

Advantage and disadvantages of Virtual Instructor-Led course
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Welcome to the reality of our new challenging world. To respond to the current Corona-Crisis, I decided to recommend Instructor-led-internet based course to my clients. Before doing so, during the last two months, I conducted a thorough research to investigate all the platforms available, read twenty articles and took some online courses. Here are the advantages and disadvantages of virtual synchronous instructor-led on line course (VILT).

Obviously it is not the same as F2F in class training. Under the circumstances, I believe it is a good alternative to F2F training and it is a much better alternative than asynchronous on- line training

Let me start with the advantages of VILT compared with online training:

1. Virtual instructor-led training (VILT) is fun and intellectually challenging. It is new to many of us.
2. I choose Zoom as the best e-Learning platform (Tool). It offers the participants the features and functions they want, as well as the usability they need. I believe that it offers the perfect mix of flexibility and ease of use for course participants.
3. On-line “private room” discussion offers teams almost the same opportunity as they have in a F2F informal interaction among participants as well as with the instructor.
4. VILT Offers the same opportunity to ask questions and get immediate answers, just like face to face courses. This can be done by chat function, as it allows participants to write questions or raise their hand to get the instructor attention.
5. You can do it from the comfort of your office or home. Thus saves on participants travel time and costs.
6. Utilizing VILT allows previous students to audit the course if they need to. Some students need to see a specific area in the topic.
7. Chat room may offer an advantage that does not exist in F2F class room environment. Where the participants can ask questions anonymously. It is much easier to type questions.

8. I was surprised to discover that the virtual rooms turn into a share team learning experience. Reports indicate that students are able to share contact information and business cards. Great community work starter.
9. Just like F2F class, if some topic is confusing, or the instructor went fast through it, the participants can give an immediate feedback that will allow the instructor to adjust the speed or explain certain topic.
10. Some students may learn better using VILT. Not everyone learns well in a F2F classroom environment.
11. VILT online training offers participants the same opportunities as F2F training to actively participate in their learning with each other and with the instructor in the class room. This is done through activities like brainstorming, polls, Chat Boxes.
12. VILT offers flexibility. The instructor can speed up or slow down to reflect the needs of the participants.
13. Some people believe that it is possible to create an even better learning environment for the participants by offering better opportunity for participation as long as we get effective instruction.

The advantages for sure far outweigh the disadvantages. We need to understand that VILT is a different way of engagement. Here are some of the disadvantages and how to overcome them:

1. Having a computer handy means it is easy to check emails, notifications or other tempting distractions that compete for learners' attention. Participants need to focus ONLY on their learning and ignore everything else.
2. Raising your virtual hand does not feel the same as raising your real hand. Raising the virtual hand can also be easily ignored or unintentionally overlooked by the instructor. Most people get used to it with time.
3. The VILT approach make the learning experience dry as you lose the personal touch and the power of eye contact and body language on connecting with participants. Again this is a matter of time, after the fourth session, most people enjoy the rest of the sessions. Thus it becomes the NORM.
4. Some people love to fly and visit course destinations. They usually make a holiday out of the training opportunity.