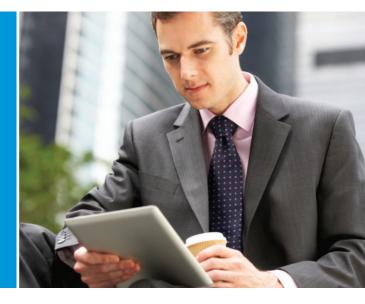# Three Essentials for Successful Virtual Classroom Training

Is anybody out there? Every virtual classroom trainer has wondered if they are just talking to empty space. How do you avoid that feeling and make Virtual classroom training (VCT) a success?

1 Don't Forget the Fundamentals

The same instructional design principles that make classroom training for the adult learner a success still hold true.

- Answer the question WIIFM (What's in it for me?) during your introduction to the lesson.
- Include learning objectives and let the learner know how they will be evaluated during or after the session.
- Build upon previous knowledge. If you are unsure of their knowledge, consider a pretest.

2 Breathe Life into the Classroom

Many learners report that a virtual classroom feels sterile and they miss the human interaction found in the real classroom. Therefore, bring your classroom to life by creating a warm and friendly atmosphere and providing them with ways to react to the lesson.

- Become more than a voice—humanize yourself by telling them about yourself. Go beyond your professional resume by including a few personal details (eg, you love waterskiing).
- When getting the learners familiar with the VCT learning platform, show them how to use emoticons and feedback tools. Encourage them to show emoticons such as laughter, applause, agree, or disagree and have them try them out before class starts.
- Do not ask general questions such as "What do you think?" or you may hear silence. Stick to specific questions.
- Build on the learners' experience and expertise and encourage them to share lessons learned

3 Keep the Learner Engaged

As you know, you need to have the learners' attention before you can successfully teach them. Therefore, one of the biggest challenges during VCT is keeping the learners' attention.

- Identify and build a strong, engaging introduction and close to the session.
- Segment content into concise, well-organized subtopics and then review no more than 4 or 5 content slides without learner interaction. Solicit feedback often using Q&A, chat, polling, and other feedback mechanisms.
- Recognize differences in learning styles—try to mix things up and use visuals, audio, and text to convey content.
- Get them working! Give a task to a small group and have them work in virtual breakout rooms—consider assigning someone in the class to be the facilitator.
- Use video or simulation tools such as Captivate or Camtasia to allow learners to visually see the skill presented. Look for opportunities to put learners in the driver's seat when demonstrating an application.

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