

Training Challenges Activity (Potential Solutions)

The following series of challenges and potential solutions are based on the realities of training. As much as possible, the answers are framed from a learner-centered instruction and practical viewpoint and are based on the training principles presented in this course.

(Click on the challenge below to be taken to the potential solution for the challenge)

1. (F2F, VI) The computer (or monitor(s), keyboard, or mouse) you are using fails and you cannot fix it.
 2. (VI) There is a technical problem with the meeting or conferencing application (instructor or learner).
 3. (F2F, VI) You have prepared a lesson plan, slides, or an activity and you forgot to bring or cannot access the content.
 4. (VI) You chose to use an external application to run a poll, white board, mind map or similar interactive activity. A learner refuses to use the application and claims that Personal Identification Information (PII) needs to be shared with the application to use it.
 5. (F2F, VI) A noisy piece of equipment or a noisy meeting suddenly starts up nearby.
 6. (F2F, VI) You find it difficult to keep track of the logistics for your sessions or lessons.
 7. (F2F, VI) Your lesson plan timing did not match the actual time taken to complete the lesson.
 8. (F2F, VI) A stranger walks into your classroom in the middle of a lesson or your training session is "Zoom-bombed" or "Zoom-raided."
 9. (VI) The camera, microphone, or speaker quality in your session is of poor quality (instructor or learner).
 10. (VI) A video you want to share is not playing.
 11. (F2F, VI) You need to determine the class size needed to effectively teach using an interactive approach.
 12. (F2F, VI) You need to decide when and how to distribute/share handouts or activity instructions.
 13. (F2F, VI) A learner asks you a question and you don't know the answer.
 14. (F2F, VI) You are having difficulty remembering the name(s) of your learners.
 15. (F2F, VI) The lesson you are conducting just isn't working or is confusing learners.
 16. (F2F, VI) There are learners in your class that know as much or almost as much about a subject as you do.
 17. (F2F, VI) One or two of your learners tends to dominate all the discussions.
 18. (F2F, VI) A learner expresses disagreement with content (or expresses an alternative viewpoint).
 19. (F2F, VI) A learner is rude, hostile, or aggressive or shows obvious signs of restlessness and boredom.
 20. (F2F, VI) One of your learners suddenly seems to be suffering from a physical or medical issue.
-
1. (F2F, VI) The computer (or monitor(s), keyboard, or mouse) you are using fails and you cannot fix it.

Preparation for a failed computer starts long before a computer breaks! Take a brief break to give yourself time consider options you have prepared for, such as:

- Have a backup laptop and make sure the backup laptop has the files needed (slides downloaded to the computer, backup flash drive, or online content) and, if needed, is internet accessible.

- (F2F) Ask if the host or one of the learners can loan you a computer or laptop for the remainder of the session.
- (VI) Sign into the application using an alternate source such as a tablet or phone and/or ask a learner to screenshare.

If you cannot get access to another computer, you can continue by having the learners follow along with the slides in participant workbooks. This solution is not ideal, but it will enable you to continue to use class time productively. As a last resort, you could read from the material directly with the learners, or copy their slide book pages to deliver the lesson.

2. (VI) There is a technical problem with the meeting or conferencing application (instructor or learner).

Completing a "technology check" with a course host prior to instruction and sending students a list of technology requirements and links to validate technology requirements are very important course preparation activities that should not be ignored. Suggestions include:

- Some course hosts require specific meeting applications to be used and other hosts consider and authorize use of a specific meeting application as recommended by the instructor. It is recommended that you check and test technologies and access with the host prior to the course.
- Having a second or backup conferencing application license is a good practice, however most technical issues are security (access or authorization) and hardware configurations that create technical issues with cloud-based applications.
- Security protocols may change which may cause some meeting applications to not work. Make sure to update applications in a timely manner (including your web browser) and restart your computer before accessing a meeting application or when frequently switching between different conferencing tools. If delivering instruction in another country, be aware that changing your country location can raise a security check by sending a password check to your email or the organizer email "just in case it's not you."
- It is important to provide learners with instructions on technical difficulties, course delays as well as the option to join a conference with a toll-free phone number. Make sure to post the instructions and phone numbers in your syllabus and in the course invitations.
- Before each class session, sign in at least 15 minutes prior to the session and perform a technology (camera, microphone, and speaker) check within the conference application.
- Be prepared to communicate session status with learners. Decide to delay a session start or schedule a make-up time.

3. (F2F, VI) You have prepared a lesson plan, slides, or an activity and you forgot to bring or cannot access the content.

First, don't panic. You should anticipate being flexible in your lessons and instructional content. Consistently prepare backup versions available for use, whether using a flash drive or online content (including emailing the content prior to class to yourself, a co-instructor, or a course learner). You can:

- Use alternative media such as flipchart or whiteboards, sharing the link to your online backup with learners, or create an online document that learners can contribute to.
- Ask learners to break out into groups to research the content and present mini-lessons or resources from what they have learned.
- Ask learners to download the slides that are available in most courses.

Be aware that these approaches will affect your timing and you should adjust your lessons accordingly.

4. (VI) You chose to use an external application to run a poll, white board, mind map or similar interactive activity. A learner refuses to use the application and claims that Personal Identification Information (PII) needs to be shared with the application to use it.

Instructors must be aware that it is any learner's right to refuse use of a file-sharing application from the cloud even if the application is internationally known. Be aware of privacy laws and regulations for both the instructor and the learner locations. For example, in the European Union (EU), instructors must make sure that General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) law is followed. You should not invite any EU citizen to use an application that is not compliant to EU law. To minimize risk in this area:

- If you are delivering a course with the support of a conference platform, use objects and functionalities (survey, poll, sharing files, etc.) that are embedded in the platform instead of third-party applications for polls or course activities. Avoid the use of supplemental or 3rd party applications that collect and require a user to provide PII to use the application, especially sensitive personal data.
- Limit the view of learner data that is available to other learners. For example, turn off "See Guest List" on applications and calendar invites that are not specific to a single organization (such as public courses). Send mass-class emails using the "BCC" functionality (masks email addresses) instead of the "TO" or "CC" fields.
- Allow a user to sign up for an application using only initials, pseudonyms, or anonymization.
- Turn off screen-sharing any time that learner personal data is accessed during a session to avoid accidentally sharing the information.

5. (F2F, VI) A noisy piece of equipment or a noisy meeting suddenly starts up nearby.

Don't ignore a disruption to the learning process! Pause in your lesson and acknowledge the disruption. Try to assess whether this is going to be a short-term or ongoing disruption. Short-term disruptions may be dealt with by taking a short break. You may also start another activity that will not be as disturbed by the disruption.

(F2F) If the disruption is ongoing, try to approach those in charge of the facility to take action to eliminate the disruption. You may need to relocate to another classroom.

(VI) If someone's microphone is transmitting disturbing noises, make sure to address the problem. You may want first to mention it without pointing out a learner (even though all learners can "see" who is talking in most conferencing applications). You could provide instructions on how to handle microphone muting. It is helpful to encourage learners to self-monitor or provide feedback to other learners if a disruption occurs. You can also choose to set each call-in to automatically mute and learners can choose to unmute for discussion opportunities.

6. (F2F, VI) You find it difficult to keep track of the logistics for your sessions or lessons.

For instructor preparation, prepare detailed checklists for all your instructional requirements (see Training Checklist TBD). Be sure to do your last-minute check just before you start instructing. This is why it is essential to arrive at the training site at least one hour in advance of your start time on the first day and 15 minutes for each class session. For the lesson itself, your lesson plan is where all the required logistics should reside.

For learner preparation, it is important to summarize not only what was learned in a session, but what learners can expect to learn or prepare for in the next session. For example, after each session post a "This session we completed" section as well as a "Next session we will review" section to best prepare learners to complete any prework or homework assignments before the next session. The prior week's "This session we completed" section can be used as a bridging activity (review of content) for the following week and a "Next session we will review" section becomes a guide for the next session's activities.

7. (F2F, VI) Your lesson plan timing did not match the actual time taken to complete the lesson.

If your lesson takes less time than anticipated and you are working with an organization, make sure you are aware of the organization's policy concerning early dismissal and follow the policy. If early release is permitted, give learners options to leave early, spend the remaining time pursuing any open issues or parking lot items, holding an open Q&A session from learners, completing a comprehension check, or reviewing quiz questions and rationale. As an instructor, plan to remain until the last learner leaves or the dedicated lesson time has ended. If early release is not permitted, be prepared with those same types of supplemental activities and give learners the choice to decide on the activities to complete with the additional time.

If your lesson is taking more time than anticipated, inform and ask learners to identify the most essential areas to be covered or the content that is most important to the learners. Concentrate on those essential areas for the rest of the lesson, making sure to cover critical points for each section that learners may not have identified as essential. Make a note to cover the remaining points in another lesson if possible or follow up with a supplemental activity or communication. Don't deal with the challenge by simply speeding up your lesson.

8. (F2F, VI) A stranger walks into your classroom in the middle of a lesson or your training session is "Zoom-bombed" or "Zoom-raided."

(F2F) Acknowledge a physical presence in your classroom with eye contact, but don't disrupt the learning process unless the stranger disrupts the lesson or you perceive a potentially unsafe situation. When possible, assign learners a small group activity, a discussion activity, or a short break and ask the stranger how you may be of assistance. Proceed to deal with the situation as you see appropriate to minimize the impact of the disruption and maintain a safe learning environment.

(VI) "Zoombombing" or "Zoom raiding" is the unwanted and disruptive intrusion into a video-conference call using any conferencing application such as Zoom, Webex, Teams, Meets, Skype, etc. In a typical incident, a teleconferencing session is hijacked by the insertion of material that is lewd, obscene, or racist in nature, typically resulting in the shutdown of the session. To prevent Zoombombing, do not publicly post conference information (links or phone numbers) and use a security access code for the meeting. In addition, use a waiting room and an "Invite only" option for the conference call in which the instructor must accept a learner into the conference call session. A meeting host is responsible for immediately reporting the issue and shutting down the Zoom-bombed conference session. Follow up with instructions to learners on how to reconnect for future sessions.

9. (VI) The camera, microphone, or speaker quality in your session is of poor quality (instructor or learner).

Check for other usage of your internet access that could occupy the band width, including turning off non-essential WIFI use such as Alexa, streaming services or platforms, or phones connected to WIFI. You can also remove high impact applications from the Start-up group in your computer's Task Manager; adjust these applications to run only when invoked.

It is recommended to restart your computer to refresh a conference tool application or when using multiple conferencing applications during the day. Encourage learners to turn off their cameras when needed. Stop sharing your camera if your session has a low bandwidth or is creating poor quality. Call the conference phone number to join the audio portion of the call if you are unable to resolve the speaker or microphone issues.

10. (VI) A video you want to share is not playing.

In an instructional environment, watching videos is considered a passive learning activity and should be assigned to learners as pre-work or homework for a session. Make sure to provide the full link to the video. Avoid sharing videos in class unless the video can be viewed without ads and in full-screen view or is embedded in a presentation.

If watching a video is important to the success of a lesson and the video is not playing, recheck the technology and volume settings. Be aware that some conferencing software disables third-party applications from broadcasting sound during the conference call; the conference host will hear the video but the conference attendees will not. You can also share the video link and request that learners watch the video on their own devices using headsets or shared resources during the session. If you have formed a WhatsApp group or any other form of community chat you can share the video link or post it to your course documents.

11. (F2F, VI) You need to determine the class size needed to effectively teach using an interactive approach.

There is no right answer for this challenge. Engagement and learner interaction is not decided by the number of learners in a class but rather by the level of active instructional techniques and media used in a class. While it can be difficult to manage interactive exercises with a large group, using small groups, pairing, or individual activities can effectively promote interaction amongst and between learners. For each 3.0 to 3.5 hours of instruction, make a point to include at least one to three (1-3) of each of the following:

- Whole group (or half class) activities where the instructor facilitates discussions (does not deliver new content);
- Small group or paired activities or breakouts where learners group separately for discussions or activities and select group representatives to present findings or feedback;
- Opportunities for learners to present content, either from small groups or Q&A activities, both orally and in written (chat) format; and
- Opportunities for private reflection time and feedback, such as "Please chat 1-2 items you learned during this section (or session)" or "Please chat 1-2 items you found interesting in this section (or session) and indicate why it was interesting to you."

12. (F2F, VI) You need to decide when and how to distribute/share handouts or activity instructions.

Two key recommendations: 1) When: distribute your handouts at a time that maximizes the learning process for learners; and 2) How: eliminate the need for physical copies of handouts whenever possible by convert handouts to electronic (working) versions that can be accessed by all learners, including learners that miss a class session. If you must physically distribute a handout, pass the handouts to learners to hand out.

Provide links or distribute handouts prior to a class session (such as the prior week) to give the learners time to review and reflect on the content in preparation for a lesson. However, if the lesson involves limited preparation for an on-the-spot learning opportunity, distribute or give access to the handouts before starting the activity. Any time you distribute handouts, you must plan for and allow time for the learners to review a handout or activity instructions and to ask clarifying questions.

Include a list of hyperlinks to online documents or internet sites that students can access to prepare for lessons. For example, include the hyperlinks in your syllabus, announcement, or homework pages. For on-the-spot activities, prepare cloud access that you can unlock step by step, following the lesson or activity. Ensure each learner has access to the cloud or shared folder.

13. (F2F, VI) A learner asks you a question and you don't know the answer.

Do not try to evade the issue, bluff, or fake an answer. Never be afraid to admit you don't know the answer. No one person knows everything. If the question relates to content that is discoverable by a learner, you can:

- admit that you do not know the answer.
- ask if another learner can share the answer to the question (orally or through chat).

- show the learners where and how to look up the answer using the course resources (or through internet searches).
- ask the learners to research the question and provide the answer at a future time, such as after the break or at the next session.

If the question relates to content that is not discoverable by a learner such as a specific restricted-access resource, you should commit to identifying a resource at a specific future time. Respond back to all class learners (not just the learner that asked the question) if the question is general in nature and respond back to the specific learner if the answer includes personally identifying information.

14. (F2F, VI) You are having difficulty remembering the name(s) of your learners.

(F2F) Use name tents from the first session until you (or other learners) do not require the use of name tents. Deliberately give yourself and other learners the opportunity to attach names to faces by using names when addressing learners. Draw up an informal seating plan for your own use. If you have forgotten a learner's name and you see no name tent or have no record of the name, listen carefully for someone else to use that learner's name. There's nothing wrong with asking a learner, "Could you please remind me of your name?"

(VI) At the beginning of the class make sure to have all the participants identify their meeting login with a first (given) and a last (family) name (or at least the first initial of their last/family name). In some conferencing applications, a learner's information may appear in the conference meeting as the name assigned to the computer resource (such as a conference room name). Ask all learners to submit a Chat to identify their presence, such as "Marie S - calling in from Conference Room 2."

15. (F2F, VI) The lesson you are conducting just isn't working or is confusing learners.

Make sure that lesson plans are tested (practiced) prior to use and ask learners for feedback on a lesson plan after completing the lesson. To reduce confusion, break down the lesson plan into smaller chunks with intermittent comprehension checks. For example, instead of assigning a 10-minute activity for breakout groups to complete an activity, assign a 5-minute activity, regroup as a whole class to confirm understanding or address questions, then return to breakouts for the remaining 5 minutes.

Take a short break to sort out your lesson plan. You may need to try something you had not originally planned. Some change of pace or content may be needed. Ask students to propose ideas on how the students would prefer to learn the material. After your lesson, make sure to update your lesson plans for the activity.

16. (F2F, VI) There are learners in your class that know as much or almost as much about a subject as you do.

At the first opportunity, acknowledge the fact. As frequently as possible, encourage each learner's participation as a resource or to provide examples such as how a specific industry or company has used or handled a content area. Don't be afraid to identify the "expert" capability of each learner in your class. Identify and acknowledge the range of expertise (or lack of prior experience) to discuss alternatives or growth in knowledge maturity for a content area. For example, if a learner is an MRP planner, ask the planner to share a planning screen and describe how the planning information is used.

17. (F2F, VI) One or two of your learners tends to dominate all the discussions.

First, acknowledge there are various comfort levels from learners regarding verbal contributions in class; some learners may prefer an aural sensory modality and others may prefer visual, written, or kinesthetic modality. Use eye contact and body positioning (F2F) to enlist responses or feedback from other learners or transition from whole-class questions to directed questions to specifically ask one to three learners to respond. Provide learners with positive reinforcement when a learner speaks up. (VI) Encourage all learners to chat their response to a question and then pick 1-2 learners to clarify or give additional verbal feedback.

If necessary, speak separately to the dominant learner(s) at a convenient break point to acknowledge the learner's contributions in class and ask the learner(s) to suggest ways to allow other learners to contribute to the discussion without discouraging the dominant learner's participation level.

18. (F2F, VI) A learner expresses disagreement with content (or expresses an alternative viewpoint).

Avoid losing your composure to this challenge or consider this as a negative action from a learner. Verbally thank the learner for feedback and acknowledge a differing viewpoint. Ask the learner to provide more information or his or her reasons for disagreeing. Do this in a calm and confident voice. Invite the other learners to join the discussion and refer to the course resources or content for more information. Gradually turn the challenge into a real learning experience for everyone. Be prepared to acknowledge alternative viewpoints from learners and change your own position if appropriate. Take the discussion offline if you feel you are losing time because of the argument; inform the learner you will follow up and provide a resolution at the next session.

19. (F2F, VI) A learner is rude, hostile, or aggressive or shows obvious signs of restlessness and boredom.

Disrespect through rudeness, hostility or aggressiveness toward other learners or the instructor should be immediately dealt with in a non-confrontational manner. Recognize that the rest of the learners are likely aware of the behavior as well and would like something done about it. If the learner persists, privately discuss the issue with the learner at a break (F2F) or invite the learner to a private breakout session (VI) to address the issue. If the issue is not resolved, you may need to ask (politely but firmly) the learner to leave the classroom (F2F) or block from the call (VI). Follow up with the learner or the host to resolve the issue or seek guidance on policy.

For obvious signs of restlessness or boredom from one or more learners, take this as a cue to evaluate your lessons. Frequently check with learners for feedback on the lessons. Compare the frequency and time allotted to active versus passive teaching methods and increase the active methods as needed. Increase the "learner talk time" and decrease the "instructor talk time." For every 50 minutes of instruction, it is recommended to take a 10-minute break and to plan for a change of pace at least every 15 to 20 minutes. The content you are teaching may not be exciting, but you can increase learner engagement and participation by increasing active participation by the learners frequently and consistently throughout your lessons.

20. (F2F, VI) One of your learners suddenly seems to be suffering from a physical or medical issue.

It is important to be prepared for a situation like this, but to not make assumptions about a learner's actions, intent, or medical situation. Encourage learners to request learning accommodations for vision, hearing, physical, or emotional impairments or identify classroom accommodations that have worked for the learner in the past (extra time, frequent breaks, quiet areas, etc.). Encourage learners to stand up, stretch, or move around the classroom or during conference sessions as needed. A learner may have an embarrassing personal hygiene condition and the last thing the learner needs is for you to draw attention to the situation by requiring the learner to sit in a chair for a lesson.

(F2F) Physical or medical emergencies cannot be ignored and should not be handled by the instructor alone. If another learner seems to be helping an impaired learner and the impaired learner wants to leave the room, let the learners leave as discreetly as possible. Call for a break or bring the class situation back to a learning environment as quickly as you can. Make sure to follow up with learners that leave the room as quickly as possible. In other cases, the learner may be having a more serious problem, such as having a seizure or choking. Whatever the situation, keep calm, remain firmly in charge, and have one or more of your students call for professional assistance immediately in the event of a potential medical emergency. If other learners know first aid or have some medical competence, let the learner(s) assist or direct. Follow all other safety and notification protocols for the location or host as required. During your class preparation ask about the medical kit location and always identify an emergency contact such as training manager, 919, HR, Hotel supervisor etc.

