



The Beginner's Guide to

Virtual Training

Key knowledge for transferring your training delivery skills to the virtual environment.

1

MINDSET first.

Even if you, your program and your trainees are the same like before, the environment challenges you all differently. The rules are different so you have to compensate for the gaps.

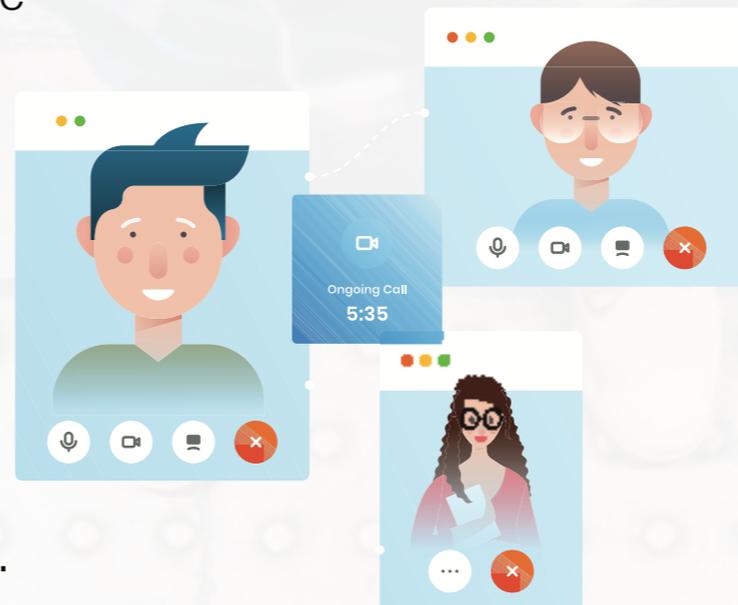
“ *Don't expect to act from your comfort zone. You'll have to put the digital hat on.* ”

What changes?

- **Communication** is only a shadow of the real life version. The info you receive from the little talking heads on the screen is minimal; for example, you have limited access to nonverbal and, depending on the technical setup every participant is choosing, you have poor access to their mimics also.

- **Responsibility** - the natural tendency in the online environment is for people to lose part of their responsibility and to show different behavior than usual: less sympathetic, more aggressive, less diplomacy, etc. The social norms and the peer pressure are perceived different in the virtual world.

- **Control** - in a traditional classroom setup, you have instant feedback of whether the participants are paying attention or not. You can keep an eye on their engagement level and you may react if it drops. In online, this kind of control is limited.



- **Interactivity** doesn't follow the same pathways. It is more difficult for the trainees to work together online on a project and for you to facilitate their doings. There are a lot of ifs and buts about it, especially regarding the technology used and the participants digital skills.

What tactics to adopt?

- Much shorter sessions (2 to 3 hours tops) divided into modular sections easy to follow and to check in a course progress map by everybody.

- A precise agenda and much clearer expectations: what we will do in every step, how and with what tools? Do they need to install and learn how to use an app? What is expected of them?

- Insists on recapitulations and summaries more than usual. Use creative repetition techniques and put any new idea or topic in a broader context.

- Delegate roles to trainees: reviewing, asking difficult questions, keeping time, etc.

- Prepare resources and predefined options for the exercises - direct their effort.

- Combine synchronous and asynchronous learning in order to make the most of the two worlds.

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"Live or alive?"

There are 2 types of learning when it comes to digital: **synchronous and asynchronous**. The first one means live online training, delivered via a webinar or videoconference platform. The second one consists in a mix of learning experiences that can be followed by the learner at his own pace and revisited whenever he needs: videos, simulations, case studies.

With the superpowers invested in you by the Digital Learning, you will have to find the optimal marriage between these two approaches. Of course, it has to do with the topic below - how far do you want to go?

3 degrees of digitalization

- **#Just@Tourist** You are just living the digital panic caused by the COVID-19 total lockdown. You will adopt some temporary measures like moving your entire training delivery activity on Zoom or some other app.
- **#SomeImplants** You are interested in Digital Learning in order to support and to complement your classroom training: moving the theoretical part, followup resources.
- **#TrulyBorg** - You have a vision and a strategy to exponentially extend your training reach, geographically, temporally or within your organization structure. Your focus is to make your online programs stand-alone viable solutions that don't need offline support.

Delivering the synchronous sessions

Some focus points for an impactful online presence:

- Whenever and wherever possible, prepare a script for your speech and practice it (explanations, stories to tell, etc). Do so even if your are familiar with the content. The virtual environment calls for a much precise speech and every error is visible and annoying..
- Don't talk too fast and pay attention to the diction.
- Be more than a talking head, they need to see your gestures. Treat your video window as a composition. Take care to be well centered, not to have too much space above your head. See what distractions are behind you and check the angle of the camera (just above your eye line). Be generous with the lightning.
- Master in detail the technology used, both software and hardware because this can make or break the job.
- Don't practice on real trainees, it will look bad; ask for help from your colleagues or from professionals.



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3

Time capsules

An old wish of the humankind was for centuries immortality. For this, no effort was spared. The singers sang, the painters painted and trainers learned about instructional videos and creative ways to record their greatness for posterity. These are the asynchronous learning resources that can act like time capsules.



"Do you speak about recording the Zoom session and posting it online for later use? This is what asynchronous learning is all about?"

Not quite, not exactly. What is organized as a synchronous online session becomes usually a dull and unattractive asynchronous module. The rhythm and the content timeline relevance are perceived different when you are in the middle of something "live" versus when you watch a recording.

The same distorted voices that just seemed a little bit annoying at that time, it sounds to you now difficult, if not impossible to listen. The entire discussion appears without much consistency and you feel the need to use the video player bar to jump through the content.

To do it right, you have to plan and design it separately in a dedicated process. It takes commitment, learning and investment. Much like a #TrulyBorg level of interest.

Skills for the asynchronous Jedi

All of the following or just part of it, depends of your exact context - types of programs to develop, volumes, complexity, etc:

- Instructional Design Skills
- Developing Scripts and Storyboards
- Planning the logistics of Digital Learning development
- Presenting in front of a camera (and teleprompter)
- Basic/advanced audio-video editing skills
- Basic/advanced E-learning authoring skills
- Basic LMS & web design skills

Some useful recommendations of apps:

- For audio editing: Audacity
- For video editing: Camtasia, ScreenFlow
- For photo editing: GIMP
- Authoring: Articulate Storyline & Rise
- For LMS/Web: Thrive Themes, LearnDash, WP.



The main enemy of the asynchronous trainer is the thought that the technical part is not his/her business.

Check the Learning Path **Digital Learning Skills Program** for more info at ecampus.ro.

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Clemency, Luxembourg
petre@learningdistillery.com

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E-Campus is our exclusive content delivery partner for Romania & Eastern Europe.

office@ecampus.ro
+40 769090000

