Delivering a Great Virtual Training Event

VITALYST ®

Every year since the late 1990s, more and more organizations use virtual classrooms to deliver instruction. This is true whether the organizations are corporate training departments or educational institutions ranging from K-12 through graduate studies. What's driving this trend? It's a change in business practices, in how employees work, and in the technology available.

An effective virtual classroom is driven by the performance of the instructor, and the practices and skill sets needed for effective online delivery are not the same as they are for the physical classroom. Effectiveness online requires preparation beforehand, which we discussed previously. In this article, you'll learn best practices for delivery including using evaluations, leveraging PowerPoint, and utilizing webcams and audio to interact with students.

Use Assessments

Assessments in the virtual classroom will provide you with data to ensure your students understand the content you are presenting. In the virtual classroom, you can't see the learners, so you must take positive steps to gauge whether they are "following" you. Polls do not track correct and incorrect answers, making it difficult to assess understanding. You must build an assessment where you judge answers and compile a score. You can do this outside of your virtual classroom when the event is over, or right inside the training event if your platform supports it.

Using assessments to create a dynamic delivery allows you to move forward or backward in your lesson. They can create flexible actions depending on whether learners are understanding the content you are presenting. If you see students responding correctly to real time assessments during the class, you know you can move on. If you notice learners are answering questions incorrectly, modify your delivery to ensure you are reviewing the content learners are struggling with.

Chat assessments are fantastic for virtual training because you can interact with the students in real-time as they supply their answers. This fosters collaboration and helps to engage the learners who may have missed something. These practices are highly recommended in virtual learning.

Use PowerPoint to Keep Your Class Organized

You should plan and create your PowerPoint slides to ensure consistent wording is used across all classes, and to detail room etiquette—how to interact with instructors, participation instructions, and housekeeping items regarding breaks and hands-on labs. Include an agenda which you can change as needed, and explain to the students up front what you will be teaching and when breaks will take place. If any documents need to be downloaded, include this information in the events lobby to ensure everyone has access to the files before the main event begins.

To ensure you design to the specific standards approved by your organization, you should have placeholder slides for user engagement—status options or polls—as part of your presentation. Your producer can open the poll on the top of the slide, or you can instruct students to change their status based on a question or statement you have. Putting these placeholder slides within the template will ensure that other designers and content include interactivity on these slides.

Leverage Live Video and Audio

It is recommended you use a webcam during introductions, at the beginning of your event, and at the end during Q&A. Because the webcam is live, it is best to turn it off when you are presenting content. One of the basics of instructional design is that "content is king"—which means we want the students completely focused on the learning content. If your webcam is turned on, the movement of the video stream will distract their eyes and they will not be sure where to look. You do not want your live video stream to compete with your content.

Provide clear and specific instructions for joining the audio conference of your event. Make sure to provide instructions on how to mute external audio sources if need be to minimize distractions during your class.

Delivering a great virtual training event takes careful planning, a use of assessments to gauge your students' progress, engaging presentations, and using video and audio to interact with your class in real time. Stick to these best practices and you'll deliver a compelling, worthwhile, and great virtual training event.

About Vitalyst

Vitalyst is a global provider of learning services and solutions that helps organizations humanize technology. Using a proprietary methodology, we help clients identify high impact opportunities, then create educational programs to maximize adoption and skilled use of technology. We deliver a unique, employee-centric, transformation experience, enabling our clients to develop sustainable improvements for continued innovation and growth.

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