interact and Engage! 50+ Activities for Virtual Training, Meetings, and Webinars* © ATD Press 2015, by Kassy LaBorie and Tom Stone

Day-of-Event Planning Checklist for Virtual Facilitators and Producers*

Some virtual facilitators think preparation for an online class is similar to preparation for a theater production: The stage is set, actors rehearse their lines, tickets are sold, and the show is ready for patrons. Likewise, a virtual class goes through a similar preparation process. This checklist can help ensure that you are prepared for your next virtual classroom training event.

Participants have been sent:

- pre-work instructions
- installation instructions for virtual classroom software
- logistics such as links, passwords, and audio information
- participant materials to print
- contact information for questions or technical support.

Facilitator and producer have materials ready:

- slides
- facilitator and producer notes
- instructions for all activities and exercises
- contingency plans
- virtual classroom setup and materials uploaded.

Equipment is ready:

- Computers and equipment have been checked and tested.
- Applications and necessary files are open, available, and ready.
- All nonessential applications are closed.
- Audio technologies such as telephones or microphones have been tested.
- Facilitator and producer are physically ready:
- Delivery area is ready (free of distractions, glass of water available, and so on).
- Training materials are readily available.
- Platform technology tools such as whiteboards and drawing privileges are enabled.
- Phone number and contact information for IT or vendor support is available.

* Worksheet adapted from *Virtual Training Tools and Templates: An Action Guide to Live Online Learning* © ATD Press 2017, by Cindy Huggett

Cindy's Top 10 list

1. **Decide your definition of virtual training.** Decide on your end goal and then choose the best way to achieve it using the virtual classroom.
2. **Interact from the start.** Engage participants from the moment they log into the virtual classroom. Create a great opening experience.
3. **Select activities for maximum involvement.** Keep the momentum going with participant interaction every few minutes.
4. **Create materials for facilitators and participants.** Set everyone up for success by creating useful guides and distribute them before the program starts.
5. **Set expectations.** Educate everyone – including participants and their managers – about expectations for engagement and participation.
6. **Prepare relentlessly.** Add technical setup and backup plans to your standard presentation preparation.
7. **Focus on dialogue.** Get out of the “presentation” mindset and focus on creating discussion and dialogue between participants.
8. **Multi-task effectively.** Juggle tasks through advance preparation, sufficient practice, and skilled proficiency.
9. **Make the most of your voice.** Keep attention by using a clear, energetic, enthusiastic voice.
10. **Handle unexpected challenges.** Care for any unforeseen issues while remaining calm and either quickly fixing it or moving to your backup plan.

Kassy's Top 10 list

1. **A great in-person trainer does not guarantee a great online trainer.** Prepare to build your virtual training skills. It does not come naturally to everyone, but it can be developed.
2. **Participants need to learn how to virtually learn.** The last time we learned "how to learn" was likely when we were young. Recognize the fact that your participants have no idea how to learn online and prepare activities to guide them.
3. **Instructional design matters even MORE online.** Participants will hear that you do not know what you are doing before you realize you are lost. Be prepared with a design that is specific to the online experience.
4. **Allow and create "chatversations."** Conversations in chat. Enable public chat, and ensure it is used for more than just questions. Build activities to encourage dialogue.
5. **Whiteboard is a verb.** Technically it is a noun, but it is exceedingly more interesting as an action! Enable annotation tools for engaging activities – "Let's whiteboard our ideas!"
6. **Master the tech to get over the tech.** Learn your platform so that you no longer have to think about your platform.
7. **Not all platforms are created equal.** Some platforms simply do not have the features or performance you need. Never let that stop you; find ways around it by using additional tools.
8. **Audio matters more than anything else.** If you cannot be heard, it will not matter what you know, what you said, or how you delivered it.
9. **A producer is only as good as your rehearsal with them.** Avoid the mistake of not having a plan. Participants will notice!
10. **Never let them hear you sweat.** "The show must go on!" There is no need to announce failures or mistakes; let them hear you being calm and in control.

Notes and Action Items

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Resources List

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About the Presenters

CINDY HUGGETT, CPLP

Cindy Huggett, CPLP is an independent consultant, professional speaker, instructional designer, classroom facilitator, and author who specializes in technology, leadership, and learning. She helps organizations and training professionals move to the virtual classroom.

Cindy is the author of three books on virtual training: *Virtual Training Tools and Templates: An Action Guide to Live Online Learning* (2017), *The Virtual Training Guidebook: How to Design, Deliver, and Implement Live Online Learning* (2013) and *Virtual Training Basics* (2010). Cindy is also a past member of the ATD National Board of Directors and was one of the first to earn the Certified Professional in Learning and Performance (CPLP) designation.

For more information about Cindy, visit her website: www.cindyhuggett.com

KASSY LABORIE

Kassy LaBorie is the principal consultant at Kassy LaBorie Consulting, LLC. She is a speaker, instructional designer, classroom facilitator, and author who specializes in technology, leadership, and learning. Kassy is passionate about helping organizations, learning teams, and training professionals successfully move to the virtual environment.

In her previous role at Dale Carnegie Training, she was the director of virtual training services, a consultancy that partners with organizations to help them develop successful online training strategies. Kassy also served as the product design architect responsible for developing the company's live online training product and experience. Prior to this, she was an independent master virtual trainer, a Microsoft software trainer, and a senior trainer at WebEx, where she helped build and deliver training at the WebEx University.

Kassy is the co-author of *Interact and Engage! 50+ Activities for Virtual Training, Meetings, and Webinars*. A frequent speaker at industry conferences since 2006, she has presented at Training Magazine events including their yearly conference and Online Learning Conferences, Chief Learning Officer symposiums, The Virtual Learning Show, ATD's TechKnowledge and International Conference & Exposition, as well as many local ATD Chapter events.

For more information about Kassy, visit her website: www.interactandengage.com