



THE GMarie GROUP
Performance Improvement Specialists

Virtual Instructor-Led Development

A Customized Approach

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Provided by:
The GMarie Group
1050 East Ray Road, #A5-312
Chandler, AZ 85225
info@gmariegroup.com

Overview

“Virtual Instructor Led Training” (VILT) is a term used to refer to the synchronous delivery of training content in a simulated classroom environment, typically over the Internet and phone. VILT delivers the learning benefits of traditional instructor-led training to the desktop, giving you the cost benefits of e-Learning. Expert-led training over the web can achieve the same level of knowledge transfer and interactivity as traditional ILT while offering additional advantages learners can not get with any other training. Organizations including Dell Computer and the U.S. Air Force employ VILT as part of their delivery strategy.

VILT Development

The GMarie Group develops highly interactive engaging virtual instructor-led training to meet your needs in a two-step process:

First, we define your goals and the knowledge and skills needed to achieve them. We recommend instructional methods needed to achieve your instructional goals. For example, developing software skills requires demonstrations followed by hands-on practice. Therefore effective delivery methods must allow display demonstrations and provide for practice. We ensure you have the infrastructure to support the medium.

Second, we design the content and visuals to promote learning following evidence-based guidelines to incorporate adult learning theories. We include text and audio when appropriate and develop interactions that are engaging and enhance the content and learner’s experience.

Below are a few areas that are easily adaptable to this format.

- Classroom style learning: Participants engage in a live interaction with a qualified trainer to complete a course or program. The content can include scenario-based learning, real-world examples, hands on or small group interactions, live question and answer sessions, and other learning activities.
- Reflection sessions: Participants review key learnings, assess their application of learned knowledge and skills, and evaluate behavioral impact. As a group, participants share their experiences and leverage each others’ learning. These sessions

help develop a learning community that supports critical skills transfer back on the job.

- Application sessions: The group debriefs a specific learning event and practices newly gained skills in a safe, non-threatening environment. Participants discuss newly acquired skills, approaches for implementing them, and solutions for overcoming foreseeable roadblocks.

Each course or program is customized based on the need of the client. We incorporate adult learning practices and develop courses that meet the needs of all types of learners.

Features

VILT systems Centra, Elluminate, Live Meeting, and Web Ex offer a rich set of tools that allow facilitators to customize the level of interactivity needed with their meeting participants. By developing an engaging and interactive virtual meeting environment, facilitators and participants are able to leverage a variety of features to conduct an effective training session. Below is a list of some options that can be incorporated to enhance the learning.

- Include a brief tutorial on the distance learning tool in which learners practice using the Chat and Mood features so they can interact with the facilitator. This tutorial will include a distance learning feature the learner will use during the "interactive" segments of the virtual class.
- Design segments of the presentation in which participants become the facilitators, even if just for a few minutes. When possible, we can include scripted scenarios, in which one or two participants can be called upon to read their "parts."
- Provide many opportunities for people to share real-world examples, and provide instruction for facilitators to get learners involved, if they do not volunteer information. For example, we can design prework that learners must share (or email in ahead of time), that the facilitator can then draw upon during the VILT.
- Use polling at the end of the DESCRIBE > DEMONSTRATE > PRACTICE model of instruction. Some applications have features

to support this model for skill-based training, such as system or navigation training. The flow of the program includes:

- Describing the skill the associate must learn.
 - Demonstrating the skill. (The Share Screen or the Share Application feature would enable this.)
 - Giving the learner the chance to practice the skill. (The Share Application feature allows this for some programs, this is determined per program.)
 - Checking the learner's skill retention. (Once the learner has practiced the skill individually, or with a small group in a break-out session, the learner may then demonstrate the skill to others in the class using the Share Application feature.)
 - Using Polling Questions to check the learner's knowledge retention. (Polling Questions that test knowledge needed to perform the skill can be loaded to the session, and then displayed at the end of DESCRIBE > DEMONSTRATE > PRACTICE model.)
- Include breakout sessions in which learners are put into smaller sub-teams and go off on their own to make a plan or solve a problem, etc. Learners then come back and present to the group at large. Adding a competitive aspect to this is an option, too.
 - Include prizes/points/recognition of some sort for people who volunteer responses, when appropriate.
 - Use the online group chat feature for “quick draw” responses to questions. Using this function, people who type fast and want to participate, but are too shy to speak up, have a forum. Prizes/recognition can be applied here, too.
 - Incorporate “homework” assignments to keep learners engaged between VILT sessions. At the beginning of each subsequent VILT, homework will be reviewed.

- Leverage the polling feature. For instance, when presenting factoids or statistics, the facilitator can poll the group with a multiple choice question, prior to presenting the information. Then, after presenting the information, the facilitator leads a discussion regarding why the group's guess/opinion differed (if it did) from the real fact.
- Keep the VILT segments short, if scheduling will allow, adding frequent stops/breaks. Having learners return on time from breaks of a virtual session is always a challenge. Some distance learning projects successfully use "cliffhangers" to encourage the learner to return on time. A cliffhanger is essentially any piece of information (vital to pass the class) that the learners receive the moment they return from break. It's a piece of information that's deemed critical for the learner to learn the job. The online facilitator "explains why this information is important" before the break, but doesn't "tell what the information is" until after the break.
- Use "pretests" where possible, to be completed before VILT sessions, to gauge the participant's skill level and adjust the content accordingly. This helps keep motivation high.
- Include interesting graphics and other appealing visuals. Instructions will guide facilitators to "write on" a graphic, or draw on, or change the graphic in some way to keep participants listening/watching. Another option is to create activities where the learner writes on the graphic (in a controlled way). (i.e., no noses and moustaches!)

Benefits

The design and development of VILT can provide the following benefits:

- Flexible class times
- Low cost
- Interactive classroom-like experience
- Engaging participant materials and resources

- Engaging graphical content
- Effective after-class “homework”
- Unique small or large group learning

Effectiveness

VILT and other forms of distance learning techniques can be as effective as traditional delivery. In an analysis of hundreds of research studies comparing learning in traditional classroom settings to learning through distance learning, Bernard (2004) reported no real differences in learning (Clark, 2005). After a brief period of acclimating to the technology, most learners respond well to this delivery platform and achieve great results.

What matters most in producing effective instruction are the methods incorporated into the program – not the medium of delivery. By incorporating solid instructional strategies into each program and leveraging the best features of the technology, we produce highly engaging and effective programs.

The GMarie Group

For over 20 years, The GMarie Group has provided nationwide clients with custom learning and performance improvement solutions. To do so, we apply the ADDIE Model, a systematic process for:

Analyzing Performance and Training Needs

The GMarie Group recommends initiating a project through rigorous analysis, which is the key to obtaining valid results and ensuring that a significant cross-section of the organization has a stake in the process. We can conduct training needs and performance analysis to determine learning solutions to address identified performance gaps.

Designing and Developing Effective Solutions

We design and develop online (Web-based) training, virtual Webcasts, podcasts, instructor-led training, performance support tools, learning portals and much more! Our team can author your custom product using any industry-standard authoring tool (e.g. Flash, Lectora, Flypaper and Captivate).

Implementing Products and Programs

We provide training program planning and coordination, train-the-trainer, training delivery and facilitation for all types of subject matter. We can also help integrate Web-based solutions into your LMS or LCMS.

Evaluating Reactions, Learning, Skills Transfer and Returns

Using Kirkpatrick's "Four Levels of Evaluation," we develop tools and scoring mechanisms to measure participant reactions to learning, mastery of objectives, transfer of skills to the job and return-on-objectives.

How Can We Help YOU?

The GMarie Group
info@gmariegroup.com
602.795.8374