

Colvin Clarke, R. & Kwinn, A. (2007). Packaging your Virtual Classroom Session in *The New Virtual Classroom Evidence Based Guidelines for Synchronous e-Learning*. (p.183-203). San Francisco CA: Pfeiffer

In this chapter the authors suggest that there are external elements that should be considered in order to increase the effectiveness of the virtual classroom. They identify four elements and discuss how they lead to a reduction or improvement in the virtual classroom experience. The first element discusses the fit of the virtual classroom with other learning methods and suggests that this will extend the benefits of the virtual classroom and compliment other training interventions. The common theme of the remaining elements is that of preparation, preparation of trainers using the technology, preparation of learners using the technology and finally preparation of module hand outs. The chapter closes with an expert's forum illustrating how the guidelines have been implemented in workplace training.

In outlining these external elements the authors provide the reader with the common issues that occur when using this technology and provide practical advice on how to deal with them. In addition to the experts forum at the end of the chapter there are numerous examples and comments from experts who deliver training in the corporate environment throughout the chapter which explain further how they have coped with these elements.

It seems obvious that trainers and learners need to be prepared to use this environment; however the chapter when broken down can provide a checklist that can ensure that the preparation provided is appropriate. As this technology will be used synchronously and asynchronously the chapter provides insight in session planning and identifying how goals may be achieved using both methods. I feel that all the information provided is useful and practical and will be used as I discuss the issue of preparation; however for me the most valuable aspect of the chapter is that relating to planning effective hand outs. The tendency can be to provide printed or electronic versions of the presentation. If we implement the authors' advice on creating presentations that reduce cognitive load and use the modality principle these presentations only carry half the message. The other half is in the narration provided by the presenter. The advice given is to create work aids that can be used when back on the job. This advice does much to solve the issue of hand outs that tend to be used during training only and never make it back to the workplace environment.

