

ILT to Digital Delivery

Virtual Training Start-up Guide

Set Up Your Workspace



Set up your webcam

Having your webcam on makes it clear that *you're* paying attention. Test the webcam and observe the video feed with a critical eye. Does the camera feed display anything that might distract your learners—or you?



Set up a second display

You can make VILT work from a single laptop screen, but a second display will make it easier for you to manage the various files and programs you might have up while running your virtual class/training.



Coordinate with others at home or in your workspace

The fewer distractions you have, the more you can focus on creating a great learning experience. Create signs, close doors, and set expectations about when you will and won't be available.



Set up your “teaching presence”

Be mindful of your attire, your face, and your surroundings.

Plan the Virtual Classroom Experience



Be mindful of your energy and attitude

Virtual instruction requires energy and animation in your voice and hand movements, or with on-screen annotation. Look straight into the camera to mimic eye contact and use your participants' names often while reading responses. Ask participants to unmute and expand on their answers to create an energetic environment.



Don't let people be anonymous

If your group is of a reasonable size, make sure people are sharing their webcam or at least a photo of themselves.



Take time to build a sense of community

Don't abandon camaraderie-building activities. Play "hobbies" bingo through chat, or [check out these cool icebreaker ideas](#) from the makers of virtual whiteboard app, Miro.



Select an assistant

Have an assistant to monitor the chat queue to escalate meaningful questions and keep everything on schedule, allowing the instructor to focus on the class/training. If your organization can provide this kind of support, great! If not, ask your learners to volunteer and rotate assistant duties amongst people in the class.



Test drive an unfamiliar feature every few days

If you're new to virtual instruction, it can be tempting to veer away from the range of features available on most platforms like Zoom, WebEx, or GoToWebinar. Yet, these features can streamline instruction once you're comfortable using them. For example, we use the Participant Window in Zoom for quick check-ins during our [Allen Academy](#) courses.



Never assume your learners know how to use the technology

Nothing is more frustrating to an online attendee than wrestling with the technology and not being able to keep up with the lesson. Provide a mini technology training pre-session, or begin new classes with a "tech talk" led by your learning technology specialist. Walking through the tool and practicing features until they are comfortable will make the classes much smoother for everyone.



Pay attention to possible bandwidth issues

With so many people working/learning online, complex videos or exercises may not load well. Perhaps start your calls with webcams on, and turn them off when the training starts to help with bandwidth issues.



Plan your class size accordingly

If you want interaction between and with attendees, a class size similar to ILT works—12 to 18 people estimate. As you increase the audience size, you may do better with pre-recorded and one-way communication techniques. You could provide a large scale presentation or webinar, followed by several smaller cohorts of participants in VILT sessions to interact with learning content and activities.



Switch up the type of content you are providing for learners

Live training can be replaced in some areas with recorded webinars. These can be chunked out with simple question-based activities between, them allowing for self-paced learning in a more individualized setting.



Shift some responsibility for teaching to the participants

Provide opportunities for learners to share information with the other participants. This allows for more engagement between learners and involvement in the topics.



Stay connected in between sessions

Use tools like Flarum (forum), Slack and Discord (chat apps), Miro and Mural (virtual whiteboards), and Zoom (meetings) to stay connected with learners.

Reorganize the Content



Keep text off the screen as much as possible

When you are presenting, show interesting and motivating imagery as a backdrop to your exposition—avoid putting walls of text on-screen. Provide the text heavy content in separate participant guides, which you can give your learners as PDF downloads.

 Intersperse presentations with user activity

Even the most charismatic speaker will have trouble holding a virtual classroom's attention if all he/she does is present a PowerPoint for sixty minutes. Interaction, gamification, whiteboards, annotations, brain teasers, and knowledge checks are all important for engagement.

VILT Tip— Participants should be asked to do something every 3-5 slides

 Take advantage of smaller breakout groups

Consider taking a longer session and breaking it up into smaller segments with assignments in between. Trust your learners to shut off the online technology and call each other to do activities in pairs. Some remote collaboration platforms have breakout group features built-in.

 Have “field trips”

Plan activities that will get your remote learners moving around and engaging with something new. Have learners capture pictures, sketch, take selfie videos, and learn through interactive virtual and in person experiences. Use your computers built-in timer app to display the amount of time remaining before participants come back together as a large virtual group.

 Schedule office hours

Make sure your learners have multiple ways to ask questions and understand the material. Some participants will not be comfortable speaking up on video and will prefer a more personalized interaction to ask questions. Find a time you can be available for one-on-one calls or small cohorts.

 Recognize the critical content

Your learners are under stress. They will not be able to focus in the same way, so make it easier for them by keeping your content laser-focused on what is really important. It is okay to have off-topic conversations, they build relationships between learners.