

BOOK OVERVIEW

Purpose

To save travel costs and reduce time away from work, virtual classroom technologies are increasingly popular training delivery media choices. However, unless new delivery media are used in ways that promote learning, cost savings are only an illusion. In the worst case, instructors transfer poorly designed traditional classroom training directly into synchronous e-learning environments. By failing to take advantage of the powerful features of these new online tools, their potential is not realized. In this book we provide research and experienced-based guidelines of how to most effectively leverage virtual classroom technologies for learning.

Audience

We write this book for facilitators, developers, and evaluators of courses to be delivered with synchronous virtual classroom technology. We believe instructional professionals from commercial, government, and educational enterprises will find our guidelines and examples illuminating. We also

recommend its use in educational technology courses as part of teacher education or instructional design university programs.

Package Components and Features

Expert Forums

Because wide adoption of synchronous technologies such as WebEx and Adobe Connect Professional for training purposes is relatively new, we called upon a number of instructional professionals who have been working with virtual classroom technologies to review our chapters and add their own experiences. Their observations appear at the end of each chapter. In addition, we incorporated snippets of practitioner wisdom throughout the chapters in our *Users Speak* inserts.

Virtual Classroom Demonstrations and Resources on the CD

We include a CD with three mini-lessons recorded with Elluminate virtual classroom software. A virtual classroom lesson on How to Use Formulas in Excel illustrates basic techniques for teaching concepts and technology-related procedures. A lesson on Defining Business Goals uses a traditional instructive approach to teach a far-transfer skill. A third virtual classroom lesson on Planning an Interview uses a problem-based learning format described in Chapter 11. At the end of each chapter we point out specific elements of these demonstrations that illustrate specific chapter guidelines.

On the CD you will also find a virtual classroom readiness checklist that you can use to guide your organization's adoption and deployment of synchronous e-learning as well as a soft copy of an e-learning facilitator's guide provided by Karen Hyder.

Glossary

Because the same terms are often used in various ways in our profession, the glossary is intended to provide a common set of definitions for the technical terms we use throughout the book.

Product Description

The book includes an introduction and four main parts as described below.

Introduction: Meet the New Virtual Classroom

In the first chapter we orient readers to the virtual classroom by describing its uses, features, and benefits.

Part One: Learning and the New Virtual Classroom

The outcomes of any new technology for training will depend on how the features of the technology are harnessed to promote human learning processes. In Chapters 2 through 4, we describe the relationships between the features of the virtual classroom and basic events of human learning. We also summarize instructional methods needed to teach five common types of content: facts, concepts, processes, procedures, and principles.

Part Two: Engaging Participants in the New Virtual Classroom

Participant dropout—physical or mental—is much more likely in the virtual classroom than in traditional classrooms. Therefore, engagement becomes a very high priority! The best path to engagement requires effective use of media features such as whiteboards and application sharing to visualize your content, in addition to the frequent and effective use of the many tool options available for active participant responses.

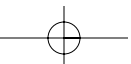
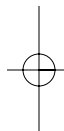
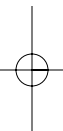
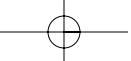
Part Three: Optimizing Your Virtual Events

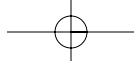
In addition to engagement, there are several elements that will optimize virtual classroom learning. Like face-to-face classrooms, virtual classes are instructor-paced. As a result they impose higher levels of mental load than self-study environments. At the same time, the combination of managing the technology, delivering presentations, and monitoring participant responses leads to mental overload in instructors who are new to virtual classroom technology. In Chapter 8 we offer evidence-based guidelines to

help participants and new instructors manage their mental load in this new environment. In Chapters 9 and 10 we offer tips for getting your class off to a good start as well as for supporting your training with surrounding elements, including handouts and welcome letters. Throughout most of the book, we assume you will use a traditional directive or instructive lesson design. However, on occasion you may want to consider adapting a problem-based learning approach to this new media. In Chapter 11 you will find the what's, why's, when's, and how's of problem-based learning in the virtual classroom.

Part Four: Creating Effective Learning Events in the New Virtual Classroom

In the final chapter, we integrate all of the guidelines offered in previous chapters into seven basic principles for success in the virtual classroom. We also suggest tips for constructing your virtual sessions, either as conversions from face-to-face classroom training or as brand-new training initiatives.





Chapter 1
Meet the New
Virtual Classroom

Introduction

Chapter 2
Learning
in the New VC

Chapter 3
Features to Exploit
in the New VC

Chapter 4
Teaching Content Types
in the New VC

Part 1: Learning and the New Virtual Classroom

Chapter 5
Visualize Your
Message

Chapter 6
Make It Active – Part 1

Chapter 7
Make It Active – Part 2

Part 2: Engaging Participants in the New Virtual Classroom

Chapter 8
Managing Mental Load
in the New VC

Chapter 9
Make a Good
First Impression

Chapter 10
Packaging Your
VC Session

Chapter 11
Problem-Based Learning
in the New VC

Part 3: Optimizing Your Virtual Events

Chapter 12
Getting Started

Part 4: Creating Effective Learning Events in the New Virtual Classroom

