# THE MODERN VIRTUAL CLASSROOM
## CREATE ENGAGING
## LEARNING EXPERIENCES

## The Virtual Training Success Formula

Expectations **+** Attention **+** Engagement **+** Application **=** Results
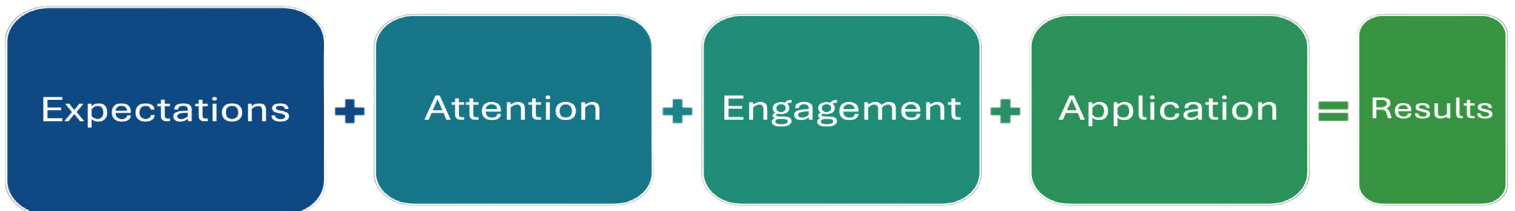
## Five Keys to an Engaging Virtual Event

**1** **Capture Attention (right away).** Have something on screen that captures attention and gets everyone looking at the virtual classroom. Use a "soft" opening in virtual events to get remote attendees engaged right away. If you must use a title slide, include a "call to action" on it.

**2** **Invite Interaction (immediately).** To set the stage for engagement, start with immediate interaction. Ask a simple question and invite reactions to it. Or use a poll question to gather audience input. Focus on the audience within the first 2-3 minutes, even before sharing any administrative details.

**3** **Share Benefits (near the start).** Everyone is tuned to WII-FM (what's in it for me?) and constantly assessing what they will pay attention to. By clearly communicating the personal benefits of active involvement in the virtual class, you'll help them prioritize the learning experience.

**4** **Use the Tools (often).** Make frequent use of the robust virtual classroom tools, including chat, polling, reactions, whiteboards, and breakouts. Invite interaction every few minutes, finding ways to involve learners as often as possible. These interactions can be quick and simple, and should always be meaningful. Also use the tools to create a social experience.

**5** **Include Everyone (every time).** Every participant in your class needs to learn and apply the training content.Create an inclusive learning environment by continually inviting everyone to participate. Use phrases like "raise hand if you have a question, click on agree if not." and "there are 15 of you, so lets get 15 responses in chat." Help everyone have a voice in the classroom.

### CREATING INTERACTION IN VIRTUAL EVENTS

Interactive online events creatively make use of available collaboration tools, including:

- Chat
- Polling
- Annotate/Draw
- Reactions/Emojis
- Webcams
- Breakouts
- Tests/Quizzes
- Q&A
- Whiteboards
- File Transfers
- Media (audio & video)
- Apps that extend platform functionality

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## Four Ways to Encourage Webcam Use

Using video helps engage attendees, creates a comfortable space for dialogue, and allows for better communication. Use these four strategies to encourage their use:

☐ Set expectaions in advance so that 'cameras on' isn't a surprise.

☐ Start in gallery view so that participants see faces as they join in.

☐ Show attendees how to use the platform video settings.

☐ Seamlessly transition between videos on/off to help avoid video fatigue.

## Four Tips for Using Webcams

Use live video to help create community, anytime there's enough bandwidth available. Ensure the following:

☐ Put light in front of you

☐ Place camera at eye level

☐ Position yourself the correct distance from camera

☐ Place appropriate items in the background (or use a virtual one)

## A Sample Opening Focused on Learners

"Hello my name is Layla, welcome to the program. Its's great to see everyone today!

"Let's find out more about each other, click on 'raise hand' if you've been with our company for more than 12 months. (acknowledge responses). Keep them raised if you've been here more than 24 months. (acknowledge & invite to lower hands.)

We have many locations represented today. Please share in Chat: your name, your role and location.

{invite participants to use the chat reactions on each others' comments. Also invite 2 or 3 to speak & elaborate on their comments, creating conversation & dialogue…}

"As you know, we'll be focused on topic XYZ today. Here's a poll question to discover which of these topics you are most interested in exploring… "

## Notes:

### COMMON VIDEO SETTINGS TO HELP WITH WEBCAM USE:

• Adjust for low light
• Touch up appearance (skin smoothing)
• Virtual backgrounds/blur
• Hide Self-View
• Filters and augments
• Avatars

### ABOUT CINDY HUGGETT:

Cindy is the author of six books on virtual training, including *Virtual Training Tools & Templates, 2nd ed*, *The Virtual Training Guidebook, 2nd ed, Designing Virtual Learning for Application and Impact, and The Facilitator's Guide to Immersive, Blended & Hybrid Learning.*

She helps trainers, designers, and organizations create engaging online learning.

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