



# 144 Tips on **SYNCHRONOUS E-LEARNING** Strategy + Research

Edited by Bill Brandon



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*162 Tips and Tricks for Working with e-Learning Tools*

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*328 Tips on the SELECTION of an LMS or LCMS*

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# I. How to Use These Tips

## A. Introduction

In April and May, 2008, The eLearning Guild conducted a survey of its members, asking for their favorite tips relating to strategies for effectively creating, managing, and using synchronous e-Learning. Members could submit tips relating to any or all of five different categories. A total of 80 members responded to the survey, contributing 144 usable tips. Two tipsters were anonymous, and, because all tips had a 4000 character limit, the input system truncated one of the tips. As is usual in our past surveys, the tips range in length from one-sentence ideas all the way up to multi-page discourses. Some are very basic in nature, and others are quite advanced.

We edited the tips lightly, including the usual spelling corrections. In a few cases where English did not appear to be the Tipster's primary language, we had to make guesses as to what the Tipster meant – otherwise, everything you see in this book is in the tipsters' own words. As a result, we believe that these tips will be useful to any designer or developer looking for best practices to incorporate into their own processes.

We began turning these tips into an organized collection simply by sorting them. The largest group is the 53 tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors. The next largest (49 tips) consists of recommended practices and general tips for designers.

Because many of the tips were long, and addressed more than one idea, it was not possible to sort the tips further into sub-categories.

After each tip, we give the name of the tipster who provided it. This may help you to contact Tipsters for additional information.

We deeply appreciate the effort that contributors made to create these tips. We hope you find many valuable ideas here that can help you as you create Synchronous online learning.



This FREE Digital eBook would not have been possible were it not for a generous contribution to its development from Adobe. If you're not familiar with their products, or if you haven't checked them out lately, we encourage you to look at their offerings soon!

# Adobe® Acrobat® Connect™ Pro for eLearning

Easily create and deliver compelling self-paced courses, conduct highly interactive virtual classes, and efficiently manage training programs



## Why Adobe for eLearning?

No downloads. Instant access. The ability to captivate your audience with live classes and on-demand courses. That's what makes Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro a leader in eLearning solutions.

Technology should make eLearning a rich, interactive experience—not a slow, cumbersome ordeal. That's why Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro software offers a captivating interface and interactive tools to help participants learn and retain the material that you teach in virtual classes and self-paced courses—and enjoy doing it. You can quickly design compelling courses with templates and a library of content, teach more effectively with instructor management tools, and track learner progress to make sure your eLearning is actually achieving its goals.

Acrobat Connect Pro removes the common barriers to eLearning by giving learners instant, hassle-free access to courses and virtual classrooms. Other eLearning solutions require specialized software or plug-in downloads, but Acrobat Connect Pro delivers learners to the classroom with just a click—from anywhere, at anytime, on almost any device. All they need is what they already have: a web browser and the ubiquitous Adobe Flash® Player software, already installed on 98% of Internet-connected computers.

## Rapid training: Get training where it's needed, when it's needed

Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro software provides interactive tools to help you deliver engaging training that users can instantly access from anywhere. You can quickly design courses that leverage existing Microsoft PowerPoint content using Adobe Presenter software, and create interactive simulations using Adobe Captivate® software. Managing courses is easy with enrollment tools, automatic learner notifications, and custom report features. All your learners do is click on a URL—no downloads or plug-ins required—and work through courses at their own pace, wherever and whenever it's convenient for them.

- Design compelling content—no specialized programming skills required
- Incorporate existing PowerPoint content
- Easily add audio and video files for a rich user experience
- Create interactive tutorials and simulations
- Manage enrollment and notification
- Allow learners to self-enroll through online catalog
- Address a variety of learning styles
- Evaluate content effectiveness with customized training reports
- Track individual learner progress



### Virtual classrooms: Deliver live, interactive content

While virtual classrooms can save time and money, if the experiences are static and boring, what is the real cost? With Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro software, you can empower trainers to capture and keep learners' attention and help increase knowledge retention by making the experience fun and interactive. You can quickly create online classes with customizable layouts and reusable, archived content—and even connect students with audio, video, and interactive simulations to address a variety of learning styles, just like you would in a physical classroom.

- Deliver and track Adobe Presenter courses inside virtual classrooms
- Customize classroom layouts and save them as templates for reuse
- Use breakout rooms to focus discussions
- Enable all learners to practice at the same time
- Record and replay interactive sessions, or download to view offline
- Evaluate virtual classroom effectiveness with customized reports
- Track individual learner progress

### Flexible deployment options for organizations of all kinds

Adobe has perfected its product development process over 25 years. That's why you can be confident that Acrobat Connect Pro is ready on day one of your implementation—whether you're a university, government agency, or Fortune 500 enterprise.

#### Hosted or on-premise

Acrobat Connect Pro can be deployed as a licensed software product, on-premise, behind your firewall, to provide complete control. Or it can be purchased on a subscription basis as a hosted service, with full end-to-end 128-bit SSL encryption available.

#### Built on open standards

Acrobat Connect Pro is based on an open, extensible architecture that supports cost-effective integration with existing infrastructure and future investments. Acrobat Connect Pro uses standards such as XML and Java™ to exchange data, and it offers a full developer resource center with hundreds of APIs and SDKs.

#### Protected content

Adobe understands your need to protect sensitive information. Acrobat Connect Pro provides tight access control and security on all content to ensure that meetings and related information are viewable only by your intended audience.

#### For more information

For more details about Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro, visit [www.adobe.com/acrobatconnectpro](http://www.adobe.com/acrobatconnectpro).



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*Guild organizations use synchronous e-Learning tools 63.7% of the time. Organizations with over 5,000 workers use these tools even more often (71.1%), while those with 500 or fewer workers use them less often (58.8%).*

## II. The eLearning Guild's Research on Synchronous Learning Strategy

In addition to asking members for tips, The eLearning Guild is in the final stages of producing the 360° Report on Synchronous Learning Systems for 2008. This report draws on continuously updated input from Guild members at all levels, and provides many insights into the strategies that practitioners use.

Here's a sneak peek at significant findings about overall strategies regarding the use of synchronous tools, and about best practices, that will be in the upcoming report.

### A. Synchronous Tool Use

A reasonable question to ask is, "Who uses synchronous e-Learning tools?"

- Guild organizations use synchronous e-Learning tools 63.7% of the time. Organizations with over 5,000 workers use these tools even more often (71.1%), while those with 500 or fewer workers use them less often (58.8%).
- Guild organizations in the U.S. lead in use of synchronous tools (65.4%), with Central and Latin America right behind at 64%. Europe, the Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) use synchronous tools least often (53.8%), while Asia-Pacific and Canada are at 55.7% and 59.1%, respectively.
- Telecom organizations are most likely to use synchronous tools (84.9%), while local governments are least likely to use them (22.2%).
- Guild members with more experience (over 4 years) use synchronous e-Learning more often, and they use it more often in 2008 than they did in 2007.
- 30% of Guild members use more than one synchronous tool to deliver instruction online.

### B. Best Practices in Synchronous Learning

In the latest research report, we highlight six best practices that differentiate organizations that report receiving very good return on investment (ROI) from synchronous e-Learning, and those who report poor or modest ROI. These are:

- Obtaining support from upper management for synchronous e-Learning,
- Using change management practices,
- Using a third party of their own choosing as a host (versus hosting synchronous sessions internally, or having the vendor host the sessions),
- Delivering synchronous e-Learning through their learning management system (LMS),
- Using instructor-led (classroom) training much less often, and synchronous e-Learning much more often, than organizations that report poor or modest ROI, and
- Formally training the instructors who use the synchronous tools.

*To optimize learning outcomes and maximize authentic assessment — try combining synchronous learning with asynchronous support and progress checks.*

KELLEY CHROUSER,  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM MANAGER,  
ASSOCIATION OF LEGAL  
ADMINISTRATORS

### III. 11 Tips for Blending Synchronous Learning with Other Learning Modalities

**Blend Content-Heavy Courses:** A basic course that exceeds eight hours in duration is generally too long to keep the attention of a typical learner in today's fast-paced world. Take what the learners need to “know,” and put that content in a self-directed e-Learning module; then give the learners the opportunity to practice what they need to “do” in a face-to-face synchronous environment. Give your learners a well-deserved break from feeding them so much content at one sitting — they're full!

**“Tap the Room:”** Keep the synchronous classroom experience interactive and engaging, and facilitate the experiences of the learners in the room (or virtual room) to help reinforce your content. Try not to present more than 10 to 15 minutes of content at one time without some sort of interaction, sharing of experiences, or group activity. This will keep the energy up, interest piqued, and your learners awake!

**Know Your Learners' Needs:** As trainers, we often think we know our learners' needs. However, it can be deceiving. As you plan your synchronous course, take the time to conduct a needs analysis. Find the “true” needs of your learners. Where's their pain? What's working? And more importantly, what's not working? For example, problems with workplace security may not require training the whole organization on the security policy, but rather coaching a small group of employees how to properly set door alarms at the end of the day. Discover the real problem before you jump to the solution.

**Don't Throw the Books Out with the Bathwater:** There is value in books, manuals, and written reference materials included in the synchronous training environment, but don't use words to replace examples, images, and experiences. Create custom written materials by integrating only the portions of the written materials that pertain to your training topic. Learn to be more specific, and customize your materials for precisely the right support.

**Visuals Are Meant to Be Seen, Not Heard:** Use PowerPoint and other visual support tools for support only, not for teaching content or replacing the spoken word. Many of us may find ourselves relying on our PowerPoint slides to be the main vehicle for communicating content, but that is not how to best use visuals. Besides, if your learners are reading the screen, they're not listening to you! Visuals are an excellent way of reinforcing concepts, showing examples, and helping to connect your learner to the information. Use them sparingly and when appropriate, but don't rely on them to speak for you.

*Michael Sunnarborg, Sr. Training Specialist, Target Corporation*

To optimize learning outcomes and maximize authentic assessment — try combining synchronous learning with asynchronous support and progress checks. We recently, for example, developed a conference focused on creating initiatives designed for implementation by attendees over the course of the year. Throughout the project cycle, we provided attendees access to asynchronous and just-in-time learning, networking, and support resources in the form of:

- Recorded Web events (synchronous with asynchronous access to the recorded event),
- A wiki center where attendees build their own “lessons learned and best practices” database,
- Discussion boards where attendees and business partners can network,
- Requested resources and peer mentoring, and

*For an effective learning experience, blend Virtual-Classroom-based training with In-Person classroom-based training, wherever viable. Do this in a 25 % (In-Person) and 75 % (Virtual Classroom) ratio.*

RAJ CHIRPUTKAR,  
VICE PRESIDENT & HEAD —  
E LEARNING, SEED INFOTECH  
LTD, PUNE, INDIA

### III. Tips for Blending Synchronous Learning with Other Learning Modalities *continued*

- Online resources provided by conference sponsors, conference hosts and conference speakers, all on an as-needed basis.

As a result, learners are creating real-world deliverables with measurable outcomes for their own workplaces.

For another synchronous learning event, we added asynchronous learning assets that participants could access prior to the synchronous event. The asynchronous learning assets provide both the means and opportunity for creating a pre-existing knowledge base. This enables synchronous event facilitators and trainers to focus on higher-order learning objectives, within a limited time-frame, in ways in which they were not previously able to do. Adding asynchronous events after synchronous events also provides trainers or instructors a means to more adequately assess learning along all four dimensions of the Kirkpatrick model of assessment.

*Kelley Chrouser, Professional Development Program Manager, Association of Legal Administrators*

For an effective learning experience, blend Virtual-Classroom-based training with In-Person classroom-based training, wherever viable. Do this in a 25 % (In-Person) and 75 % (Virtual Classroom) ratio.

- Use In-Person training for teaching concepts, foundation, simple examples, and for establishing rapport.
- Use Virtual Classroom training for covering more examples, subtleties of concepts, case studies, etc.
- If In-Person is not feasible, then one could substitute pre-recorded multimedia learning objects for that component.

This blend will give the best of both the objectives — “effective learning” experience with “anywhere learning” flexibility and scalability of training activities.

*Raj Chirputkar, Vice President & Head — e Learning, SEED Infotech Ltd, Pune, India*

If you require pre-work or other assignments, review them and build on them in the class. Everyone remembers the college professor who asked you to read a chapter for homework, and then basically quoted the chapter in the next class. You could have skipped the reading and taken notes. You felt like you wasted your time, and then you didn't read any more of the chapters for the rest of the term. Don't lose your credibility with the participants. Pre-work, and other assessments, should be purposeful, worth the time to do them, and relevant to the formal learning sessions.

*Tracy Ross, Instructional Designer, Intel Corporation*

Blended learning is a very effective method for delivering training, and requires preparation to be successful. Unlike traditional classroom-based training, blended learning has many moving parts. For example, in a traditional classroom program, the facilitator is preparing for a “live” event, shipping materials, traveling to a location, preparing notes, checking enrollments, etc. In the blend-

*Blended learning is still a fairly new approach to learning, and often times, people become distracted by the interaction between people and technology. TIP: “Training is training.” At the end of the day, regardless of the design, you are still trying to accomplish the same things – skill development and knowledge transfer.*

SEAN M. COLFER,  
CHIEF LEARNING OFFICER,  
COLFER SOLUTIONS, INC.

### III. Tips for Blending Synchronous Learning with Other Learning Modalities *continued*

ed environment, the facilitator may still be responsible for completing the classroom steps, however the blended environment requires much more.

This guide will help you decide whether Blended Learning is appropriate, and how to prepare. It will outline the necessary steps that go beyond the traditional classroom-based training program.

#### Where Do I Begin?

Blended learning is still a fairly new approach to learning, and often times, people become distracted by the interaction between people and technology. *TIP: “Training is training.”* At the end of the day, regardless of the design, you are still trying to accomplish the same things — skill development and knowledge transfer. Therefore, the best place to start is to use the ADDIE instructional design model. ADDIE is a long-time, battle-tested, approach to instructional design that can help guide you to the most effective delivery approach.

#### 1. Analysis of Key Outcomes: Assess training need

- a. Why is the training being requested or created?
- b. Analyze learning environment
  - Learner demographic
  - Physical environment
  - Technology environment
- c. Identify learner expectations
- d. Determine the learner motivation (required, requested, voluntary, compliant training)
- e. What level of proficiency is required?
- f. Identify type of support required
  - Program management or learner management
  - Support required for different delivery modalities
  - System support
- g. Identify existing documents, job aids, references, and resources, and determine if they may usable for this initiative

#### 2. Design

- a. Draft learning objectives and desired outcomes
- b. Create measurements
  - Criterion- or skills-based
  - Program Key Performance Indicators (i.e. X% will pass the exam or become certified)
- c. Identify expected course duration, and acceptable time a learner should devote to complete the lesson or program
- d. Design applications requiring the learner to demonstrate they are actively participating in the program (i.e. # of thread discussion comments, working with a partner, sending project information to the facilitator)
- e. Which modalities are available, and most effective, to develop the learner skills and meet the criteria?
- f. Facilitator requirements and support: Does the facilitator require training on use of virtual tools? Does the facilitator need support with chat or Q&A during Web collaboration?

*Asking your group, “Did you read last night’s homework?” usually brings on a long silence. Try this instead: Give an additional instruction with the homework, such as, “We’ll start tomorrow’s class by having each participant tell something to the class that he or she learned in the lesson.”*

JILL EASTERDAY,  
CONSULTANT

### III. Tips for Blending Synchronous Learning with Other Learning Modalities *continued*

- g. Create a practice environment where learners can practice labs, work together on projects, break out rooms, etc.
- h. What other supporting tools are required (i.e. headphones, customer support)? At this point, you should have a good idea whether a Blended Learning program is appropriate. Keep in mind the support required to maintain the Blended Learning environment, including access to technology, user support, and program management. These can be “show stoppers” if an organization does not have the necessary resources to fully support the Blended Learning program. If you choose Blended Learning, continue to the next steps to develop and implement your solution.

#### 3. Develop

- a. Leverage existing material or content (don’t reinvent the wheel)
- b. Create new content and/or materials
- c. Develop learner and job aids, including how to be a successful virtual learner.
- d. Develop facilitator resources, if applicable. For example, your blended design may not require an instructor, which makes this step unnecessary.
- e. Develop a communication plan. THIS IS A CRITICAL STEP TO ENSURE YOUR BLENDED PROGRAM IS SUCCESSFUL.
  - You must maintain constant communication with the learners, pre, during(Tip truncated because it exceeded 4000 characters.)

*Sean M. Colfer, Chief Learning Officer, Colfer Solutions, Inc.*

Asking your group, “Did you read last night’s homework?” usually brings on a long silence. Try this instead: Give an additional instruction with the homework, such as, “We’ll start tomorrow’s class by having each participant tell something to the class that he or she learned in the lesson.”

*Jill Easterday, Consultant*

To decide whether e-Learning is the appropriate format for a topic, consider the following: Should the student use different methods to accomplish the same goal, depending on the individual situation? If so, be aware that many e-Learning formats limit the amount of process branching available, especially for assessments. If it is important that the student understand that different circumstances require different methods, instructor-led learning may be more appropriate, since you can customize it to the audience’s particular situation. If there is really only one process to accomplish the goal, then e-Learning is a better format. The minor branching capabilities offered in e-Learning software (such as menu path, keystroke, or toolbar button) are usually enough to communicate the process. Making this distinction has allowed us to choose the correct format for each class, and allowed the incorporation of e-Learning to be seen as a supplement to instructor-led training, instead of as a competitive format.

*Jennifer Thomas, Content Developer, Haynes & Boone LLP*

# Adobe eLearning Solutions for Higher Education

Deliver engaging teaching and learning experiences to anyone, anytime, anywhere



Learn more about Adobe eLearning solutions for higher education at [www.adobe.com/go/hed\\_elearning](http://www.adobe.com/go/hed_elearning).

In a relatively short amount of time, eLearning has gained a permanent, highly visible place in the worldwide higher education community. A practice that a few years ago held only a niche role now is an indispensable element of many institutions' curricula, success, and overall reputation. From working adult learners to full-time students living on and off campus to dedicated educators, individuals are increasingly taking advantage of synchronous eLearning opportunities such as virtual lectures and mentoring, as well as asynchronous eLearning offerings such as digital online courses, flexible content creation and distribution, and built-in assessment tools.

Adobe Systems is proud that its solutions played a major role in launching this eLearning revolution. Now, years later and still firmly at the forefront of eLearning technology, Adobe solutions enable higher education faculty and students to teach, learn, and collaborate anytime, anywhere—more effectively than ever. Whether participants are in a couple of locations, spread across campus, or dispersed worldwide, Adobe eLearning solutions put them in exactly the same learning environment, receiving the same instructional experience or training.

## **Adobe solutions put the most effective eLearning tools in your hands**

Adobe solutions enable higher education institutions to easily create and deploy engaging eLearning experiences that are easily accessible across campus, across a multi-campus institution, and beyond—within existing Learning Management Systems (LMS). Hassle-free access keeps the focus on the content, and not on technology. Here are key components:

- **Adobe® Acrobat® Connect™ Pro 7**, the cornerstone of Adobe eLearning solutions, offers an interface and interactive tools to help participants learn and retain the material that educators teach in virtual classes and self-paced courses. You can quickly design compelling courses with templates and a library of content, control learner participation, and track learner progress—so you can teach effectively in the virtual classroom and training environments while reaching your overall eLearning goals.
- **Adobe Presenter 7** empowers faculty and students to rapidly create high-quality, on-demand presentations without special training.
- **Adobe Captivate® 3** software enables faculty and students to rapidly create powerful and engaging simulations, software demonstrations, and scenario-based training without programming knowledge or multimedia skills.

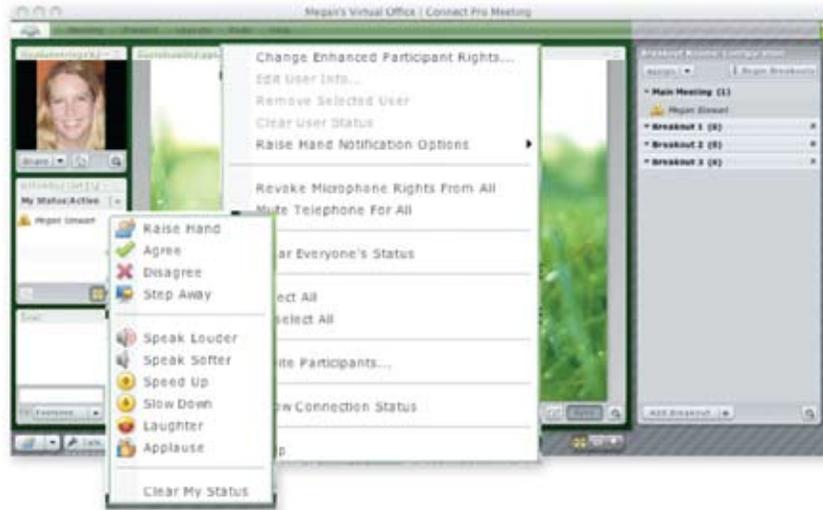
## Adobe eLearning Solutions for Higher Education

- **Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro 7:** Engage online audiences with highly interactive web meetings, multimedia virtual classroom experiences, and hands-on training sessions. Easily incorporate Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Flash® content.
- **Adobe Presenter 7:** Rapidly create Flash based presentations and eLearning material from Microsoft PowerPoint.
- **Adobe Captivate 3:** Create engaging eLearning content without programming or multimedia skills.
- **Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro Training:** Create and deploy high-impact training material and interactive simulations, and track the effectiveness of coursework and training.
- **Adobe Acrobat Professional:** Create, combine, distribute, and review media-rich PDF documents that support electronic workflows. Combine a wide range of content in a single PDF portfolio.

- **Adobe Acrobat Professional** software enables educators and students to reliably create, combine, share, and control media-rich Adobe PDF documents for easy, more secure communication, collaboration, and timesaving electronic workflows. Acrobat Professional lets you combine a wide range of content—including documents, drawings, e-mail, and spreadsheets—in a single PDF portfolio.

### Create virtual classroom experiences that engage learners

Virtual classrooms are distributed learning environments that deliver media-rich content while removing geographic barriers. From working adult learners to full-time students living on campus, virtual classrooms expand opportunities without sacrificing engagement or course value. Virtual classrooms provide the opportunity to work on a degree without leaving current employment, and they help educators and students communicate, collaborate, and interact no matter where they are.



Using Adobe solutions, an instructor can provide formal online instruction and more informal “office hour” discussions with all participating students. With Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro 7, students can meet with an instructor in real time, reviewing media-rich content that the instructor can present on his or her desktop. All students need is a web connection.

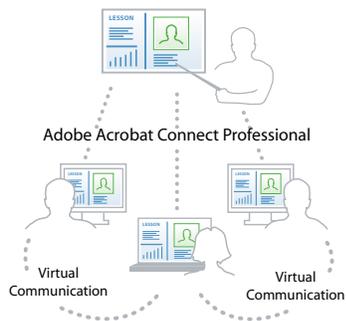
Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro 7 allows educators to teach in real time, or deliver narrated presentations and courses that students can view on-demand. Either way, educators can capture and keep the attention of learners with engaging video, audio, and interactive multimedia course material that requires no additional downloads. And with Adobe Captivate 3, there’s no limit to the level of engagement in that material. Based on industry-leading Adobe Flash technology, Adobe Captivate automatically generates interactive, Adobe Flash Player-compatible content for quizzes and simulations that are easy to distribute and access online.

Further, Adobe eLearning solutions provide dynamic virtual classroom management tools that increase instructor efficiency:

- Breakout rooms allow expanded curriculum and more specific focus.
- Customizable layouts and persistent content reduce preparation time.
- Instructors can reuse and archive virtual classroom settings with editable online and offline recordings.
- For class assignments, and for out-of-class feedback on those assignments, Acrobat software delivers an electronic PDF workflow, complete with easy-to-use commenting tools.

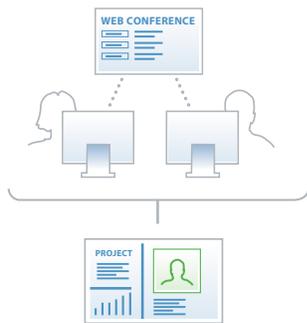
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### A Instructors with Learners



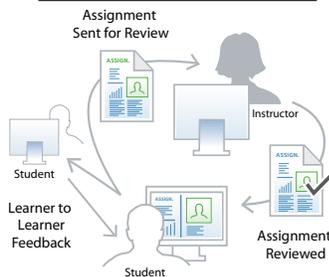
Instructors share new ideas and information with learners, providing guidance and feedback on student performance.

### B Learners with Learners



Learners engage with one another to collaborate and share knowledge by asking questions, exchanging perspectives and experiences, and creatively expressing themselves.

### C Learners with Content



A wide variety of multimedia, print, and communication resources help educators share new ideas and information with all members of the learning community, no matter where they are located, whenever they need it most.

Adobe solutions for the virtual classroom enable higher education institutions to offer more classes to more students. While eLearning has found a particularly loyal and growing audience among working adult learners, it is increasingly being selected by campus-based students as part of blended face-to-face/eLearning programs. From traditional campuses to technical institutions to completely online programs, higher education institutions and their educators can use Adobe eLearning solutions to create and maintain highly effective virtual classrooms.

### Rapidly create and deliver engaging online training content

Adobe rapid training solutions—powered by the amazing delivery and extension capabilities of Acrobat Connect Pro 7—empower higher education faculty to provide training where it's needed, when it's needed. Give users instant access via a web browser using ubiquitous Adobe Flash Player software. Quickly design courses that leverage existing PowerPoint content using Adobe Presenter 7 software, and create interactive simulations using Adobe Captivate 3 software. Manage courses using enrollment, automatic learner notifications, and custom report features.

This unique framework empowers higher education faculty to concentrate on creating and delivering highly effective content—without having to worry about intricate and burdensome code. Consider some of the advantages of Adobe rapid training solutions:

- Use familiar content-creation tools such as Microsoft PowerPoint and Adobe Flash to quickly and easily develop rich multimedia learning content in minutes, not months.
- Avoid having to develop new technical skills or depend on web professionals.
- Allow subject matter experts (SMEs) to easily and confidently capture their own content using Adobe Captivate, and create their own quizzes and courses using Adobe Presenter.
- Include interactive simulations and demonstrations created in Adobe Captivate.
- Create reusable and shareable content that is standards-based and interoperable.
- Deploy and track effectiveness of courses by using Acrobat Connect Pro Training.

From vocational training—to undergraduate and graduate courses—to professional development, Adobe rapid training solutions can put you in a rich, immersive eLearning environment that includes interactive simulations, streaming video, and scenario-based learning. The solutions make it easy to assess, track, and report progress and achievement within any LMS standard. It's all there.

### Put Adobe eLearning solutions to work for your institution

Adobe's new eLearning solutions reflect its ongoing commitment to helping faculty, students, researchers, and administrators at higher education institutions.

Adobe virtual classroom solutions—highly effective alternatives to traditional teaching and learning methods—empower instructors to deliver richer, more interactive learning experiences to students in class, across campus, and throughout the world. Adobe rapid eLearning solutions empower higher education institutions of all kinds and sizes to provide faculty, students, and other learners with high-impact online learning that is instantly accessible.

To learn more about unlocking the potential of Adobe eLearning solutions at your institution, visit the Adobe higher education eLearning website at [www.adobe.com/go/hed\\_elearning](http://www.adobe.com/go/hed_elearning).

*Respect the Learners' Time: This may seem obvious, but be sure the activity you have planned for a synchronous session has a purpose, and cannot be delivered as a free-standing (asynchronous) video.*

TERESA MURPHREY,  
FACULTY, TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY

### III. Tips for Blending Synchronous Learning with Other Learning Modalities *continued*

During our virtual classrooms, we include links to guided practice simulations (previously created with Captivate) that are stored on a Web server. Each student has their own instance of the simulation that provides them with a hands-on experience in a simulated and controlled environment.

*Janet Clifford, Instructional Designer, Kronos Educational Services*

Respect the Learners' Time: This may seem obvious, but be sure the activity you have planned for a synchronous session has a purpose, and cannot be delivered as a free-standing (asynchronous) video. Do not deliver lectures using synchronous sessions — be sure that these sessions take advantage of being LIVE with the learners. Do activities, have question and answer sessions, provide the learner the opportunity to contribute. Save the lectures for delivery in the online materials for watching at the learner's convenience. And — end the synchronous session ON TIME.

*Theresa Murphrey, Faculty, Texas A&M University*

In a college course setting, I highly recommend blending asynchronous content with a synchronous learning session. Used as either a pre- or post-learning support, items such as questionnaires and case studies provide an excellent basis for discussion. The discussion is the focus of a synchronous event. My students have commented on the value of the “moment,” whereby their classmates contribute their on-the-spot feedback and thoughts. You don't want to take up the precious hour or two that you have together with answering basic or logistic questions. Freeing up that time for personal introductions, needs statements, and expectations creates a collegial environment in the synchronous session right from the start. The pre-readings for my course are essential to the quality of the discussions. I supplement the material with quick, interactive Flash pieces and quizzes. I like to follow up with a Wiki component, to continue the discussion and address logistic/clarification issues. From a participant's perspective, this is more valuable because it removes the expectation that all your questions will be answered during the session, and lessens the chance of feeling disappointment that the instructor/facilitator did not address all of your questions. By not including asynchronous elements, the learning, by default, becomes more of a one-way information session. That is a valid experience, as long as it meets participant expectations and/or needs, This has been my experience facilitating at the college level with adults ranging from age 20 up to age 60.

*Claudio Ierulli, Learning Solutions Developer, CIBC*

Participants can play board games while taking synchronous learning classes for additional interaction. The instructor would display the board, and roll the dice when it's time to play. The instructor would ask a question, then display the correct answer. The players would move around the board the number of spaces indicated by the instructor when they answer the question correctly, or remain on a space if they answer incorrectly. Each participant should receive a paper-

*Keep in mind that attention spans for most Americans are very short. Learners expect some type of break or change in activity after 10 to 12 minutes (this is learned behavior from having commercial breaks while watching TV).*

TONY SAN GIOVANNI,  
SENIOR LEARNING &  
DEVELOPMENT CONSULTANT,  
METLIFE

### III. Tips for Blending Synchronous Learning with Other Learning Modalities *continued*

based, or soft-copy, game board. These are easy to create in MS PowerPoint, or other drawing tools. Each participant can use a coin, or other small object, to move along the board. When a participant makes it around the course, they can send a message to the instructor. Those participants are the winners. Of course, the honesty system is used during this game.

*Deborah Thomas, Founder and President, SillyMonkey LLC*

### IV. 49 Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars

You can't do too much advanced prep, which is most appropriate for drop-in tutorial sessions or interactive dialogue-based sessions. Not only does a quick "patch-together" job show in the quality of your presentation, but it can also be insulting to your audience. If you take the time to think through the different branches the presentation may take, depending on the needs of the audience, you can be seen to have created a customized presentation that seamlessly allows you to respond to any question or alternative path they may like to take. By anticipating branches, you can prepare materials that you may need in order to answer questions or demonstrate concepts in different ways. You will be able to engage the audience by allowing the conversation to flow naturally. This technique works better each time you deliver, as you can't anticipate every variation, but you can respond by preparing material for the next delivery. There is little added value to a learner spending time listening to a presentation live, if there is no engagement or opportunity to contribute to where the conversation goes. Presenters are often reluctant to deviate from their canned presentation when they don't have the resources or visual presentation material to support verbal answers.

*Bryan Fair, Educational Technologist, British Columbia Institute of Technology*

Keep in mind that attention spans for most Americans are very short. Learners expect some type of break or change in activity after 10 to 12 minutes (this is learned behavior from having commercial breaks while watching TV). This is especially true when facilitating virtually in the current culture of multi-tasking. If you are not "pulling" information from your learners, chances are your learners aren't fully engaged. Get creative when pulling information from your learners. Encourage your learners to use the whiteboard feature, if available, for brainstorming activities. You can use polling and chat functionality to create informal virtual learning games. Whatever you choose, keeping the learner constantly engaged is critical, since reading body language is not a luxury that virtual facilitators have.

*Tony SanGiovanni, Senior Learning & Development Consultant, MetLife*

*If your synchronous event is not using live video, provide a small photo of each presenter. This adds a personal touch to the presentation, and provides the user with something more than a computer screen to envision the speaker.*

PATRICK HENTSCHELL,  
E-LEARNING PROJECT  
MANAGER, FM GLOBAL

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

If designing content to be viewed on a projector (e.g. PowerPoint slides), try to adhere to the 6x6 rule. No more than 6 bullets per page — no more than 6 words per line. Moreover, use appropriate graphics to help make a point.

*Dwayne Dush*

One important basic tip for a designer or instructor is the instructional planning for the virtual class. It is essential to know the features and resources available through the technology, and create an appropriate strategy to use these features according to the audience, and to the nature of the knowledge that will be delivered. You may do this basic planning easily and quickly using an Excel spreadsheet, where it is possible to relate learning goals to contents or features to be shown or used. It may also include an estimated duration (in minutes) for each topic, in order to create a view of the total length of the virtual class.

*Luciano Gardesani Marques, Product Manager, MicroPower*

Use a tight script, include thought-provoking leading questions, speak to the audience as though you have eye contact, and solicit participation. Use a variety of communication mechanisms when conducting virtual synchronous training events, to engage participants in activities that require teamwork, contribution of materials, etc.

*Anonymous*

In addition to following John Keller's ARCS model (Attention, Relevance, Confidence, Satisfaction), make your content FUN!! People become bored and disengaged in Webinars if you do not have a strong opening. In one session in which I was sharing my desktop, I slipped in a slide that had the image of the BSOD (Blue Screen of Death for you non-techies) near the beginning, to prove a point that when things go wrong, it is usually at the worst possible time. The harmless practical joke not only helped to get the audience's attention, but also "broke the ice," which made the remainder of the session much more interactive and therefore productive.

*Tony SanGiovanni, Sr. Learning & Development Consultant, MetLife*

If your synchronous event is not using live video, provide a small photo of each presenter. This adds a personal touch to the presentation, and provides the user with something more than a computer screen to envision the speaker.

*Patrick Hentschell, E-Learning Project Manager, FM Global*

*Follow up a Webinar event with refresher information, or activities that require the attendees to recall or apply what they have learned. Design Webinars to be short, not much more than 45 minutes.*

PATRICK HENTSCHELL,  
E-LEARNING PROJECT  
MANAGER, FM GLOBAL

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

Follow up a Webinar event with refresher information, or activities that require the attendees to recall or apply what they have learned. Design Webinars to be short, not much more than 45 minutes.

*Patrick Hentschell, E-Learning Project Manager, FM Global*

To improve learning through a synchronous class, it is critical to create and promote a highly collaborative environment. This task belongs to the instructor, but also is based on the learning strategy adopted before, while planning and building the agenda for the class. A low-collaborative class does not bring significant learning results. The more collaborative the class, the better your results will be. The audience must be part of the class, and must be called upon often by the instructor to answer questions, bring up examples or share experiences, perform some activity, etc. An efficient virtual class must be different from watching TV or going to the movies. The participants (students) must feel that they may be called upon anytime to do something, and so paying attention is critical. That's why it is also very important to work with groups of no more than 15 to 20 students per class. Large groups usually are more difficult to create a high-collaboration environment in.

*Luciano Gardesani Marques, Product Manager — MicroPower Presence, MicroPower*

Make sure to send an email invitation to the e-Learning event. Your email invitation should include:

- Objectives for the course (or what will be covered),
- Any Passwords to access the event,
- Call-in numbers for the event (if audio is not VoIP),
- Info on how soon before the event people can access the event (i.e., 15 minutes early, etc.), and
- A link to the event's login screen.

*Deborah Nugent, Learning Consultant, Fidelity Investments*

Live video broadcast is secondary, unless your audience has a broadband Internet connection fast enough to support high-quality transmission. Experience with customers shows that live video may be important during the beginning of the virtual class for a social approach, but after that what really matters is the capacity of the instructor to create a dynamic and highly-collaborative environment. Some technical training normally demands video to explain how to assemble equipment, for example. Today it is very simple to record a video, instead of broadcasting it live through the Internet. Another good option is Flash. A Flash simulation is more useful because it is possible to simulate, and not just show how to do something. This interaction improves learning results.

*Luciano Gardesani Marques, Product Manager — MicroPower Presence, MicroPower*

*Find a way to place all class materials that the learner will need in one place. This way, the learner can go download it all, prior to class, instead of the facilitator needing to email it to them.*

CAROL HUHN, NUANCE COMMUNICATIONS

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

Make the content as engaging as possible with motion, graphics, quizzes, puzzles, or anything to break it up. Only include critical information — stuff that they will need and use on the job.

*Patty Skerl, Senior Talent Development Specialist, AmTrust Bank*

Designing for synchronous presentations is no different than designing any other type of learning. It starts with solid instructional design: Audience analysis, clear learning objectives, and a good structure. Don't limit yourself to lecturing with slides; look for creative ways to get your material across. Make sure there is lots of opportunity for engagement. Ask your learners to do something every three minutes, even if it's something as simple as answering a Yes or No question. Challenge them! Learn to use ALL the tools in your synchronous package, and then actually USE THEM!

*Julie Biddle, Training Specialist, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing*

Invite a guest or co-host to help present key points. During the training, make it more of a discussion rather than a one-way conversation. Have the guest share a story, or interrupt you at any time with questions or comments. Feel free to go off the script, to answer questions for those topics that you were planning on addressing later. This interaction will engage the listeners, and make them feel like they too are part of the conversation.

*Rory Frey, Consultant Technical Training, The Hartford*

Find a way to place all class materials that the learner will need in one place. This way, the learner can go download it all, prior to class, instead of the facilitator needing to email it to them.

*Carol Huhn, Nuance Communications*

Keep in mind that, with a little creativity, you can convert almost all classroom exercises to a synchronous on-line format. For example, groups can work on a section of a whiteboard, while they chat with each other, or they can go to a breakout room (if your software has that functionality). Don't eliminate exercises just because you are online, in fact, those exercises are more important to keep people involved!

*Anne Harper*

Practice, practice, practice before going live. Also, a great idea to have a second computer up and running so you can “see” what the participants see, and make sure that all is functioning well.

*Paula Colwell, Learning Specialist, Canada School of Public Service*

# Grundfos Management A/S

Leading manufacturer streamlines training and delivers compelling eLearning courses to customers and employees worldwide using Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro

## Grundfos Management A/S

[www.grundfos.com](http://www.grundfos.com)



## In Partnership With

ZaqONE

[www.zaqolutions.dk](http://www.zaqolutions.dk)

## Industry

Manufacturing

## Challenges

- Accelerate production of training materials
- Reduce costs to deliver training to staff, partners, and customers worldwide
- Minimize need for IT to support eLearning courses

## Solution

- eLearning
- Grundfos is using Acrobat Connect to deliver engaging training courses to staff, partners, and customers worldwide.

## Results

- Enhance quality and accessibility of training courses delivered worldwide
- Help ensure that staff, partners, and customers have continued access to timely product information
- Reduce time and costs to produce and deliver training content
- Minimize demand on valuable IT resources needed to support training initiatives

## Systems At A Glance

- Acrobat Connect Pro
- Adobe Presenter

## Training customers and staff worldwide

Grundfos is the world's largest manufacturer of circulation pumps. The company has offices in 58 countries and currently employs approximately 14,000 staff, with roughly a third employed in Denmark. With its large employee base and complex products, Grundfos has its own training academy that today is being supplemented with Acrobat Connect Pro software.

eLearning is crucial for Grundfos to meet the challenges of the future and to reinforce its position as the leading company in the pump industry. Both employees and customers can be educated with the help of Acrobat Connect Pro.

For Grundfos, a commitment to staff training helps ensure the company can maintain and develop its position in the world market. This is the reason why Grundfos established its training academy—the Poul Due Jensen Academy—with associated hotel facilities at its headquarters. The academy is an independent division of Grundfos Management and is managed by Kim Hansen, the director of the academy.

## Be-Think-Innovate

The overall objective of the academy is to ensure the best education for employees. For example, sales managers should understand as much about sales and marketing as they do about product features. Also, instead of just responding to customer inquiries, the sales staff should be proactive in its relationships with existing and potential customers, serving as problem solvers and reliable partners that can deliver customized solutions. This requires highly specialized knowledge that can only be acquired through excellent training.

“Be-Think-Innovate” is the slogan that Grundfos employs to put the company's values into words. Being willing to change, to assume responsibility, and being innovative are crucial for meeting the challenges of the future. One initiative that was developed in this spirit is using eLearning to attain even closer contact with the company's customers. For instance, dealers and wholesalers make decisions every day as to which pump they will recommend for a project. Specific product knowledge builds confidence with the customer. Therefore, Grundfos wants to offer product training via eLearning to ensure that customers can choose the right Grundfos pump.

## Leveraging the reach of the web

Senior eLearning Project Manager Ole Kristensen is tasked with developing training methods that utilize the Internet for updating the knowledge of Grundfos employees. With eLearning, the time and costs for training employees are reduced compared to traditional training methods. At the same time, eLearning can happen at each employee's location.

For Grundfos, eLearning is not an alternative to traditional courses, but instead supplements courses as part of a blended-learning process that combines day courses and eLearning. “eLearning and day

With the help of Acrobat Connect Pro staff at Grundfos can rapidly create and assemble a complete training presentation in less than three hours—a task that previously could take three weeks just for the planning and storyboard. Grundfos employees and customers worldwide can now be trained on a given topic within 24 hours.



*“Thanks to Acrobat Connect, we can train our employees worldwide faster and more cost effectively than ever.”*

Kim Hansen,  
Academy director,  
Grundfos

courses are part of our module-based training system,” explains Kristensen. “It gives participants the opportunity for better preparation and offers flexibility as the eLearning modules can fit into people’s busy lives. We have also established a system to handle customer training.”

#### **Adopting Adobe Presenter**

Grundfos uses Adobe Presenter and Microsoft PowerPoint to create eLearning content. Because Adobe Presenter and PowerPoint are integrated, anyone who can use PowerPoint can create eLearning presentations with animations and built-in tests. An Adobe Presenter presentation can also be used to create short training exercises or product presentations that conclude with a few questions that test whether the participant has understood the content.

Another advantage of using Adobe Presenter is that the presentation is delivered in the Adobe Flash® format. This means that all PCs can run the presentation without the need to install extra software. As a result, Grundfos does not need to devote a lot of time to providing support. “By using Acrobat Connect Pro and Adobe Flash, we are confident that people can participate in trainings without problems,” says Kristensen. “Users only have to click with the mouse to run the presentation. At the same time, the minimal bandwidth required for the Flash based trainings is amazing. We can even reliably train people who have low-bandwidth connections in remote areas worldwide via Adobe Presenter.”

#### **Rapid training and quality meetings**

With Acrobat Connect Pro, Grundfos can quickly produce learning material. Traditionally, production of eLearning material has been expensive and time-consuming. “With Acrobat Connect Pro, we can rapidly create and assemble a complete training presentation in less than three hours—previously it could take three weeks just for the planning and storyboard,” explains Kristensen. “We can now train our staff worldwide on a given topic within 24 hours. This is truly rapid learning,” adds Hansen, “Thanks to Acrobat Connect Pro, we can train our employees worldwide faster and more cost effectively than ever.”

Grundfos runs Acrobat Connect Pro on an internal server. Authorized employees have an area in which they can see which courses they should take, and also view the results of courses they have completed. It was important for Grundfos that Acrobat Connect Pro can handle user data from its internal directory server. This means that users do not have to be set up separately on the Acrobat Connect Pro server. The Adobe software has built-in LDAP integration and automatically accesses all user data from the Grundfos directory database. In this way, it is possible to maintain users from one location, and as many as 6,000 users can be set up in less than hour.

*“By using Acrobat Connect and Adobe Flash, we are confident that people can participate in trainings without problems.”*

Ole Kristensen,  
Senior eLearning project manager,  
Grundfos

**For More Information**

[www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro)

With a hosted Acrobat Connect Pro module for training, Grundfos offers training to customers and partners. The Adobe solution monitors who has gone through the training presentation and uses short tests to measure whether the messages have been understood. With Acrobat Connect Pro, the company can quickly update customers with the latest product information. “Acrobat Connect Pro enables us to deliver timely product training to our distributors and wholesalers, so they can always recommend the right pump for a project,” says Hansen. “We’d like to train 10,000 customers using the Adobe software, which would give a real upswing in pump sales.”

Grundfos also uses a hosted version of Acrobat Connect Pro for meetings to organize eMeetings. The Adobe meetings do not require an AV room, and can be carried out from an individual’s workspace over the Internet (IP). It requires just a web camera and a microphone. Through live meetings, the course participants have the opportunity to take part actively in training programs, asking questions and sharing their knowledge with the other participants. In addition to live course meetings, Grundfos uses Acrobat Connect Pro for normal business meetings.

**A complete learning solution**

At Grundfos, eLearning is an important part of the company’s training strategy. Acrobat Connect Pro provides the opportunity to manage the entire eLearning flow, from production and design of learning content that includes integrated tests through to following up and monitoring activities. Grundfos can see the test results of individual users and assess whether eLearning is working. Everything is controlled from the Acrobat Connect Pro server.

The Adobe software also offers the possibility for live training via the Internet. The software is so user-friendly that production of the training process is assigned to the individual departments. In this way, eLearning can gain acceptance as a natural tool for knowledge dissemination and competence development at Grundfos.



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***Make the content as engaging as possible with motion, graphics, quizzes, puzzles, or anything to break it up. Only include critical information — stuff that they will need and use on the job.***

PATTY SKERL,  
SENIOR TALENT  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST,  
AMTRUST BANK

## **IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars** *continued*

Translate classroom training cues (too fast or slow, the first of five, what do we need to review next?) to a format that can let participants engage in defining the value and driving the presentation. Over larger groups, you can do this effectively with polling tools. This requires pre-planning, to build an arsenal of well-thought-out questions to pull at time of need during the presentation. Consider feedback, to refine the content during the live presentation in order to optimize participants' value.

*David Glow, Chief Learning Architect, Glow Development*

The first thing to keep in mind while you decide to make something for synchronous presentations: The presentation should supplement the presenter — not the other way around. Ask yourself a simple question: If I were to email this presentation to a participant, will she be able to derive value from it by going through it? If the answer is yes, it has two clear indications. First, your audience will also realize it after the first few slides, and the moment they find out, or are assured that it will be made available to download or mailed to them, they will drop off your online meeting. Second, you might want to consider recording your voice-over, and use it as a canned audiovisual, rather than a synchronous event.

*Uday Kranti, Sr. Consultant*

Create a text file, or unformatted word processing document, with sentences or phrases you use or will use in your presentation. Have the file open while in session, and when the situation arises, cut and paste your text onto a whiteboard, or in the chat feature of your application. This will save time, and is very helpful when troubleshooting common issues. For example when troubleshooting a sound issue you could cut and paste the sentence, "Be sure your headphone and microphone cords are fully plugged in, and neither is set to mute." Or, when posing a question to participants, you could have phrases such as, "That is an interesting point. Could you expand further?" or, "What do you see as the challenges with that course of action?" As you develop and present more often, you will probably add to this document. If you teach more than one course, think about creating separate documents specific to each course.

*Floyd Wheeler, Learning Strategist, Booz Allen Hamilton*

Effective learning involves participation. Avoid using synchronous e-Learning tools to simply "broadcast" from the instructor or teacher. An effective synchronous session may build on several hours of asynchronous preparation, and provide the stimulus for several hours of follow-up. You should broadcast material that is more suited to broadcast. Use the asynchronous environments to distribute information prior to the session (e.g., Web documents to read, videos to watch, slideshows to view, Podcasts to listen to, etc.), and use the valuable time of the synchronous session to discuss, debate, and clarify the material, and to develop the understandings that are required. This applies equally to students. Synchronous sessions provide a great way for students to present "tutorials" of their work or assignments at the end of a course. Avoid making this a

*Include an activity that early-arriving students can do while waiting for class to begin. If the activity includes using the whiteboard markup tools, the students can get comfortable with them in a fun, non-threatening way.*

CAROL HUHN, NUANCE  
COMMUNICATIONS

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

time where others have to sit and listen to them present (as often happens in a face-to-face classroom). Instead, require them to upload their presentations, prior to the synchronous session, for other students to read, watch, or listen to. Then use the synchronous session to interrogate, and seek the deeper understandings that may emerge.

*Derek Wenmoth, Director, e-Learning, CORE Education*

Plan for a back-chat channel. Student participation is a frequently-cited reason for using synchronous tools. However many instances of online education resemble a typical classroom, where the students are simply listening to a broadcast from the teacher, with an occasional opportunity to respond to a teacher-directed question. An effective way of enabling student participation is to ensure there is a back-chat channel open for use. Within synchronous tools like Elluminate, this is a standard feature. Alternatively, you can use the “Public Chat” feature of Skype, to allow all participants to communicate by chat during the session. An astute presenter will be monitoring the back-chat feed, using the comments and questions to “steer” the presentation, and inviting participation from specific students.

*Derek Wenmoth, Director, e-Learning, CORE Education*

It is not possible to plan “too much” for a synchronous event. In our organization, we develop a training plan for the learning objectives, a technical plan for the Webcast logistics, and an interactivity plan to accommodate non-standard Webcast techniques. We conduct a technology orientation for each new presenter. We conduct a technical rehearsal for Webcasts of more than 100 invitees.

*James Lloyd, Training Developer, Promega Corporation*

Include an activity that early-arriving students can do while waiting for class to begin. If the activity includes using the whiteboard markup tools, the students can get comfortable with them in a fun, non-threatening way. This type of activity also helps get them participating from the start.

*Carol Huhn, Nuance Communications*

Use pictures: We don't use video streaming, so for any Web- or Internet-based session, I try to provide an image of all the presenters at the beginning of the class, the specific presenter for each session, and all the presenters again at the end of the class. If I have a net-class, I try to provide a “class picture” of everyone at the beginning of the session by creating a slide, in advance, which has a company picture of everyone in attendance. This gives the virtual class more of a networking feel, like what they often get in a traditional classroom.

*Dwayne Dush*

*Consider whether you really need a camera. A camera can be a source of technical difficulties, distraction, and bandwidth problems. It does help create a rapport with people you have not previously met. Consider turning it off after the introduction.*

BRIAN MULLIGAN,  
OPEN LEARNING  
COORDINATOR, INSTITUTE  
OF TECHNOLOGY, SLIGO

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

Design exercises and class activities that utilize the tools you have available in your e-Learning application. Chat, and the text tools on the whiteboard, are both great ways to get answers and brainstorm. This works for technical training also, but you may need to get more creative.

*Carol Huhn, Nuance Communications*

Consider whether you really need a camera. A camera can be a source of technical difficulties, distraction, and bandwidth problems. It does help create a rapport with people you have not previously met. Consider turning it off after the introduction. In a continuous series of Webcasts, perhaps you don't need it after the first one.

*Brian Mulligan, Open Learning Coordinator, Institute of Technology, Sligo*

We use WebEx as our communications medium, and have found that one of the best methods of reinforcement is have each learner participate in the learning by demonstrating the learning objective that we just covered. All of our training is technical training on our proprietary software for our customer base. When we deliver synchronous Web-based training, we use PowerPoint slides to show concepts, but we use the actual software to show the learners how to accomplish their business processes. For example, if our learning objectives are to show how to create a savings benefit, and apply it to a group of employees, we first explain the whys, whats, whens, and hows of the process to the learners, and then use the software to show the process. With that complete, we ask the learners what questions they have about the process, and answer those questions. Next, we will show the learners a slide with a new requirement on it, such as a new benefit that our sample company needs to create, and the employee group to which the benefit will apply. We discuss the needs, requirements, and process flow required to accomplish this task. Then we select a learner to complete creating the benefit, turn complete control of the environment over to the student, and allow him or her to complete the task in a risk-free environment. As the student completes the task, we ask what considerations led them to make the selections that they did. When the task of creating of the benefit is complete, we then select another learner to apply the benefit and give control of the environment to that learner. After meeting all the requirements, we discuss the process again with all the learners in the session. This type of direct involvement, and hands-on learning, has proven to be very effective with our learner community, as it enables them to see, hear, and do in the single session, and that enhances retention and performance.

*David B. Dubin, Senior Curriculum Developer, Sage Software, Inc.*

A short live-video introduction by the presenter helps to reduce some of the "virtual" feeling for the participants in a virtual classroom environment. The intro takes only a few seconds, and the addition of a live visual element stimulates interest and promotes participation by the group. It isn't necessary to continue providing video, because those initial few seconds will create a long-

***Time-Saving Tip: Design and develop a Flash movie, an Articulate Presenter-converted PowerPoint, or other possible self-playing solution that presents Webinar etiquette, and other important information pertinent to the Webinar. Ask participants to log in 10 to 15 minutes early, to watch this movie before the session starts.***

JAYNE ROGERS,  
SENIOR LEARNING SPECIALIST,  
CIGNA HEALTHCARE  
CORPORATION

## **IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars** *continued*

lasting image that will be retained and recalled after the presenter shifts to audio-only mode.

*Roy Coleman, Trainer, Gap Inc. Direct*

The more time you spend on the front end of your program, the less work you will have to put into organizing and reorganizing the information. Storyboards are a great tool to cut down on development — make them as detailed as possible, and you will see your program grow as you go along.

*Sarah Beth Larson, Instructional Designer, Lifeblood/MSRBC*

Often, when discussing synchronous programs that require multiple sessions, there is little consideration given to the offline instruction that has to take place. This requires an asynchronous, Web 2.0-like tool to foster communication from the facilitator, access to the course materials, and learning and collaboration with one another. Typically, in the best practice discussions I encounter on the Internet, no one addresses these vital elements. Moreover (and assuming your company has the infrastructure to support this), this particular element requires thoughtful planning in look and appeal to drive traffic to a space that will inevitably enhance the learning experience. This also impresses upon the designer the need to think very differently about design. At the very least, it requires the designer to work very closely with Web developers to harness their knowledge and employ another technology to aid the learning experience. On the other hand, it may even require the designer to familiarize him or herself with the tools to employ a Web 2.0 solution. Neither of these requirements have necessarily been part of the job description, but they are becoming increasingly unavoidable. In summary, as synchronous deliverables become more prominent, they will require designers to become more and more familiar with technology that, to this point, has been under the domain of the technologist. I believe that the lines delineating designers, facilitators, and e-Learning experts are becoming more blurred, as a result of the strides made in Web-conferencing platforms, and the Internet in general.

*Walter Crawford, Facilitator, Fidelity Investments*

***Time-Saving Tip: Design and develop a Flash movie, an Articulate Presenter-converted PowerPoint, or other possible self-playing solution that presents Webinar etiquette, and other important information pertinent to the Webinar. Ask participants to log in 10 to 15 minutes early, to watch this movie before the session starts. By asking participants to login early and watch the movie, you do not have to dedicate so much time to these issues once the sessions starts. This also allows time to deal with any technical issues. For example, if you need sound or audio for the session, the movie can provide instructions on how to adjust the settings on the computer. You can add screen shots in a Captivate presentation to the Flash or Presenter movie to facilitate this issue.***

*Jayne Rogers, Senior Learning Specialist, CIGNA Healthcare Corporation*

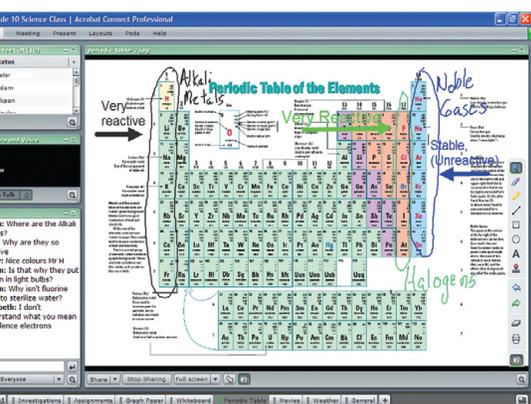
## Ontario Ministry of Education

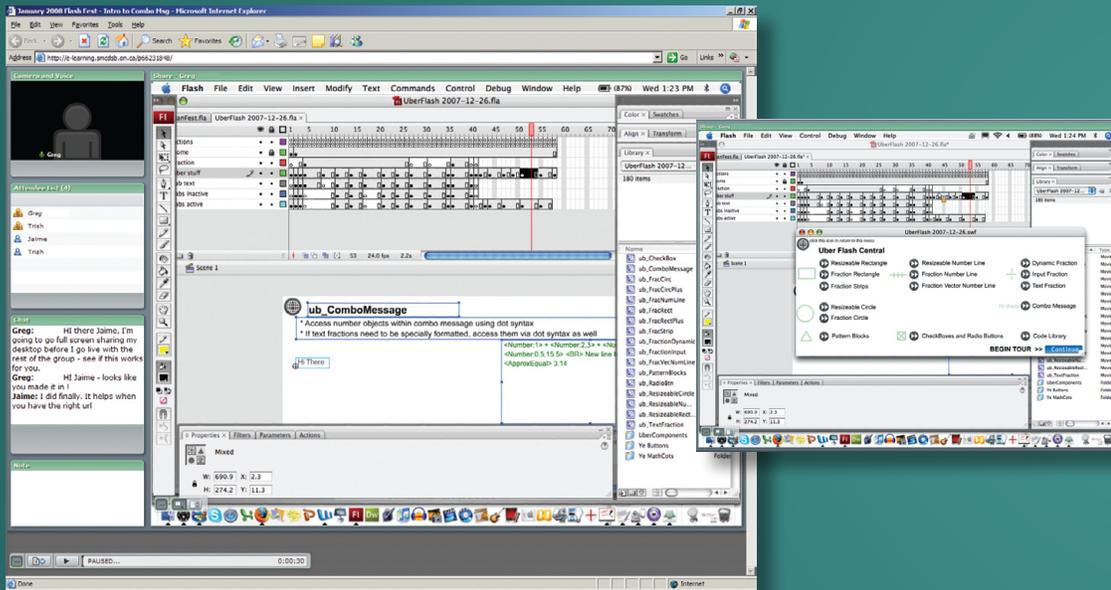
### Lesson in achievement

Ontario selects Adobe® Acrobat® Connect™ Professional to enhance public education for more than two million Canadian students

In Ontario, big numbers are the norm. As Canada's largest province, Ontario's population exceeds 12 million and is spread out over an area larger than France and Spain combined. Ontario's far-reaching publicly funded education system is administered by the Ministry of Education, which relates to 72 different school boards as well as many school authorities serving over two million students in more than 5,000 different elementary and secondary schools. There are also more than 115,000 teachers.

The sheer size and scope of Ontario's public education system poses a unique set of challenges, particularly when it comes to using technology to help sustain a vibrant, publicly funded program. After conducting an extensive review process, the Ministry's software acquisition advisory committee recommended that all 72 school boards, 12 faculties of education, and 6 other public educational entities be empowered with Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional to foster Internet-based learning and online meetings.





Schools that are part of the Ontario public education system are using Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional to blend web-based learning into the daily classroom experience and to participate in a variety of collaborative projects. Two elementary schools located about 400 miles apart recently did a book study together, enabling students to interact across the province to share ideas and resources.

*“Quickly, the technology becomes invisible and the kids go right to the reality-based interactivity. We couldn’t offer this type of learning before. Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional is great.”*

**Shawn Allenby, regional eLearning contact,  
Ottawa Carleton District School Board**

With its noted ease of use and readily customizable interface, the Adobe solution is intended to help carry out the Ministry’s three-pronged mission: support high levels of student achievement, reduce gaps in student achievement, and build strong public confidence in the publicly funded education system.

**Engaging 21st century learners**

From daytime classroom experiences to evening online discussions, Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional can enhance the interactive educational process for millions of students and teachers across Ontario. In every aspect of teaching and learning, the use of Adobe technology has the potential to change Canada’s diverse educational landscape.

During the day, district eLearning contact and special assignment teacher, Karen Kasik—a computer science, engineering, and math teacher who has worked at Hill Park Secondary School in Hamilton, Ontario—uses Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional to blend web-based learning into the daily classroom

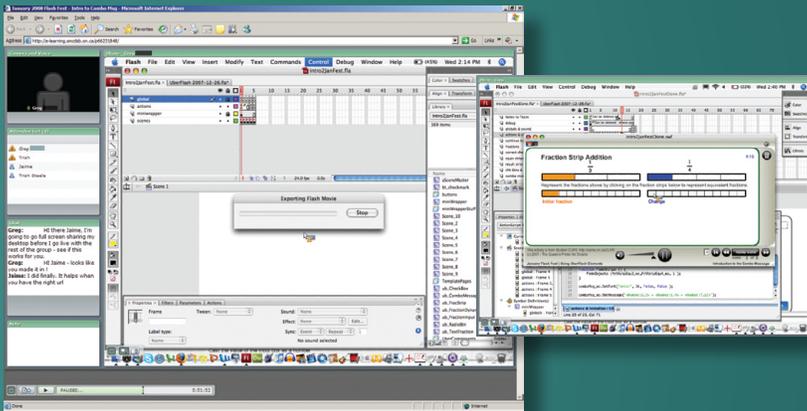
experience across the curriculum. “Using Acrobat Connect Professional, we can teach in two classrooms at the same time and double the number of students we reach,” says Kasik. Recently, a biology teacher presented an Internet video demonstration, which the students rated “great”. Participants in both rooms used the live chat feature in Acrobat Connect Professional to ask questions—melding two physical classrooms into one collaborative, eLearning center. “There’s so much more we can do,” says Kasik. “We use all of the available technology in our school to teach some of our larger classes which provides a wonderful collaboration for the entire class. And recording the sessions for those students who are away or need review is an added bonus.”

For example, online classes build bridges among remotely located schools, which is important because all schools are required to follow the same curriculum. Students from schools throughout the Hamilton-Wentworth district recently participated in an online law class that was held during the school day in

their First Class system and continued in the evenings twice a week using Acrobat Connect Professional. Each student had a role—from prosecutor to judge to juror. “The teacher held trials online, did jury selection, and everything related to the real collaborative experience,” says Kasik. “The class had a 100% completion rate.”

Outside speakers who previously had to travel great distances to Ontario schools are now virtually visiting classrooms throughout the province, adding otherwise unattainable resources to enrich learning experiences. In the Ottawa Carleton District School Board, which consists of 157 schools, regional eLearning contact Shawn Allenby reports that by using Acrobat Connect Professional, schools have hosted guest speakers to participate in live, interactive presentations via digital video to thousands of students across the district. Speakers included an author from Chicago, a noted Canadian illustrator, and famed national hero Craig Kielburger, founder of Free the Children. “If a picture is worth a thousand words, the value of web conferencing is priceless. It is an incredibly empowering experience for everyone,” says Allenby.

Schools throughout the district are using their Acrobat Connect Professional licenses to participate in a variety of collaborative projects. Two elementary schools located about 400 miles apart recently did a book study together, enabling students to interact across the province to share ideas and resources. As well, Acrobat Connect Professional was used to “follow” an expedition down the east coast of Africa. “Quickly, the technology becomes



Before implementing use of Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional, regional trainers would have to travel to visit schools throughout districts to discuss integrating technology into the curriculum. Now, Acrobat Connect Professional sessions at district, regional, and local levels are being held to impart eLearning expertise to teachers, staff, and administrators. From standard orientation meetings to instructional development to remedial learning, Acrobat Connect Professional is helping infuse the educational population with new ways to learn and further develop their skills.

invisible and the kids go right to the reality-based interactivity. We couldn't offer this type of learning before," says Allenby. "Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional is great."

### Benefits beyond the classroom

While Acrobat Connect Professional is adding new dimensions to learning inside the classroom, it is also extending benefits to students away from the school in a variety of scenarios. For example, students who are in the hospital or at home for extended care can remain part of the school experience to keep up with lessons and stay abreast socially by interacting with classmates during the day and with teachers in the evenings.

According to teacher Karen Kasik, some students simply need extra attention. "Students can access me at night in Acrobat Connect Professional sessions," she says. "Often, when kids get home, they forget information from that day. Acrobat Connect Professional gives them the opportunity to ask questions and complete the learning cycle. It's a great motivational tool that makes a huge difference to some kids."

Often, teachers open up an Acrobat Connect Professional session the night before a test to answer questions. Kasik notes that it is the freedom for students to access teachers so easily that is incredibly effective.

### Focus on professional development

Previously, regional trainers would have to travel to visit schools throughout the district to discuss integrating technology into the curriculum. Now, Acrobat Connect Professional sessions at

district, regional, and local levels are being held to impart eLearning expertise to teachers, staff, and administrators. From standard orientation meetings to instructional development to remedial learning, Acrobat Connect Professional is helping infuse the educational population with new ways to learn and further develop their skills.

At the provincial level, 500 math teachers and technology leaders recently gathered to attend a mathematics education conference that focused on Connecting Research and Practice in Mathematics Education. A breakout session introduced participants to Adobe Connect Professional and how it might be used for professional development at a distance. One example used was the small professional learning community in Ontario that was using Acrobat Connect Professional to meet and learn about The Geometer's Sketchpad. Other session topics included white boarding in Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional for teaching algebra and geometry, and authoring learning objects in Adobe Flash® and Adobe Acrobat Professional.

"Our Connecting Research and Practice in Mathematics Education breakout session showcased teacher collaboration with Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional. Since that time, we have been involved in creating learning objects, called CLIPS, using Adobe Flash CS3 Professional, which is also licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Education for schools," says Ross Isenegger, information technology and numeracy coordinator in the Near North District School board.

### Organization

**Ontario Ministry of Education**  
Province of Ontario, Canada  
[www.edu.gov.on.ca](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca)

### Challenges

- Standardize on a single, easy-to-use, collaborative web meeting platform
- Provide teachers with intuitive tools for authoring learning objects
- Keep web conferencing costs low
- Reach high levels of student achievement
- Reduce gaps in student achievement
- Build strong public confidence in the public education system

### Solution

Use Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional to implement a cost-effective, web meeting platform to foster collaboration and extend resources beyond campus boundaries

### Benefits

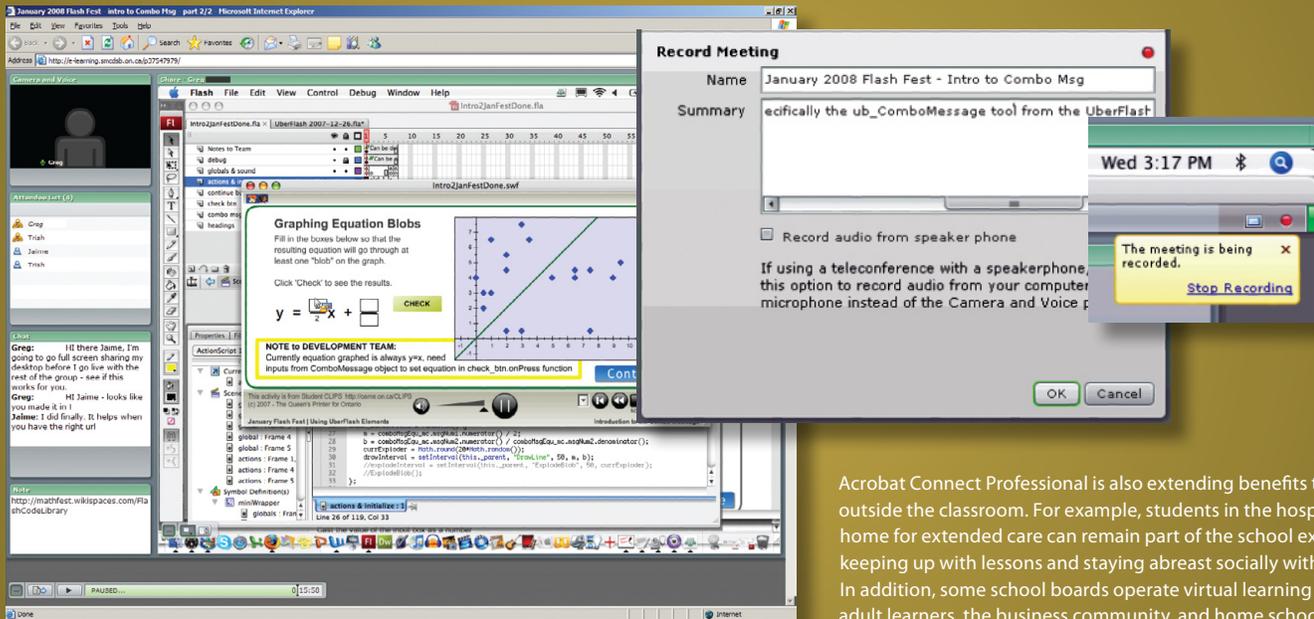
- Engaged students in intuitive, collaborative learning solutions
- Reduced failure rate in virtual learning centers and classrooms
- Gained access to outside speakers and reality-based learning experiences
- Created online and blended learning models using technology across curriculum
- Increased teacher job satisfaction with exciting professional development
- Provided students with access to teachers after school for test prep, discussion groups, and remedial lessons

### Toolkit

- Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional
- Adobe Captivate™
- Adobe Flash
- Adobe Acrobat Professional
- Adobe Presenter
- Platform: Mac and PC computers using Microsoft® Windows® XP and Mac OS

### For More Information

[www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/)  
[www.adobe.com/education](http://www.adobe.com/education)



Acrobat Connect Professional is also extending benefits to students outside the classroom. For example, students in the hospital or at home for extended care can remain part of the school experience—keeping up with lessons and staying abreast socially with classmates. In addition, some school boards operate virtual learning centers for adult learners, the business community, and home schoolers.

*“Once you use Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional, there’s no turning back. It’s just a matter of where and when.”*

**Peter Harris, course instructor, The Virtual Learning Centre, Trillium Lakelands District School Board**

### Success at virtual learning centers

In addition to elementary and secondary schools, some school boards operate a series of virtual learning centers to serve the needs of adult learners, the business community, and home schoolers. Students from all over the world attend virtual classes with connection bandwidths ranging from dial-up to high speed.

“It’s been a struggle to get interactive content online using other expensive video conferencing technology,” says Peter Harris, course instructor at The Virtual Learning Centre in the Trillium Lakelands District School Board. Previously, the program was a basic e-mail correspondence course with students completing weekly assignments and teachers marking them up. “Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional puts me into the 21st century virtual classroom,” he says. “I feel like a teacher again. The response from students has been phenomenal.”

Since implementing Acrobat Connect Professional, the failure rate at The Virtual Learning Centre has dropped significantly for those who attend regularly—commensurate with in-class rates. “Compared to where we were five years ago, the model is drastically different. Now we provide students with tremendous flexibility and the opportunity to complete courses anytime, anywhere.”

To further enhance the virtual learning experience, Harris is using Adobe Presenter to incorporate interactive Adobe Flash content into the online curriculum and to decrease the need to repeatedly relay information to individual students. As well, students are using Adobe Presenter for peer tutoring and independent study presentations. “I impart upon the students the importance of good communication skills and knowledge sharing. The simplicity of Adobe Presenter enables students to convert their PowerPoint presentations to Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional presentations with little teacher involvement,” says Harris.

Throughout Ontario, teachers are exploring new ways to impact the 21st century learner. “Once you use Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional, there’s no turning back,” says Harris. “It’s just a matter of where and when.”



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*Plan to take time to teach the presentation tool. Yes, it is easy, but not necessarily as intuitive as experienced users might think. Instructions and tips to use the presentation tool make great pre-work assignments.*

JANE STACKHOUSE, SENIOR  
TRAINER

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

Plan to take time to teach the presentation tool. Yes, it is easy, but not necessarily as intuitive as experienced users might think. Instructions and tips to use the presentation tool make great pre-work assignments.

*Jane Stackhouse, Senior Trainer*

Design for interaction, collaboration, and contribution:

- Keep the content visually engaging, but not too busy. Builds in Microsoft PowerPoint are fantastic for providing dynamic content. No flashing graphics or tacky effects — just use simple builds to emphasize what you are discussing. This is especially useful for illustrating steps in a process, or segments of a program or project.
- At the beginning of the session, schedule up to 10 minutes of “play time,” to let participants try out collaboration and annotation tools. Make sure they have plenty of time to get comfortable with the tool, so that participation is easy. Direct facilitators to invite participants to use these tools as needed, to communicate appropriately.
- Use a whiteboard or blank PowerPoint slide to brainstorm ideas on a topic, rather than presenting them with bulleted lists. Allow participants to type directly in the space, if possible, or scribe their inputs. Do not summarize. Use the participants' exact words.
- Design in opportunities to use feedback mechanisms to get yes/no, agree/disagree, and like/dislike reactions from participants. Direct your facilitators to respond to the feedback, and pace the content accordingly.
- Use appropriate, consistent, teachable images, rather than bulleted lists. Ask participants to point out what is wrong or right with the graphic or photo. Allow participants to use line-drawing tools to match vocabulary terms to items in the photo or graphic.
- Use polling, when appropriate, to vote for an option, give opinions, or test knowledge. If a polling feature is not available, use the colors in feedback status squares, or place a specified annotation (check mark, text “x,” etc.) over an image representing the choice.

*Tracy Ross, Instructional Designer, Intel Corporation*

Web conferences should use two or more voices (a presenter and a facilitator) to offer more interest and vary the intonations. Facilitators (apart from monitoring chat box comments) can interject concepts based on the presentation, that participants may want to ask but don't necessarily do so. They can act as a “devil's advocate” to repeat the concept being discussed (learning stickiness), and put a concept into several practical situations.

*Joyce, Instructional Designer/Online Learning Specialist, Pal-Tech, Inc.*

Use ustream.tv for the traditional classroom: If you are teaching a traditional classroom, you could set up the Webcam and broadcast your traditional lectures. All of your students could be given your Web address (which does not change), and could log in and watch the class from a dis-

*Include check-in questions after four to five slides, to keep students interested.*

CACILDA, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER, CA

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

tance if they are not able to attend the traditional class. This way each student could still log in, and get the material if s/he is sick. S/he could also participate with the class by using the chat feature. Again, you can record the lessons, giving students the ability to watch your lectures again to review something they did not quite understand, or to review for exams.

*Kelly Kirk, Distance Education Program Director, Davidson County Community College*

I recently had another Webcast experience as a presenter. I have done them before (both as a presenter and a participant), but it has been a little while since I have presented during a Webcast ... and I had forgotten how much I rely on the visual cues of the audience. People nodding, taking notes, talking to a neighbor, or even glaring at me with arms crossed across their bodies. Those cues give me data that encourages me, informs me, and often redirects me. My other challenge, one commonly expressed by people working in synchronous technology-mediated environments, is that I wanted to deliver a smooth presentation while at the same time attend to the high volume of text-based comments and questions from the audience. I was simply unable to track it all. In fact, there was one point where I completely lost track of where I was in the presentation, which is something that never happens to me in a face-to-face setting. Although challenging, I am not going to give up on Webcasts. The online audience has a craving for synchronous connection, so I want to participate in more Webcasts, and add more Webcasts to my online courses. However, I do have to deal with these two issues: (1) my reliance on visual cues from the audience, and (2) attending to audience comments and questions. The second issue is much easier to deal with. I have had great luck with asking a colleague to step in and act as moderator. The moderator can completely focus on the text traffic, and make sure that I address questions and respond to comments. In terms of the first issue, I have come up with two angles to pursue: Setting ground rules, and structuring the presentation to support time for frequent interaction.

Setting ground rules:

- Demonstrate how participants can engage in side conversations using the “private” feature so that they do not distract the entire audience (or presenter), reserving the “chat” feature for on-topic questions and comments.
- Ask the audience to hold questions and comments until designated times throughout the Webcast.
- If there is a moderator, explain to the audience that the moderator will track comments and questions, categorize them into themes, and present them for response during designated times throughout the Webcast.
- Share a set of emoticons that the audience can use to let you know whether they are in agreement, disagreement, want more, want less, and so on.

Structuring the presentation:

- Collect potential questions and comments from the audience in advance of the Webcast. This gives you time to incorporate relevant content.
- Make sure there is time before the presentation begins for people to check access and say “Hello.”

*When designing a learning course it is best to have worksheets for the user to fill out, or to try out a learned lesson. The worksheet should have the option to print, so that the user has something tangible to take along when the browser closes or the lesson is over.*

ELAINE STROTHERS, MS,  
ASSOCIATE, ORGANIZED  
CHANGE CONSULTANCY

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

- Share the ground rules. Ask if the group wants to change any of the rules, and adjust as appropriate. (Send ground rules out in advance, if possible.)
- If you wish to collect pre-presentation data from the audience (to make sure you address questions, and to get them engaged in the topic), use the polling feature of your Webcast tool.
- Set up the presentation so that you are delivering content in three to five minute chunks.
- Between each chunk, open it up for three to five questions.
- Leave time at the end for discussion. (I have found that presenters often use their allotted time for the presentation, leaving no time for audience participation.)
- Use the polling feature to check for understanding throughout the presentation. This is a quick way to get feedback, without waiting for a large group of people to type in their responses. Plus, it is something that can be set up in advance of the Webcast.
- If appropriate, provide a way for you and the audience to keep the discussion going after the Webcast; for example, by using an asynchronous communication tool (e.g., threaded discussion).

Wish me luck — I have another Webcast coming up, and will certainly put some of these strategies into play.

*Joanna C. Dunlap, Associate Professor, University of Colorado Denver*

When designing a learning course, it is best to have worksheets for the user to fill out, or to try out a learned lesson. The worksheet should have the option to print, so that the user has something tangible to take along when the browser closes or the lesson is over. The option to clear the page would be nice too, so the user doesn't have to backspace, or use the button in case they want to start over.

*Elaine Strothers, MS, Associate, Organized Change Consultancy*

Include check-in questions after four to five slides to keep students interested.

*Cacilda, Instructional Designer, CA*

Consider creating actionable and relevant material that can live beyond the session. When designing content, think about how the learner will consume the information, both during the session and after the session. Think “A-C-T” (Applicability — Context — Transportable) when trying to create actionable and evergreen experiences:

- **Applicability** — Offer worksheets and/or workbooks that learners can download and fill out during the session. This allows learners to acquire knowledge, and apply it to their own environment.
- **Context** — During the session, the learner may understand the key concepts being taught. Often, take-home material lacks context, which makes it hard for learners to remember the meaning behind a bullet point. Take-home material should include more background information than the lesson in the synchronous session does.

*Don't forget it is about e-Learning. Synchronous communication and interaction are part of the e-Learning program you offer. Organize, and offer them that way. Consider the goals of the e-Learning program to match the intention of the synchronous event.*

MIGUEL MINÍ, TEACHER

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

- Transportable content — Beyond providing context, at its best the take-home material should provide enough depth and breadth that a new learner can pick up the take-home collateral material and quickly understand the key teaching points.

*Vincent Huang, Director, Finance Learning Centers, Corporate Executive Board*

Don't forget it is about e-Learning. Synchronous communication and interaction are part of the e-Learning program you offer. Organize, and offer them that way. Consider the goals of the e-Learning program to match the intention of the synchronous event.

*Miguel Mini, Teacher*

Minimize the use of slides. The only thing worse than classroom slides and lecture is virtual classroom slides and lecture. Today's synchronous learning tools are robust enough that your trainees can fully engage in their own learning for the majority of any training session. Get creative. Design ways to pull content from the heads of your trainees, and ways for trainees to share knowledge with each other. If there is knowledge-based foundational content that they must learn, then provide it as a resource. Ask learners to read on their own in preparation for an interactive, group-based online learning session! You should use the valuable synchronous remote classroom time for active idea generation, problem solving, and other higher-level application activities. In summary, only use a text slide, combined with lecture, when you just can't think of any other way to build the KSAs (Knowledge-Skills-Attitudes) of your learners. The tools don't limit us — we're only limited by our design creativity!

*Susan McDonald Osborn, Owner, Laurus Design, LLC*

Clearly list the instructions for an activity on the screen. Do not just rely on including them in the Facilitator notes. Some learners need to see and hear. Example: "Send a chat to your host/presenter with your best guess." This saves learners who need more time to process what they hear the embarrassment of asking again, "What am I supposed to do?"

*Debbi Spranza, Virtual Training Lead, First Horizon National*

On the Web, where color is free, it is tempting for designers to show emphasis and meaning using color. Keep in mind that upwards of 10% of men are color-blind. I create e-Learning in the financial services industry, which employs a high percentage of white men. Thus, the percentage of our student population with color blindness was even higher. The development team had to be very cautious when using color as a signal in e-Learning classes; the meaning would be lost to a large portion of our students. So when designing your e-Learning, consider your audience. Who are they? Are you expressing meaning or placing emphasis by using green and red? If so, the audience may be lost. Consider using a color and pattern combination for graphics, or a color and font

*Make sure you outline your course. A table of contents and flow of course will typically be like an outline. It pre-sets and guides you during creation, and verifies that you cover all topics.*

MICHELE LARGMAN,  
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

combination for text. A few small steps could allow you to use the color you love, and allow your audience to get the meaning.

*Christiana Houck, Curriculum Developer, Aristocrat Technologies Inc.*

We've found that it works best to open a Chat pod before the presentation begins, so people entering the room can "talk amongst themselves." Throwing out a question like, "Where are you from?" or "What is your position?" helps target the chat. Once the presentation begins, we change the chat to only accept questions, which we then answer after the presentation. This way the participants can focus on the presentation, without having messages come up during the presentation that are unrelated to the topic. Some folks may welcome such chat, so do what works best for you. Create a few slides that show participants how to use the meeting room functions (Chat, polls, etc.). Loop the presentation, and play it for the 10 minutes before start time.

*Lisa Stepanovic, Business Practice Leader, e-Learning, Center for Business, Industry & Labor @ SLCC*

Make sure you outline your course. A table of contents and flow of course will typically be like an outline. It pre-sets and guides you during creation, and verifies that you cover all topics.

*Michele Largman, Instructional Designer*

Summarize, Don't Sermonize. Sparing an hour or two from our busy workday schedules to attend a Webinar is a real investment. We all know about the cost to productivity, and the extra time you wish you had at the end of the day to get everything done. Moreover, speaking of investments, sometimes your employer will want to see a tangible result from your stay in Webinar Land. So what was the takeaway? Can I see what you learned? In every Webinar I have attended or given, someone always asks if the presentation material will be available after the session. In fact, I think I have asked that very question myself.

The "material" often includes the archived Webinar recording, and the presentation deck (slides). Now, whether you choose to make it available or not is a decision you'll no doubt make based on the type of Webinar it is (sales, training) and the type of information you are sharing.

If you do make the presentation deck available, here are some design tips, based on my experience on both sides of the microphone:

- Include only highlight points on your screens — do not distract the audience with too many details. The higher level the points are, the better.
- Keep things clean — stick to your key messages.
- Don't overdo it. A busy page leaves much to the imagination.
- Avoid rich graphics, as most of us have to print on black and white printers, so the effectiveness of your high impact photos may be lost. This brings up another excellent question — why attend the Webinar if the slides are available afterwards? The value added in the Webinar is (and should be) in the training event, not the handouts. You are the presentation. The purpose

*Remember that you can present information in the form of an activity. You don't have to wait until you have reached the end of a module to conduct a review activity. You don't have to present content in a lecture, and then review it in an activity.*

DEBORAH THOMAS,  
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT,  
SILLYMONKEY LLC

## IV. Tips for Designers of Synchronous Presentations, Courses, and Webinars *continued*

of your support material is, if you'll pardon the expression, to keep everyone on the same page. The rest is up to you.  
Happy presenting!

*Claudio Ierulli, Learning Solutions Developer, CIBC*

It is a good idea to build in interaction within every 10 slides. Remember that you can present information in the form of an activity. You don't have to wait until you have reached the end of a module to conduct a review activity. You don't have to present content in a lecture, and then review it in an activity. You can present it in an activity, and review it in another activity, or in a lecture format. That way you can build in more interaction. And you can get your participants thinking about the content while it's being presented.

*Deborah Thomas, Founder and President, SillyMonkey LLC*

Use photo services such as photos.com to find professional-looking photos for your courses. These services typically have an annual charge. Then you can obtain as many photos as you need throughout the year. It's easy to search on the photos, and it will give you creative choices for your content. For instance, for a diversity class you can simply type the word "diversity," and you will have hundreds of photos to choose from, depending on the service that you sign up with.

*Deborah Thomas, Founder and President, SillyMonkey LLC*

## V. 8 Tips for Managers Who Lead Synchronous Learning Efforts

Be a leader with the synchronous learning technology. If you use it proficiently yourself, you will be helping to promote it throughout your organization. Use the technology for e-Meetings, both internally and with people from other departments. If others see how well the technology can work on a day-to-day basis, the positive word will spread, and help others adopt this technology. This helps fight the "traditional" vs. "online" battles we all face.

*Carol Huhn, Nuance Communication*

Save energies, use synchronous activities when they are viable and workable.

*Miguel Mini, Teacher*

# Philips Medical Systems

Global services unit enhances training capabilities with Adobe® Acrobat® Connect™ Professional software to support innovative eLearning programs serving customers and staff worldwide

## Philips Medical Systems

[www.medical.philips.com](http://www.medical.philips.com)

# PHILIPS

### Industry

Healthcare

### Challenges

Establish flexible eLearning initiative accessible from any location

### Solution

- Real-time eLearning conferences
- Synchronous training

Philips Medical is using Acrobat Connect Professional to provide employees, partners, and customers with dynamic eLearning programs that improve understanding of advanced healthcare products.

### Results

- Reduced employee travel and administrative costs
- Improved customer knowledge about sophisticated healthcare technology and clinical uses facilitates better patient care management
- Accelerated development and delivery of eLearning content
- Streamlined customer compliance with certification and continuing education requirements

### Systems At A Glance

- Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional
- Adobe Connect Enterprise Server
- Adobe Presenter
- Adobe Flash®
- Adobe Captivate™
- Adobe Premiere® Pro
- Adobe Creative Suite® 2.  
Components used include:
  - Adobe InDesign® CS2
  - Adobe Photoshop® CS2
  - Adobe GoLive® CS2

## Improving patient outcomes

For healthcare firms to effectively serve global populations, they must engage learners with information when, where, and how it will have the greatest impact. At Philips Medical Systems, the use of Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional software and the Adobe Connect™ Enterprise Server supports the company's Learning Services business efforts to provide high-quality, web-based education programs for customers and partners, and enhanced training for marketing, sales, and distribution teams worldwide.

“By successfully training people to use our advanced medical equipment, we simplify healthcare for our customers and help facilitate better patient care management,” says Douglas Dell, Global Director, Learning Services at Philips Medical Systems, the leading U.S. division of Royal Philips Electronics of the Netherlands. The organization's Learning Services business reaches more than 135,000 registered users in more than 100 countries with synchronous education, video conferencing, and web seminar services.

For Philips Medical, the benefits of using Acrobat Connect Professional to improve training for employees, partners, and customers are measurable. “We can serve increasing numbers of people with on-demand and real-time training and then relate those efforts to tangible business benefits of increased competencies which translate to system optimization and customer satisfaction,” says Dell.

## Overcoming deployment obstacles

Philips Medical Systems needs to provide training for its medical equipment customers to achieve maximum utilization of their equipment's capabilities. In addition to providing product training for customers, Philips Medical also provides continuing education to healthcare professionals. For example, Radiologic Technologists must complete 24 continuing education credits every two years to maintain certification. These efforts support Philips' service strategy of enhancing the customer experience in every season of system ownership.

Many Philips customers have recognized the benefits of the continuing education and purchased the education component as part of their service agreements—and, as the company determined through an in-depth needs assessment—customers prefer education that is available online 24 hours a day. Prior to standardizing on Acrobat Connect Professional for the synchronous delivery of online education, Philips used a combination of services to deliver training, but was frustrated by the high telecommunications costs, unwieldy downloads, and problems presented by firewalls at customer sites.

To better engage sales and distribution channels outside the corporate network, Philips leverages core functionality in Acrobat Connect Professional. Because Acrobat Connect content is delivered via the ubiquitous Adobe Flash Player—which is not dependent upon using certain browsers or computing platforms—Philips eLearning programs are easily available to authorized users on most any digital device. Equally important, the Acrobat Connect content and meetings can be delivered securely and reliably inside medical organizations' firewalls.

Philips Medical leverages Acrobat Connect Professional to improve training for employees, partners, and customers. Online eLearning courses are integrated with the company's advanced healthcare Learning Management System (LMS), and a content authoring tool developed by Philips to meet the unique needs of the healthcare market. For staff and customers unable to attend real-time or in-person meetings, archived webinars and courses are available.



*“With Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional, we can regularly engage with our customers, enable our field force to demonstrate the capabilities of our products, and help ensure that people know how to properly use our equipment and leverage the full clinical capabilities. This all adds up to patient benefits.”*

Douglas Dell,  
Global director, Learning Services,  
Philips Medical Systems

#### For More Information

[www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/)

“With Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional, we can regularly engage with our customers, enable our field force to demonstrate the capabilities of our products, and help ensure that people know how to properly use our equipment and leverage the full clinical capabilities,” explains Dell. “This all adds up to patient benefits.”

#### A blended learning environment

Philips Medical develops approximately 100 training modules annually, with more than 400 currently in use. Online training programs complement onsite training held at Philips global training centers in Europe, Asia, and the United States. Critical to the synchronous and asynchronous learning model at Philips is that online training saves the organization significant travel and staff costs. Archived seminars are available for people who cannot attend in-person meetings.

The online eLearning courses are integrated with the company's advanced healthcare Learning Management System (LMS), and a content authoring tool developed by Philips to meet the unique needs of the healthcare market. In addition, integrating Adobe Acrobat Connect Professional software and server technology into the company's computing infrastructure has resulted in additional efficiencies.

To deliver rich media, synchronous eLearning content, Philips uses Adobe Presenter to easily take content from subject matter experts and prepare it for Acrobat Connect Professional sessions. At the same time, staff regularly uses other Adobe tools—Creative Suite 2, including Adobe InDesign CS2, GoLive CS2, and Photoshop CS2, as well as Adobe Premiere Pro, Flash, and Adobe Captivate—to author content, develop web pages, and collaborate.

#### Engaging users with dynamic content

To do justice to its visually oriented medical imaging products—such as its advanced iE33 cardiac ultrasound imaging system—Philips needed a training solution that could demonstrate the equipment's ability to render the human heart and valves in 3D. By easily handling FLV files, Acrobat Connect Professional offered the perfect solution.

Acrobat Connect Professional has also proved invaluable when launching consumer lifestyle products like the Sonicare toothbrush. Philips strategy is to deliver timely, cost-efficient methods to support effective training for its less technical products. The training group delivers dynamic training modules via Adobe solutions to demonstrate the product and how to use it. “Showcasing our products dynamically online leverages the power of Connect and saves us tremendous time and money,” says Dell.

For staff and customers unable to attend real-time or in-person meetings, archived webinars and courses are available. In addition, the use of webinars and ad-hoc web meetings is embraced across the larger Philips organization, reducing travel costs and facilitating better training worldwide. “As we continue to expand our Learning Service business, Acrobat Connect Professional will be an important conduit to deliver training, establish presence, and build relationships with people globally,” says Dell.



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*Use photo services such as photos.com to find professional looking photos for your courses. These services typically have an annual charge. Then you can obtain as many photos as you need throughout the year. It's easy to search on the photos, and it will give you creative choices for your content.*

DEBORAH THOMAS,  
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT,  
SILLYMONKEY LLC

## V. Tips for Managers Who Lead Synchronous Learning Efforts *continued*

Never assume that a good classroom facilitator makes an engaging and effective virtual facilitator. Make sure that you provide your team with the tools, resources, and support that they need, to be successful no matter how talented they may be in a classroom. “Virtually observe” your facilitators, and ask yourself if the attendees are actually learning from the experience.

*Tony SanGiovanni, Sr. Learning & Development Consultant, MetLife*

Managers — although your resources may be tight, allowing a second staff member to function as “producer” or co-presenter often helps the class run more smoothly, since this person can troubleshoot, answer questions, or even step in, in the event of an emergency.

*Carol Huhn, Nuance Communications*

Based on the analysis report, highlight the difficult concepts first, and explain them according to a presentation plan. Review the difficult concepts first, and then go for simple concepts. The order-of-concepts arrangement is an easy way to manage the direction of synchronous learning efforts. This order may be in hierarchy.

*Rehman, Instructional Designer, Visionlabs*

It's important that the participants give the session their full attention. It's tempting for them to check email, surf the internet, etc., during the session. At the beginning of the session, let the participants know how much time it will take, and give them some guidelines to follow during the session. If you stick to a reasonable time limit (60 minutes or so), and ask them to turn off their email, cell phones, etc., you should have a more productive session. Remind the participants that the session is for their benefit, and encourage them to fully participate.

*Heather Carroll, Leadership Consultant, Bluewater Interactive*

Make your presentation as visually interesting as possible. Subscribe to a clip art library such as dreamstime.com for images. This will help maintain participants' attention more than boring PowerPoint bullet text.

*Lisa Stepanovic, Business Practice Leader, e-Learning, Center for Business, Industry & Labor @ SLCC*

For the effort of maximizing shareholder wealth, it is important to track marketing intelligence as well as information on competitors and innovators by using e-Learning. But you have to think ... it should a continuous process ... if you can appoint a specific person for that, it is like an investment for the future, or an intangible asset ... try to put one person as a tracker, as well as an expert on company e-Learning. But you need to look for his/her training and development too.

*Nalin Abeysekera, Lecturer, Open University of Sri Lanka*

*Be careful with the wording of questions. Students can't tell if it's a rhetorical question or not. Also, be wary of using double negatives in your questions. Students won't know if they should answer yes or no!*

CAROL HUHN, NUANCE COMMUNICATIONS

## VI. 53 Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

Always have a glass of water ready. I find that cold water will sweat and leave a pool, so I try to get water that is room temperature. I also have some hand-towels ready (usually from the bathroom), so I can quickly wipe up any spills.

*Dwayne Dush*

Be careful with the wording of questions. Students can't tell if it's a rhetorical question or not. Also, be wary of using double negatives in your questions. Students won't know if they should answer yes or no!

*Carol Huhn, Nuance Communications*

The quickest way to build credibility with a class is to admit when you don't know something. If you try to fake it, the class will be able to tell, and will quickly discount everything you say. When something comes up that you can't answer, write it down, and get an answer back to the group as quickly as time allows.

*Dwayne Dush*

Maybe this should be for designers ... I attended one "online course" that was all done over the phone. The facilitator essentially interviewed the person that was presenting material to make it sound like a radio show. It made the whole course much more dynamic from the point of a listener. Later, during the course, they had everyone hang up and call a predetermined partner (within the course) to do an activity over the call. When the time for the activity was over, we hung up, recalled the group line, and debriefed on our individual experiences. I was quite surprised how well a simple "phone course" went, and how they had created it to be interactive.

*Tracy Hamilton, Education Assistant, Southlake Regional Health Centre*

Use the whiteboard as your easel to capture responses during discussion. You can do this in two ways: Keep control of the white board and record responses yourself, OR, release white board control to all participants and let them type their own responses directly. It's an energizing way to capture key discussion points!

*Anne Scott, Training Program Developer, Sodexo*

Sometimes multiple participants "huddle" around one computer to take a class together, or will be in close physical proximity to each other. When the training is delivered to multiple clusters of learners in this way, small group breakouts are easy to incorporate into the class. At the conclusion of an activity, you can use chat and polling features to allow each group to present findings to the class.

*Holly Mason, Senior Instructional Technologist, Commonwealth Trading Partners*

*Practice before the live event. Upload content, walk through exercises, conduct polls, etc. Going through your session at least once, before you have your participants, will allow you to identify areas of concern and find solutions.*

SARAH REMIJAN,  
MANAGER, CLUB AND  
DISTRICT TRAINING, ROTARY  
INTERNATIONAL

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

When working with a visual presentation (like PowerPoint), NEVER just read what is on the slide. Use the information on the slide as a guide to your presentation. The slides can elaborate your speaking points, illustrate them, or summarize them. But the slides should never BE the presentation.

*Dwayne Dush*

Use a pre-assessment to determine your audience needs, capabilities, interests, preferences, and expectations. Then use a post-assessment to evaluate your presentation, and determine if you were successful. Align measures for the pre-assessment and post-assessment, to best determine outcomes and areas for improvement.

*Margaret Martinez, CEO, The Training Place, Inc.*

SET EXPECTATIONS: Whether I'm leading a traditional classroom session or one over the Web, one of the first things I do is to start by telling everyone when we will take breaks, that they can ask questions right away rather than holding them until the end, and review the course outline to help explain the format of the class. It typically doesn't matter what rules you set in place, as long as you communicate them, explain the reasons for the rules, and consistently follow the rules.

*Dwayne Dush*

If your application has a "feedback" tool, encourage the students to use it to tell you if you are going too fast or too slow. In a traditional classroom, you can tell when you are moving too fast by the "deer in the headlights" look on a learner's face. Since you cannot usually see the learners in a synchronous class, using the feedback tool may help to gauge how you are doing.

*Carol Huhn, Nuance Communications*

Practice before the live event. Upload content, walk through exercises, conduct polls, etc. Going through your session at least once, before you have your participants, will allow you to identify areas of concern and find solutions.

*Sarah Remijan, Manager, Club and District Training, Rotary International*

Emoticons aren't just for email! Emoticons are generally facial expressions put together from keyboard letters and symbols to help express the tone and emotion of the sentence, paragraph, or message. Since text-based communication can bring added uncertainty, emoticons can greatly facilitate the tone and emotion you have intended in the message. Use emoticons if you want to

*If you are taping the event for later viewing, avoid unnecessary noises (like beeps every time a new participant enters) that will distract those watching the recorded session, and may even cause them to stop watching.*

SARAH REMIJAN, MANAGER,  
CLUB AND DISTRICT  
TRAINING, ROTARY  
INTERNATIONAL

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

help the student with the intention of your tone through the text. Following are some examples of common emoticons used in text communication:

- :) = smile or happy
- .-) = smile with a wink
- :-D = big grin
- :-o = wow, or I'm surprised
- :-( = frown or sad

*Michele Meissner, Instructional Designer, University of Michigan Health System*

Do the same participants always answer your in-class quiz questions? Prepare your questions in index cards (one question per card). Note the unit or topic on the card. Ask the learners to "line up" and then ask each learner a question, in turn. This puts the learners in random order. If the learner cannot answer the question correctly, allow the next learner a chance. Make notes on your index card such as: "need to reword the question," "double-check curriculum, page 12," "easy question," or "need more practice." This gives the learners an opportunity to test their knowledge, and ask about what they don't understand. It also provides the instructor with feedback about which topics need more coverage, and which questions to reword.

*Jill Easterday, Consultant*

To train customer service agents in the use of courtesy phrases, require each agent to sign on and off with the appropriate greeting and closing. Also, require courtesy phrases in class, such as, "Please," "Thank you," and "You're welcome." The added repetition encourages good habits! Be sure to point out how courtesy affects both the conversation and the quality score.

*Jill Easterday, Consultant*

If you are taping the event for later viewing, avoid unnecessary noises (like beeps every time a new participant enters) that will distract those watching the recorded session, and may even cause them to stop watching.

*Sarah Remijan, Manager, Club and District Training, Rotary International*

Much time can be lost at the beginning of a session by attendees "staggering in" and interrupting proceedings. To prevent this, ask your students or attendees to log on about 10 to 15 minutes before the actual start time. At this time, say "Hello" as people come in to the live environment, ask them to say "Hello" back, so you can test their microphone and sound settings, and Webcams if applicable. Have a slide or text on display that also says "Welcome," and that you're still waiting to begin. Then at the appointed time (or a little over, to wait for the inevitable late arrivals) begin the session by moving to your actual Start slide or text, and announce that you are beginning. This will not only give you a smooth and immediately productive start, but it will also prevent techni-

*For training that is one day or longer, use the “Team Teaching” approach whenever possible. It will help the students stay attentive when they have a variety of voices and presentation styles to listen to during the class.*

DWAYNE DUSH

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

cal issues in the middle of your session, when attendees suddenly discover that their Webcam/mic is not working.

*Joyce Seitzinger, EIT Hawke's Bay*

For training that is one day or longer, use the “Team Teaching” approach whenever possible. It will help the students stay attentive when they have a variety of voices and presentation styles to listen to during the class.

*Dwayne Dush*

Here is a nice introduction that has many applications. I use it when training folks on software applications. “There 'IS' little difference between nuisance and nuance. I am here to take the “IS” out of nuisance.” “What is a NulSance? Something you neither expect to encounter, nor know what to do when you encounter it. A nuance? A nuance is something that is different, but you either expect it or know what to do. My job, here, today, will be to take the “IS” out of what is a NulSance to you using \_\_\_\_\_.”

*Tim Pearson, Lead Consultant, Datatel, Inc.*

For a weeklong training session, we play the “ABC” game in class on the last day. I list the letters A through Z on the board. Then I tell the class that, as a group, they have to come up with something they learned during the week that connects to each of the 26 letters. When down to difficult letters (like X) allow lots of flexibility. (X can be something like “Xtra Attention to Details”) It typically turns into a fun way to review the week, and shows the students how much they actually did learn.

*Dwayne Dush*

Imagine you're in the same room with your learners, and welcoming them to your party. It creates a warmer atmosphere that they will be able to feel. Work on vocal variety. It's hard to stay awake and learning when you're hearing a droning voice. Practice by reading children's stories aloud! Use informal, inclusive language that encourages participants to interact. Formal language distances you from them, and you are already distanced by the geography and the technology. Use your language and voice to overcome that distance. Got an exercise to do? Have one participant coach another on how to do it. Ask all the others to stand by in case one of them asks for help. Choose the participants, don't ask for volunteers (you won't get many, or only the keeners).

*Julie Biddle, Training Specialist, Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing*

*Do a test run of your program with a few people who aren't subject matter experts. You will get the best ideas of simple things you can do to improve your program's flow, timing, and explanations from people who are less familiar with your topic.*

SARAH BETH LARSON,  
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER,  
LIFEBLOOD/MSRBC

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

Signpost, signpost, signpost. Think about your transitions into and around a page. Before you move on to the next slide, give them a taste of what to expect. This will help the learner quickly understand the meaning behind the slide. Often, I see speakers or instructors react to a page. Pre-script your transitions. While on the page, always provide navigation signposts for the learner. Whether the speaker is moving from left to right, or top to bottom, verbal cues will help the learner visually navigate the page.

*Vincent Huang, Director, Finance Learning Centers, Corporate Executive Board*

Always Have a Backup Plan: Audio always dominates the visual in synchronous delivery. Participants will tolerate a less-than-perfect video image, or slowish download of graphics, if the momentum of the conversation can be maintained with the audio flow. Also, if anything is going to happen, it is far more likely that the visual part of your presentation will cause problems, so be prepared. Here are some tips that may be helpful: Where appropriate, upload materials to a course LMS or Wiki prior to the synchronous session. Students can download these, and view them from their desktop if required during the session (very useful if students have an annotation tool they can use during the conference). If you are planning on presenting a slideshow, or using graphics as a part of a presentation, make sure you have them available in another place on the Web. I find Slideshare (<http://www.slideshare.com>), TeachTube (<http://www.teachertube.com>) and Flickr (<http://www.flickr.com>) very useful here. If you are sharing graphics or a slideshow, take the time to optimize the graphics you use (reducing the file size) to make it easier to share in an online environment. A photograph inserted into a PowerPoint show, for instance, can be over a megabyte in size, but you can easily reduce it by using something like Photoshop or even Imagewell. Always have a “back-chat” channel open for use.

*Derek Wenmoth, Director, e-Learning, Core Education*

Do a test run of your program with a few people who aren't subject matter experts. You will get the best ideas of simple things you can do to improve your program's flow, timing, and explanations from people who are less familiar with your topic.

*Sarah Beth Larson, Instructional Designer, Lifeblood/MSRBC*

Embed hyperlinks in some of your slides. These would be the “nice to know” slides, and not the “need to know slides.” If you are rushed for time during a presentation, you can click on the strategic hyperlink and “jump” over slides. Then the audience does not see the presenter fumbling through a series of slides.

*Jim Swan, Training and Development Consultant, The Hartford*

**Practice A LOT! Presenting online is quite different from a traditional in-person presentation, where you can see the audience and their reactions. Get comfortable with this format well before the live event.**

LISA STEPANOVIC,  
BUSINESS PRACTICE LEADER,  
E-LEARNING, CENTER FOR  
BUSINESS, INDUSTRY &  
LABOR @ SLCC

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

Review all the experience gained from radio and TV broadcasting. Decades of knowledge about communicating through audio and video are available. Even while today's technology helps prevent interference in messages (noise, shadows, delays), there's nothing like plain communication, direct and effective.

*Miguel Mini, Teacher*

To help the audience anticipate what's going to happen next during a Webcast, TELL THEM. For example, if you're going to do a poll, tell them "I'm going to open a poll now," ... "I'm going to close the poll now." This will also give a cue to the meeting host if they have control over polls. It seems simple, but it's critical. It prevents people from getting confused when the windows shift around on the screen.

*Lisa Stepanovic, Business Practice Leader, e-Learning, Center for Business, Industry & Labor @ SLCC*

Practice A LOT! Presenting online is quite different from a traditional in-person presentation, where you can see the audience and their reactions. Get comfortable with this format well before the live event.

*Lisa Stepanovic, Business Practice Leader, e-Learning, Center for Business, Industry & Labor @ SLCC*

Trust your technology. Avoid phrases such as, "Hopefully everyone can see this" or, "Let's see if this will work." There is no need to lower expectations before you even begin. You can be sure that if no one can see, even if the service you use does not somehow communicate that to you, your participants will let you know.

*Debbi Spranza, Virtual Training Lead, First Horizon National*

When using breakout rooms, you should determine if your call-in system (if other than VoIP) allows for breakout conversations. This will allow your small groups to not only work together in the e-space, but also communicate via phone. Make sure to clearly explain how to return to the main "room" after the breakout period has ended. You don't want learners to have to call in again if they get disconnected!

*Deborah Nugent, Learning Consultant, Fidelity Investments*

Especially for non-native English speakers: Pre-record your presentation with narration. For questions, pause your presentation, or wait until it's finished, and then do a live voice-chat if needed — or stay with the chat window or to the pods.

*Ole Kristensen, Senior e-Learning Consultant, Grundfos Management*

**You can use ustream.tv to deliver a video and VoIP for FREE! Attendees can view the lesson while interacting in a chat feature. Ustream.tv will also allow you to archive the video for later use. One additional benefit would be a single Web address for all sessions, rather than a new one for each session.**

KELLY KIRK,  
DISTANCE EDUCATION  
PROGRAM DIRECTOR,  
DAVIDSON COUNTY  
COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

If leading a chat room session, I prepare my questions that I want to ask in a Word document. Then I cut and paste the questions into the chat window, following the order from the document. I ask my students to read a relevant article beforehand. I usually start prompting the students, using the order in the chat window. However, as the students start participating, I let them choose when to answer the question. Sometimes if the chat content deviates slightly I let it go as long as it is relevant to the topic.

*Malcolm Roberts, Program manager: Grad Diploma IT in Education, Wintec*

- Don't be afraid of silence. Your participants may need a moment to collect their thoughts, especially if you are conducting the session in a language that is not their native tongue.
- Take advantage of collaboration and annotation tools. Participants who are normally quiet during a synchronous session, are often more willing to contribute via a text tool.
- Don't feel like you have to answer every question yourself. You have several smart, capable, experienced people in the session. Ask the participants how they might approach a problem. It keeps them more engaged, and you will get many creative answers.

*Tracy Ross, Instructional Designer, Intel Corporation*

If you are facilitating in a virtual world, where both you and the participants are represented by avatars, don't just position your avatar in a fixed spot, such as the podium, while you deliver your content. Instead, move your avatar around as you present. This makes the participants stay engaged in a literally hands-on way, as they move their avatars to stay in visual contact with you. In fact, don't hesitate to ask everyone to gather in a different spot from time to time to keep them active, or to have them gesture wildly or jump up and down — the equivalent of a live-classroom stretch break. And speaking of gesturing, take advantage of the capabilities you have to make your facilitator avatar more life-like. Use gestures, facial expressions, and movement to make your presentation more dynamic. If you find the prospect of controlling your avatar while speaking and presenting slide content daunting, enlist the help of a co-facilitator. Four hands are better than two, when it comes to making virtual training come alive!

*David Werboff, Group Director, e-Learning Solutions, Informa Training Partners*

You can use ustream.tv to deliver a video and VoIP for FREE! Attendees can view the lesson while interacting in a chat feature. Ustream.tv will also allow you to archive the video for later use. One additional benefit would be a single Web address for all sessions, rather than a new one for each session.

*Kelly Kirk, Distance Education Program Director, Davidson County Community College*

When conducting virtual classroom sessions, it is beneficial to have a co-moderator for sessions with more than 20 participants. The co-moderator does not need to be a subject-matter expert.

*If your class runs over several weeks with the same students, have them all get Instant Messenger accounts, and have them keep these accounts open when class is going on. That way, if the main synchronous system you are using fails, you have a way of getting in touch with them.*

JEFFRY GORDON,  
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATIONAL  
INFORMATICS, VANDERBILT  
UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF  
NURSING

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

They can help to field and organize chat questions that are submitted. My previous experiences have shown that it is difficult for a primary moderator to keep up with chat questions for larger groups. A co-moderator helps to manage the process. The results are wonderful!

*Jamal, Director, Learning Technologies, HR People Development*

If your class runs over several weeks with the same students, have them all get Instant Messenger accounts, and have them keep these accounts open when class is going on. That way, if the main synchronous system you are using fails, you have a way of getting in touch with them. Likewise, if their audio fails suddenly, or they cannot see your mouse movements, they have a quiet way to get in touch with you. People often ask why I don't use the messaging system built into the synchronous tool. The reason that isn't a good idea, is that, if the synchronous tool fails, you lose all of your communication tools. It is also a good idea to have phone numbers for several of your students. That way, if your network connection fails, or you have to reboot to recover from a freeze, you can call one of those students, and they can pass that information on to your class. Perhaps your fix is something as simple as a reboot, but if that takes five minutes, and your students do not know what is going on, they may leave before you come back. This helps keep them around.

*Jeffrey Gordon, Professor of Educational Informatics, Vanderbilt University School of Nursing*

To set interaction expectations early, poll, survey or use some other activity within the first five to ten minutes of your Web-based training session. Follow up with additional activities every 15 to 20 minutes. You may do polls and surveys via your Web meeting tool, or, if your group is small, verbally. Be certain to share the poll or survey results with your Web trainees.

*Jeffrey Hippler, Senior Implementation Consultant, Wolters Kluwer Financial Services*

After you ask a question, count to thirty! Do not be afraid of silence following a question. You must give people time to gather their thoughts and respond before you move on. Many people are new to the synchronous learning environment, and it may take them a few moments to remember how to raise their hand or how to respond in the Chat area.

*Karin Rex, Owner, Geeky Girl, LLC*

Keep calm when some trainees seem to be unable to concentrate on the material you are presenting, even in 20-minute segments. I put noiseless little "toys" on each table (such as small stuffed toys or balls) for those with some attention deficit to manipulate (almost unconsciously) while listening. In the Middle East, "worry beads" accomplish this. Main tip: Do not fret or punish those who seem to be fidgeting (though not disturbing others) or even doodling — it seems to help those with attention deficit to actually focus painlessly. I have tried it in classes. This works

*When doing events that use voice, but not necessarily streaming video, I found it very helpful to pre-record what I was planning to say, and then to listen to the speech and the phrasing. By doing so, I could polish the presentation, and I managed to eliminate some of the potential for awkward phrasing which may arise in an “off the cuff” speech.*

MARK L. SHEPPARD, SR.  
EDUCATION OFFICER,  
SMART SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH  
AGENCY

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

with synchronous and non-synchronous learning for some people. A professor from the University of Minnesota tried this with a whole class and me, and he was successful in increasing our learning and our joy in learning.

*John Michael Lyons, Trainer of Trainers, Independent Consultant*

Structuring group and team learning activities: Assign rotating functions for each member of the group (four learners per group is ideal, or even five) in their discussion. For example, first assign one of the volunteers as TIME KEEPER for each group, and give him/her absolute power to remind members of time remaining and when to stop. Then, assign a NOTE-TAKER (whose notes are official), then a PRESENTER(s), then a VISUAL-AID MAKER(s). Finally the remaining person is the GROUP LEADER, whose function is to give the activity OBJECTIVE and explain it to members, and then to encourage each member for input. He or she only votes to break a tie. This last one is most important in places where leader means absolute DECIDER — this helps to redefine leadership in a very practical way.

*John Michael Lyons, Trainer of Trainers, Independent Consultant*

When doing events that use voice, but not necessarily streaming video, I found it very helpful to pre-record what I was planning to say, and then to listen to the speech and the phrasing. By doing so, I could polish the presentation, and I managed to eliminate some of the potential for awkward phrasing which may arise in an “off the cuff” speech. As I told later instructors and presenters in our organization, synchronous work is like radio broadcasting. You have to be clear, concise, and polished. Adapt to the medium and the loss of “presence,” so that you, “Say more, but speak less.”

*Mark L. Sheppard, Sr. Education Officer, Smart Systems for Health Agency*

Dry RUN! It is a good idea to perform a short, but full-dress, rehearsal before your big event. Create a practice online event, preferably using the actual content, and start presenting. Have a colleague join you in this dry run through a separate PC logged in as audience, so that you can get feedback on how it looks to the audience. Better still; have another machine arranged for you during the dry run, which is logged in as participant, so that you can see for yourself as well.

*Uday Kranti, Sr. Consultant, NIIT*

The first important thing to keep in mind is that your online event cannot appear like a PowerPoint with speaker voice-over. Having participation is as important as having participants. Go through the features of the tool you use for the online event. Look for possibilities of real-time polls, chats, and voice-based discussions you can include to make it more participative. You might have years of speaking experience, but if you are a first-time synchronous speaker or instructor, prior participation as audience in a similar event will help. Most of the good organizations

*If you can have another speaker, including having someone in the class explain a process or concept, it breaks up the class and re-gains attention.*

PATTY SKERL,  
SENIOR TALENT  
DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST,  
AMTRUST BANK

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

involved in online synchronous learning tools host regular meetings to promote their product. Attending one of them is a good start. Try joining in on a presentation hosted by the organization that makes the tool you intend to use. The good thing is that their presentation will include product features that you can use. They will also provide you links to other sources that can help you present better. The next, equally important tip, is to keep the first few minutes for the “weather” (you don’t necessarily need to talk about the weather). Even a punctual audience may not have their wrist watch synchronized with yours. The idea is to accommodate the first three to five minutes waiting for people to join in, without having dead air. The on-hold music is another put off. Talking about some rules to follow during the event is one way to utilize the first couple of minutes.

*Uday Kranti, Sr. Consultant, NIIT*

If you can have another speaker, including having someone in the class explain a process or concept, it breaks up the class and re-gains attention.

*Patty Skerl, Senior Talent Development Specialist, AmTrust Bank*

- If at all possible, have two machines. One to “lead,” and one to see what your participants are seeing.
- Practice, practice, practice.
- Keep a bottle of water handy, your throat will become parched.
- Use a headset, not an open mike.
- Close everything on your computer desktop, other than what you really need for your session.
- It’s not necessary to be a total geek (hey, I’m only a semi-geek), but you need to UNDERSTAND the technology you’re working with, enough to understand what could go wrong (or right) during your session.

*Paula Cancro*

Whenever possible, set up two computers side by side, and log one in as the presenter and the other as an attendee. This way you can see both views. Many times what they see isn’t what you see, and so you won’t be chatting away, oblivious that your students are viewing a blank screen.

*Jean Marrapodi, Ph.D., CPLP, Solutions Specialist, Mimeo.com*

Whenever you are presenting software programs online, and don’t have the luxury of having everyone on their own PC, it’s important to take frequent breaks to let your audience demonstrate that they are gaining the concepts you are presenting. You should only use this type of training for shorter software training classes, rather than for critical data entry types. It’s useful for lookup type of database training. Use the “pass the mouse” feature, and let them demonstrate that they have

**Count on the first session taking 15 minutes to kick off, especially if people are new to the technique. Build that time into the first presentation. Also, have a technical person on standby to troubleshoot anything from the presenter's end.**

BRADLEY SHOEBOTTOM,  
INFORMATION ARCHITECT,  
INNOVATIA

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

mastered the task. I assign three or four roles, depending on the size of the class: 1) PICKER (or CHOOSER): This person makes any choices. For example, which font, which name if there are several choices. Adult learners like to have choices. 2) DRIVER: This is the person moving the mouse. However s/he MAY NOT move the mouse without instruction from the talker. 3) TALKER: This person gives instructions to the driver. They may reference the manual. S/he may ask the COACH (below) for help. 4) COACH: This role is for the remainder of the group, and is optional. They may assist the talker if the talker has trouble and asks for help. Their other role is to “Ahem,” if the TALKER appears to be leading the DRIVER astray. It’s important to make a chart of who is PICKER, DRIVER, and TALKER for each exercise, and switch them for each exercise. What is interesting is that they root for one another, and internally follow along with the steps of the DRIVER, practicing the steps as if they were driving the mouse themselves. Everyone is involved, even though you may not have everyone on a PC. It leverages the team spirit, which can be reinforced at the end when the trainer may not be available, where they can all help one another with the program after class. Trainees leave class saying it was an incredibly fun way to learn software.

*Jean Marrapodi, Ph.D., CPLP, Solutions Specialist, Mimeo.com*

This tip is for using a synchronous Webinar tool (such as Adobe Connect, GoToMeeting, WebEx, etc.). As a speaker or an instructor, you should have another computer next to you and log in as a (fake) participant, so you can compare the two screens, and tell what the participants are seeing while you are presenting.

*Seung Youn (Yonnie) Chyung, Associate Professor, Boise State University*

Avoid phrases such as “notice this” or “look here” and replace them with more descriptive phrases like “Notice the small blue icon at the top of your screen” or “Look at the third bullet regarding ...”. These extra few words will paint a visual picture, and help guide the learner to what you are describing.

*Rory Frey, Consultant Technical Training, The Hartford*

Count on the first session taking 15 minutes to kick off, especially if people are new to the technique. Build that time into the first presentation. Also, have a technical person on standby to troubleshoot anything from the presenter's end.

*Bradley Shoebottom, Information Architect, Innovatia*

To promote interaction and participation while serving as a review exercise, I use the following technique:

1. Ask each attendee to formulate a review question (T\F, Fill-in-the-blank, short answer, etc.).
2. View the Attendees List on the left. In your notes, record the name of the persons directly

*Don't forget to take breaks. Just because you are connected remotely, doesn't mean people don't need "bio breaks."*

MICHELE LARGMAN,  
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER

## VI. Tips for Synchronous Speakers and Instructors

*continued*

above and below you in the list as follows:

ABOVE: Mary Jones

BELOW: Tom Smith

3. Using the Chat box, type your review question and send it ONLY to your BELOW person.
4. Upon receiving a review question, reply with the correct answer (use your notes and work-book if needed) ONLY to your ABOVE person.
5. Reply to the BELOW person either indicating the answer was correct or by providing the correct answer.
6. Change your My Status to Thumbs Up when complete.

*Steve Cavin, Consultant/Technical Trainer, Datatel, Inc.*

If you train over the internet (collaboratively via a tool like WebEx, Interwise, Placeware, or Centra), make sure you constantly "check-in" with your audience. Speak slowly and clearly. Don't use jargon, as your audience may be international, and not understand your words.

*Michele Largman, Instructional Designer*

Don't forget to take breaks. Just because you are connected remotely, doesn't mean people don't need "bio breaks."

*Michele Largman, Instructional Designer*

## VII. 23 Tips for Technical Production, Planning and Preparation

Anticipate technical problems, and determine what you will do if they occur "live." Always have a plan B to follow, if the audio and/or video is lost or of poor quality. What will you do if the server goes down? The key is to communicate problems to the audience, so they're not left hanging.

*Lisa Stepanovic, Business Practice Leader, e-Learning, Center for Business, Industry & Labor @ SLCC*

Prior to the live meeting, put together a "flow" document that the presenter, host, and technical folks can follow during the Webcast. Document everything that will happen during the meeting — introductions, polls, Q&A, when to show specific slide numbers — and who is responsible for each of these.

*Lisa Stepanovic, Business Practice Leader, e-Learning, Center for Business, Industry & Labor @ SLCC*



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**Motivated team leaders are critical to your project's success. Before beginning a project, select a Project Manager and Lead Developer who are comfortable working together. Make sure these team players are passionate, and bring enthusiasm to the project.**

JACQUIE BECK, SVP,  
E-LEARNING, BROOKWOOD

## VII. Tips for Technical Production, Planning and Preparation *continued*

Assure that you provide to participants, ahead of time, all the info about needed configuration settings (for example: Flash version, JAVA, Firewall settings) and specify where they can get it. Provide more than one connection to each session, in order to avoid too much traffic over a single link. Always provide an automatic “add to calendar” schedule option according to the time region (e.g. Eastern Time vs. GMT)

*Elisio Carmona, Senior Consultant, Deloitte*

The best tip I can offer for synchronous technology is to always use at least two computers for Webcasting. Use one computer (in my case this is the “presenter's” computer) to send the outgoing video, audio, and images. Use a second computer (for me this is the meeting “host's” computer), to manage the meeting software and monitor the video, audio, and images coming from the presenter.

*James Lloyd, Training Developer, Promega Corporation*

- Encourage facilitators to use a production assistant. The assistant can field questions, help with technical problems, and generally help keep the session on track.
- Facilitators should schedule practice sessions before their first live session, to make sure they are very comfortable with the tools.
- Create a welcome slide to greet participants as they log in. It lets them know they are in the right place, and sets the tone for the session. If you have a “slideshow” option (such as the one in LiveMeeting 2007), create a three- or four-slide welcome deck to rotate as participants log in. Share instructor information and photo, a couple of “Did you know?” facts about the session topic, or other relevant info.
- Facilitators should log in at least 10 to 15 minutes before the session, to load documents, test that all is working properly, and greet participants as they join.

*Tracy Ross, Instructional Designer, Intel Corporation*

Motivated team leaders are critical to your project's success. Before beginning a project, select a Project Manager and Lead Developer who are comfortable working together. Make sure these team players are passionate, and bring enthusiasm to the project. People who are excited to work on a project are much more effective and productive than people who are not motivated. A bad seed on the production team will bring the entire project down. Once you align motivated team leaders, you will need to rely on their enthusiasm to keep the project rolling. I always ask my developers in the performance review, “What are your favorite parts of your job? What do you like so much that you would do it for free?” I listen carefully, and make sure I am aligning them to do the development work that is close to their heart. I have found that this allows me to get the best performance and loyalty out of my employees. They are happy doing a job that they enjoy, they come to work with a smile on their face, and they are highly motivated to be on the development team. Finally, if everyone wants to do the same thing, and all the glory jobs are taken, I put incen-

*Until the tool becomes second nature, take the time to give practice sessions with participants prior to the learning event, or build in some time at the beginning of the session for a practice session.*

PAULA COLWELL, LEARNING SPECIALIST, CANADA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC SERVICE

## VII. Tips for Technical Production, Planning and Preparation *continued*

tives around the jobs that are least popular. For example, no one wants to QA content — especially boring content! Therefore, I have an incentive program that pays my QA Team \$3 for every legitimate bug they find. In some cases, with longer projects, it isn't unusual to find 15 to 20 bugs. With this system in place, my developers can make an extra \$45 to \$60 per day doing QA, and being very detail-oriented. This ensures they are doing high-quality testing, they are trying their best to find mistakes, and they are getting rewarded for doing a not-so-popular job.

*Jacquie Beck, SVP, e-Learning, Brookwood*

Be ready to customize on the fly. Most synchronous tools have a polling feature that defaults to a YES/NO question. It's great to have your questions pre-loaded, but if something comes up during the presentation, ask the question verbally, and leave the text field for the question blank. (Practice this beforehand.)

*Michael Coleman, e-Learning Manager, BOMI International*

Until the tool becomes second nature, take the time to give practice sessions with participants prior to the learning event, or build in some time at the beginning of the session for a practice session.

*Paula Colwell, Learning Specialist, Canada School of Public Service*

Be vigilant about preparation. Each presenter, no matter how experienced online, needs to test the setup of this session with this content and this equipment. Make no assumptions.

*Karen Hyder, Online Event Producer and Speaker Coach, The e-Learning Guild*

Use music and commercial jingles throughout the training. It is very welcoming to have music playing in the background as guests join the session, or while they are conducting an exercise. We also like to use fake commercial jingles when switching to a new topic as a way to transition. You can easily play music with a simple phone adapter line that plays from your PC's speaker.

*Rory Frey, Consultant Technical Training, The Hartford*

Some voices, no matter how well they project in the classroom, just don't record well, or carry over VoIP. When this happens, no amount of speaking loudly or increasing the input volume on the computer will solve the problem. Instead of using a standard USB microphone, and having the students turn up the volume, record yourself using an actual microphone plugged into an amp, and then into the computer's microphone jack. You'll be amazed at how wonderful your voice sounds.

*Christiana Houck, Curriculum Developer, Aristocrat Technologies Inc.*

*Just say no to wireless network connections. As a meeting host or presenter, you cannot afford the intermittent lapses that can happen with even the best wireless connection. It is not worth the grief to even consider this worth the risk.*

JAMES LLOYD,  
TRAINING DEVELOPER,  
PROMEGA CORPORATION

## VII. Tips for Technical Production, Planning and Preparation *continued*

Just say “No” to wireless network connections. As a meeting host or presenter, you cannot afford the intermittent lapses that can happen with even the best wireless connection. It is not worth the grief to even consider this worth the risk.

*James Lloyd, Training Developer, Promega Corporation*

Create a “bogus” student for the class. This way, when you are testing the material, you can log in as a leader on one PC and as a student on the other. This allows you to see the online material exactly the way a student sees it. It’s a good troubleshooting tool when you are not sure how something will look when presented online.

*Carol Huhn, Nuance Communications*

For the one-person e-Learning shop or department: Begin with your business objectives. Then establish metrics that you can build into the outcome. If you are developing without clear business objectives, start with a sample focus group of your audience to establish “Top” performance gaps. Hopefully, you shouldn’t have more than about five to eight objectives for a single SCO (sharable content object.) If you have more than that, consider restructuring the SCO. Always keep in mind that your audience will have divided attention, and varying degrees of previous experience with your topical matter. For self-paced e-Learning, plan to keep information in approximately 90- to 120-second chunks. This is to ensure that you have targeted outcomes. For blended interactions, consider that, unlike a classroom setting, many people turn to e-Learning as a short-but-sweet interlude. Therefore, you should attempt to meet that need by keeping live synchronous learning to less than 30 minutes. Don’t fret; you can always supplement any areas that may have been glossed over, using online documentation. Once you’ve determined what needs to be included, and why you need to measure it, the next step in planning is considering how you want to present your materials. Consider the technical capabilities of your audience, and if possible do a small field test with a sample group. If you cannot do a field test, a quick phone call will suffice to establish what your audience can and cannot do. I like to establish the uppermost technical abilities, and the lower-most, and then develop with the middle in mind. Now for the scheduling for development, I use an 8:1 ratio. For every one minute of e-Learning, it will take approximately 8 HOURS of development. (The ratio is closer to 480:1 on a minute basis) Why so much time? Unless you are an exceptionally great Flash developer, or you have an established (read 100+) library of SCO’s at the ready, or you have a team of SME’s who can do the dedicated development for you, in a one-person shop you will be developing, researching, testing, and deploying all by your lonesome. Incidentally, I’m speaking of developing with off-the-shelf tools, as well as plug and play software. So the total planning time for a 120 second SCO is about one to two days.

*Kira Zadow-Colley, Training Analyst, Hotwire.com*

*Develop two or three announcement emails to send at regularly scheduled intervals in advance of your Webinar. Provide some information and motivation to get the learners excited, involved, and aware of the scheduled date and time of the event.*

PATRICK HENTSCHELL,  
E-LEARNING PROJECT  
MANAGER, FM GLOBAL

## VII. Tips for Technical Production, Planning and Preparation *continued*

Is it a conference? Remember that workshops and laboratories are more participatory, collaborative, and constructive. In short, they are more meaningful. If an eminence will be available for students, be welcome. Online teachers should be facilitators of the e-Learning process, instead of lecturers.

*Miguel Mini, Teacher*

The most important ingredient to successful participation by your audience is for them to have all the technology pieces running well (client-side plug-ins, popup blockers, and all the rest). While you might have rehearsed with the technology before, not all members of your audience may have done so. Most surveys indicate that at least 33% of the audience faces trouble joining the online event. With the first 10 minutes lost, the audience feels left out, and continues with reduced interest. With all your invitations, do send in a link that your audience can use to test their settings. If you think most of your audience is new to this mode of learning, another way to handle this is to have a very short event scheduled (with a suitable name and agenda) before the first main event. This ensures that the hiccups don't happen with your main event.

*Uday Kranti, Sr. Consultant*

Develop two or three announcement emails to send at regularly scheduled intervals in advance of your Webinar. Provide some information and motivation to get the learners excited, involved, and aware of the scheduled date and time of the event.

*Patrick Hentschell, E-Learning Project Manager, FM Global*

Be sure to test everything in advance (at least a week) and then again on the day before, and again on the day of the event. If the learners need to use certain software, have them test at least a week before also, to ensure there are no firewalls, etc. that they may need to overcome prior to the meeting. Also, find a backup plan. If the technology just won't work the day of the meeting, and re-scheduling is out of the question, can you send materials via email and do a conference call that way, or chat? Think out-of-the-box for alternatives, just in case.

*Patty Skerl, Senior Talent Development Specialist, AmTrust Bank*

If you are unsure of the bandwidth availability at various audience locations, prefer using a dial-in number, rather than using the online meeting features for presenter audio. Most online meeting products offer both options. Slow-loading images are a lesser pain than crackling or lagging audio.

*Uday Kranti, Sr. Consultant*

*Use the all-famous ADDIE model. Like writing a thesis paper, ADDIE covers every angle of project, from start to completion, and then some. Don't skip steps, or you may lose a valuable item that was important to the course and, more importantly, to the learner!*

MICHELE LARGMAN,  
INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER

## VII. Tips for Technical Production, Planning and Preparation *continued*

Do you have a disaster plan? We've only encountered the worst situation once in our Webcasting experience — a complete failure of the network (this due to a power-outage). Even this need not be catastrophic, if you can solicit an off-site partner to be available to log in to your meeting, and explain what has happened to the meeting participants. Another possible solution to this might be to keep a laptop with a cellular network connection on hand.

*James Lloyd, Training Developer, Promega Corporation*

Anything can go wrong during a Webcast. Always have a backup plan. What will you do if the presenter's audio is lost? What will you do if the video goes down? Some ideas include:

- Tell participants what's going on using the Chat pod,
- Put up a slide that says, "We're having technical difficulty. Be with you soon,"
- Have back-up headsets for the participants,
- Turn off the video feed (it takes a ton of bandwidth), and
- Always have a technical person available who knows the software and equipment to monitor things during the Webcast.

*Lisa Stepanovic, Business Practice Leader, e-Learning, Center for Business, Industry & Labor @ SLCC*

Use the all-famous ADDIE model. Like writing a thesis paper, ADDIE covers every angle of project, from start to completion, and then some. Don't skip steps, or you may lose a valuable item that was important to the course and, more importantly, to the learner!

*Michele Largman, Instructional Designer*

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