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**Dynamic Web Conferencing and Presentation Skills  
For Effective Meetings, Trainings, and Learning Sessions  
Created October 12, 2009 (Latest Update: July 23, 2014)**

Web conferencing increasingly is becoming part of our communication toolbox through a variety of free and paid services as we use it to conduct meetings and provide workplace leaning and performance opportunities with colleagues near and far. While not completely replacing our face-to-face workplace encounters, the use of web conferencing tools is proving effective in overcoming many of the constraints we face in terms of travel costs, time, and producing positive, long-term results. What is often lacking, however, is an understanding of the presentation skills which take full advantage of the possibilities offered through web-conferencing.

The following resource list is intended help those new to web-conferencing familiarize themselves with its possibilities while calling attention to basic and innovative elements of contemporary presentation styles.

For help in exploring web-conferencing and presentation skills which meet your organization's needs, please contact [Paul Signorelli & Associates](http://PaulSignorelli.com) at [paul@paulsignorelli.com](mailto:paul@paulsignorelli.com).

*A Sample of Web-Conferencing Resources*

Martin, Michele. *9 Lessons I Learned from Running My First Webinar*.

Accessed July 23, 2014 at

<http://michelemartin.typepad.com/thebambooprojectblog/2008/01/what-i-learned.html>

Michele Martin, whose popular [The Bamboo Project blog](http://TheBambooProject.com) lucidly explores technology and learning strategies, provides a primer for those completely unfamiliar with the mechanics of conducting effective online presentations. Among her nine tips are: expect to spend much more time preparing an online presentation than is required for face-to-face work; write a script; have back-up support during the live, online event; and don't hesitate to deviate from the script.

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Publicare Marketing Communications. (2014). Unique Around the World: Vendor-Independent Review of Web Conferencing Solutions. Accessed July 23, 2014 at [http://www.webconferencing-test.com/en/webconference\\_home.html](http://www.webconferencing-test.com/en/webconference_home.html).

Publicare, a German-based marketing and communications company created in 1994, offers a detailed “vendor-independent review of web conferencing solutions” with links to 35 web-conferencing providers and reviews of what each offers. What is very helpful about the site is that it includes a function allowing for comparisons of up to four web and videoconferencing software programs at a time and provides extensive information about the number and scope of features offered, the effort required to set up the software, system requirements, and brief conclusions about each of those four providers’ products. There is also a web conferencing evaluation guide that provides introductory-level descriptions to key web and videoconferencing features and options. Links to individual reviews for all providers include access to sites providing free trials of the software and also lead to each provider’s website.

WebEx. (2014). How Do I...? Accessed July 23, 2014 at [http://support.webex.com/support/howdoi.html#anc\\_hdi60](http://support.webex.com/support/howdoi.html#anc_hdi60).

WebEx is notable not only for being one of the most respected and popular providers of web-conferencing tools available, but for its extensive online tutorials which are available free of charge, and the tutorials serve not only to show how WebEx works but also to introduce viewers to the capabilities of much of what is great about web conferencing today. The “Meeting Center” section of the WebEx site provides basic information including how to set up and start meetings, interacting within and controlling online meetings, and using audio capabilities. The “Training Center” section of the site includes tips on scheduling, setting up, and starting online sessions as well as guidance on facilitating, presenting, and communicating. The “Event Center” section includes an entire subsection on interacting during web-conferencing events, and other links from the WebEx “How Do I...?” page explore other elements of what WebEx offers its users.

Wikipedia. (2014). Web Conferencing. Accessed July 23, 2014 at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_conferencing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_conferencing)

This brief Wikipedia article defines web conferencing, describes some of its standard features, and provides links to other articles introducing a variety of software and service providers including Adobe Connect, Elluminate, GoToMeeting, Microsoft Office Live Meeting, Mikogo, OpenMeetings, Skype, TeamViewer, and WebEx.

### ***Web-Conferencing Providers with Demonstration Videos or Introductory Pages***

Adobe Acrobat Connect. (2014). What Is Adobe Connect? Accessed July 23, 2014 at <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobatconnectpro/demo/>

Adobe connect provides plenty of text along with brief introductory videos to introduce viewers to what web-conferencing offers in general and how Adobe's product is used in online learning. There are also links to social media discussion groups and other resources.

Blackboard Collaborate. (2014). Introductory Video. Accessed July 23, 2014 at <http://www.brainshark.com/blackboardinc/vu?pi=zIKzqrsiYz35Sgz0>

Blackboard Collaborate has been the platform for some of the most engaging online learning experiences I have had. Participants can see and hear the presenter and participants who have chosen to join using webcams; see the slides shared by the facilitator; see the list of session participants; and participate in live typed chat. Archived versions capture the immediacy of the presentations effectively, as is obvious when viewing this session led by Howard Rheingold:

<https://sas.illuminate.com/site/external/jwsdetect/playback.jnlp?psid=2013-02-19.1604.M.E1C6971D0015BD348DBD143FC183D6.vcr&sid=2008350>.

Google+ Hangouts. (2014). Google Hangout Tutorial, by Sue Soucy. Accessed July 23, 2014 at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_6bLIPnAEiA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6bLIPnAEiA)

This tutorial, prepared by a Google+ Hangout user, provides background on how to begin using Hangouts, how to invite people to your sessions, and how to provide access via YouTube for those who are interesting only in watching rather than participating in a live session. It also includes a review of some of the apps available to anyone organizing a session via Hangouts.

GoToMeeting. (2014). GoToMeeting: Online Meetings Made Easy. Accessed July 23, 2014 at [https://www1.gotomeeting.com/en\\_US/pre/quickTour.tmpl](https://www1.gotomeeting.com/en_US/pre/quickTour.tmpl)

The GoToMeeting introductory video provides another overview of what the product and other web-conferencing services offer while using a series of images which, in quick succession, show examples of what users see in web-conferencing settings.

Mikogo. (2014). Introductory Video. Accessed July 23, 2014 at <http://www.mikogo.com/>

The Mikogo introductory video on the company's home page, emphasizes its usefulness as an online meeting tool with screen-sharing capabilities and also notes, in passing, that it can be used as a delivery vehicle for training sessions.

Skype. (2014). Introductory Video. Accessed July 23, 2014 at <http://www.skype.com/en/essentials/windows-desktop/#how-to-set-up-a-group-video-call>

This brief (less than a minute) video provides guidance on how to initiate and invite others into an online session that accommodates up to 10 participants at a time. It's worth noting that the small print at the bottom of the group video-calling page (<http://www.skype.com/en/group-video-call/>) includes a recommendation to include no more than five people for best quality during Skype sessions.

TalkShoe. (2014). New to TalkShoe? Accessed July 23, 2014 at <http://www.talkshoe.com/se/about/TSAbout.html>

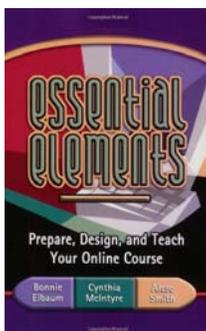
TalkShoe, the only resource described here which does not include video capabilities, is effectively used for live online interactive discussions, conversations, podcasts, and audioblogs. The TalkShoe website provides an overview of its services, which include the audio capabilities, a live (typed) chat function so participants can send written messages back and forth while conversations are underway, and a recording function so discussions can be archived for later use.

Vyew. (2014). Vyew "overview." Accessed July 23, 2014 at <http://vyew.com/site/product/vyew-in-action/uses/#meet-present>

The Vyew demonstration site provides yet another approach to explaining web-conferencing: it provides an extensive written description of the service with connections to sample rooms.

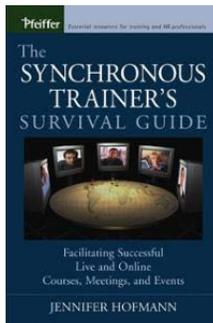
### ***Presentations and Facilitation Online***

Elbaum, B., McIntyre, C., & Smith, A. (2002) Essential Elements: Prepare, Design, and Teach Your Online Course. Madison: Atwood Publishing.



Bonnie Elbaum, Cynthia McIntyre, and Alese Smith, all affiliated with [the Concord Consortium](#) in Massachusetts at the time their book was published, offer what they consider to be the seventeen essential steps of preparing online learning sessions which will keep instructors and learners equally engaged. The book opens with a section on preparing an online course and includes tips on how to build a course outline, set clear deadlines to encourage effective learning, and planning for quality. The middle section of the book moves into elements of designing a course which helps students maintain their focus, develop effective collaborations which foster learning, and literally stay on course. The concluding section on how to teach online is followed by an extensive checklist which summarizes the contents of the entire book for anyone involved in developing and delivering online learning opportunities.

Hofmann, J. (2004). *The Synchronous Trainer's Survival Guide: Facilitating Successful Live and Online Courses, Meetings, and Events*. San Francisco: Pfeiffer.



Jennifer Hofmann, an e-learning consultant and president of [InSync Training, LLC](#), combines summaries, tips, and examples to familiarize trainers and others with the challenges of creating and conducting successful online sessions. The introductory chapter to the book includes a valuable and detailed table of features commonly found in live online learning environments; the table is accompanied with illustrations to help readers understand how each feature works. The second chapter, “Facilitating in the Synchronous Classroom,” is a wonderful primer which outlines facilitators’ roles in directing learning while helping participants communicate and collaborate online; reminds presenters and facilitators that flexibility and an ability to work well in stressful situations are key components to success in online presentations; and discusses key resources—including the use of a producer or assistant—for those engaged in online presentations. The remainder of the book provides suggestions for facilitating effective communication, managing the online learning environment and technology, and conducting online meetings and other live events. Among the appendices are a “Synchronous Software Features Checklist,” “Synchronous Classroom Management Checklists,” additional “Recommended Resources for Synchronous and Blended e-Learning,” and a glossary of terms for those unfamiliar with online learning.

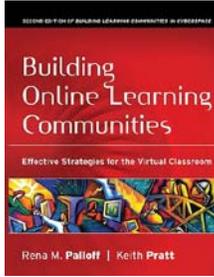
Kuhlmann, T. (2007). *The Insider's Guide to Becoming a Rapid E-Learning Pro*. Retrieved February 26, 2009 at <http://www.articulate.com/rapid-elearning/free-ebook/>

With a strong focus on meeting learners’ needs, [Tom Kuhlmann](#) uses his more than fifteen years of experience in the training industry to explore the benefits of using rapid e-learning tools. He briefly reviews topics including e-learning vs. e-information; designing effective quizzes which contribute to the learning process; providing just enough information to inspire learners while inspiring them to “locate additional resources when they need them” (p. 27); and creating effective performance-based courses. In the context of describing rapid e-learning authoring tools provided by the company for which he works, he offers guidelines to anyone interested in producing their own e-learning modules: use a tool which “leverages” PowerPoint (p. 34); use a quiz tool; add interactions; obtain more than one product; and value “quality ease of use” (p. 35). Sections on audio, video, and graphics complete this introduction to rapid e-learning techniques and leave readers with the foundations for further exploration in the field of e-learning.

Palloff, R.M. & Pratt, K. (1999). *Building Learning Communities in Cyberspace: Effective Strategies for the Online Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Rena Palloff and Keith Pratt, building from work which began while they were Ph.D. students in 1993, offer online presenters an educators’ view of how to create and sustain effective online learning opportunities which lead to communities of learning. Their

focus is on “teaching and learning” rather than on technology (p. xvii); the result is rewarding and inspirational. The first of the two sections of the book concentrates on the philosophy and mechanics of developing communities of learning online; the second section explores hands-on methods for producing those communities and includes explicit guidance on how to inspire collaboration by providing learners with clear guidelines as well as effective facilitation and feedback (pp. 111-125). A chapter on transformative learning (pp. 129-143) makes a strong case for how effective online learning can be by providing learners with time for engagement and reflection, and also reminds readers that effective online learning is a learner-centered process (p. 135). Sample course outlines, syllabi, lists of learning objectives, and online course guidelines make this an indispensable tool for anyone involved in online presentations and online learning.



Signorelli, P. (2013). “ALA Annual Conference 2013: Presentation Pain and Pleasure (Tips for Presenters.” Accessed July 23, 2014 at <http://buildingcreativebridges.wordpress.com/2013/07/03/ala-annual-conference-2013-presentation-pain-and-pleasure-tips-for-presenters/>

Although written about onsite presenters, this article offers presentation tips that can easily be applied in online settings: arriving at least 30 minutes before a session begins so last-minute trouble-shooting can be completed; engaging in informal conversation with participants before the formal presentation begins; keeping slides simple and visually appealing; and responding to rather than deflecting participants’ questions.

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