101 Ways to Make Learning *Active* Beyond the Classroom

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CONTENTS

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All authors list people to whom they are grateful, but this is a volume that never would have occurred without the pioneers in learning and development (L&D) who push us to be the best that we can be. Look carefully at the contributors' names at the end of the activities. They are the ones, our generous colleagues, who willingly shared their best activities so that all of us may benefit. A humble thank you to all of you. You motivate me.

Of the contributors, a special thank you to everyone who tweeted, texted, emailed, and called their colleagues; contributed extra activities; volunteered to help; and were involved in 101 other ways: Wendy Axelrod, Jane Bozarth, Peter Garber, Barbara Glacel, Catherine Lombardozzi, Karen Lawson, Lynne Lazaroff, Renie McClay, David Powell, Kella Price, Tracy Tagliati, Shannon Tipton, Amy Tolbert. Thanks for your contributions and for going "beyond" in order to make learning active.

This volume draws heavily upon what I've learned from the professionals I call the "e-learning elite" and the other industry experts who continue to encourage us through their research, their writings, their admonishments, and their brilliance. Without these people, we would not be where we are in guiding others to develop in the best and most natural ways: Clark Aldrich, Jon Aleckson, Michael Allen, Jane Bozarth, Ruth Clark, Jenny Dearborn, Julie Dirksen, Jane Hart, Jennifer Hofmann, Bill Horton, Cindy Huggett, Karl Kapp, Elliott Masie, Clark Quinn, Patti Shank, Thiagi, Karie Willyerd, and others.

Thanks to my husband Dan, who created masterpieces in the kitchen to sustain me through all of those long hours of writing: cinnamon chip scones, brandied

INTRODUCTION: GETTING THE MOST FROM THIS RESOURCE

Talent developers of the world, this book was written for you. Our job is to give learners an experience that makes them leave with increased competence, confidence, and commitment. Developing people ensures our organizations have the ability to achieve their visions in a "VUCA" world. The term "VUCA" has been around for almost 20 years. Some of you may have heard the term before. VUCA stands for volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous—terms that reflect an increasingly unstable and rapidly changing business world—the world in which we all work today.

As the people who guide the development of employees, we have a critical role to play in supporting the talent that deals with the VUCA world. The ability to find rare or unique talent in many specialized occupations is becoming increasingly important for organizational success, yet fewer and fewer people possess the skills required. Once the needed talent is found, how do you attract these people to your organization and keep them there? Now, before you scream "That's not my job," think about this: Can specialized talent be developed, and, if so, how? What developmental experiences are needed to grow such talent? It is your job. And ensuring that the development is exciting, practical, timely, and encourages talent to stay is also your job.

You are developing the capability for your organization's future—technical and professional skills. The pace of changes in technology accelerates each year, creating even more demand for highly educated people. Imagine the skills that will be needed in the future for things such as electric cars, new sources of energy, cyber-security, changes in government regulations, mobile computing applications,

or the customization of services. Few organizations have the "capability"—the skills and knowledge for any of these or a host of other science, technology, engineering, or math careers (commonly called STEM).

There is lots of chatter about new technology and delivery systems. Your job is to find the right mix of coaching, mentoring, stretch assignments, rotational assignments, and training interventions to meet the job requirements of today and of the future. Gamification, the application of game-playing elements to nongame environments like the workplace, will continue to grow as organizations think about ways to engage their employees, assess skills, and attract talent. In addition, utilizing point systems, badges, leaderboards, and other competitive tactics to encourage desirable behaviors—such as employee health and wellness, training and development, and performance—is likely to increase. Organizations are transitioning from using gamification as a tactic into using it as a strategy, for example, using it to discover underlying business problems.

There is a new emphasis on experiential learning. Most of us know that experiential learning is effective, yet few organizations get the full benefit of this learning. Research at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) and the University of North Carolina shows that companies that want to develop a bench strength within their talent pool can increase the impact of development by helping employees learn from experience.

"Less is more" is one of the themes that cycles throughout conferences and conversations. As practitioners, we need to find the least amount of content that our learners need. The Internet is filled with information. We are overwhelmed with data. There is no shortage of information. What our learners need right now is just the right amount. Just as Goldilocks was looking for not too soft, not too hard, but just right, so we need to find not too much, not too little—but just the right amount for our learners. This book will help you do just that.

Few of us rely on only virtual or only classroom delivery. The activities in this text are written with that in mind. However, as you read the activities, you will easily see that they can all be adapted to many situations.

How This Book Is Organized

Top 10 Lists

You will find top tips from cover to cover. Literally! *The 101 Active Learning* book series has always started with 20 "Top 10" lists. This text does also. But it goes *beyond*—like its title. This book *ends* with a "Top 10" list. The end of this book is really the beginning of what's to come. David Powell, a futurist at CCL, shares what he believes learning will be like in the not-too-distant future with "10 Ways to Think about Learning in the Future." It is an intriguing list and one that requires a special spot. This provocative list is a great way to end the book. You will find this bonus list located between "Active Learning Idea 101" and the "Additional Reading" list.

101 Ways beyond the Classroom

The 101 techniques described in this text are divided into five sections. Each is described here to help you know where to find the technique that will be most beneficial. Note that there is crossover from one topic to another. So, just because you don't find something in one area, check another area. For example, an activity using Twitter might be found under "e-Learning tools," "Social Learning," "Technology in the Classroom," or "Online Learning Activities."

Online Learning

The section "Online Learning" delivers ideas and tools to create an exciting and practical virtual learning experience. Although the activities are designed for an online experience, each of them can be used in other settings.

- Online Openings: First contacts create a lasting impression. The first 10 minutes of any initial meeting between two people lays the groundwork for almost all assumptions and decisions about the ensuing relationship. This is true with the opening of your online session.

- Online Closings: Closings need as much attention as openings. A well-delivered closing incorporates a review, ensures that expectations have been met, confirms the transfer of learning to the workplace, and offers an appropriate send-off with a positive message.

- Online Learning Activities: Many trainers forget that they need to conduct online learning in the same way they do face-to-face learning. You can't throw adult learning principles out the door just because your learners are not in the room with you.

- Online Asynchronous Learning: Learners are able to complete asynchronous learning modules at their convenience. Interaction is still expected in these sessions; however, the interaction refers to the interface between the learner and the instructional methods.

- Unique Online Situations: These activities offer you a variety of ways in which learning can occur but may not be thought of as "developmental." You will find a strategy for learning about global needs of an organization, an online orientation, and a strategy to use to facilitate a team-building session (or any other topic) as a facilitator from afar.

Technology Tactics

Technology has opened exciting doors for learning and development in the past couple of years. Experiment with technology and discover new ways to engage your learners and deliver content in creative and memorable ways.

- Blended Solutions: Everything can fit into this category, but that does not make it blended learning. Just because you have a video, an asynchronous activity, and a classroom module does not make it "blended." Rather, "blended" means that you have chosen the best delivery methodologies to match specific objectives.

- e-Learning Tools: Breakouts, chat rooms, document sharing, polling, raised hand, whiteboards, annotation tools—these are some among many options that you have in online courses. Have you also used a meter poll, course map, Pinterest, Evernote, Poll Everywhere, or Twitter? This section presents a broad variety of tools that you can use in many situations.

- m-Learning: Think of m-learning as a miniature data point—perhaps a skill check, producing a quick connection with your learners. It must be concise, encouraging a response from your learners. It must be easy to understand, since the learners may be distracted. Ideally, it should offer just-in-time support.

- Social Learning: Social learning allows trainers to extend learning between formal training events. Using blogs, wikis, community spaces, Google Wave, Skype, YouTube, Twitter, and other social media tools for learning will maximize an organization's investment in learning.

- Technology in the Classroom: Learners bring their own tools in the form of smartphones, tablets, and laptops. Take advantage of these whenever you can. They provide multiple options for you to collect needs assessment information, survey participants, communicate messages via words or pictures (or both), and follow up later.

Learn from Many

Learning comes from many different directions and various people. Help your learners seek out other options by directing them toward mentors or peer learning groups. Help supervisors understand the critical job they have in coaching and teaching their employees, and help them find team experiences that lead to learning.

- Learning on a Team: Individuals may use cross-functional teams as an opportunity for development in large organizations. Teams are created to solve an organizational problem or to implement a process that spans the breadth of the organization and requires representation from many departments.

- My Mentor and Me: A mentoring partnership is an agreement between two people who share experiences and expertise to facilitate personal and professional growth. Mentoring provides an approach for less experienced employees to learn and hone skills that will make them more effective.

- Put Me in Coach: Most Fortune 500 companies hire coaches, both internal and external, to support their workforce. Most organizations also expect managers to coach their employees to be better at their jobs. Your job may be to help managers understand this role.

- Peer-to-Peer Learning: Providing personal and professional support between colleagues is often quite informal. These learning ideas may provide the impetus to encourage more options or enhance what is already occurring.

Learning on the Job

Everyone learns on the job. Whether you help yourself, receive assignments from your supervisor, learn from experiences, tap into the Internet, ask a colleague, or join a professional association, every experience that you have and encourage your learners to have benefits both the individual and the organization.

- Help Yourself: Self-directed learning appeals to all of us because we prefer to learn on our own and because it is self-paced. The flexibility allows us to learn when and where we want. This supports most of our natural learning desires.

- Informal Learning: The unofficial, impromptu, unscheduled way most people learn to do their jobs is responsible for 70 to 80 percent of all learning. We need to create an organizational culture that supports informal learning.

- Learn from Experience: Designing experiential learning activities to fit into classroom activities ensures learners practice skills. Bringing the real world into the classroom gives learners skills that are required to solve today's problems. Finding ways to take the entire learning group to the site is even better.

- On-the-Job Assignments: Supervisors have many tools at their disposal: rotational assignments, stretch assignments, project-based assignments, and others. Supervisors decide which learning developmental assignments will be most beneficial for each employee. As an L&D professional, you may need to help supervisors define this important role.

Learning beyond the Workplace

Learning doesn't stop when learners leave the workplace. In fact, it may just begin. As an L&D professional, you may need to help learners see the value in various opportunities outside the organization. You may also need to help them see the importance of taking responsibility for their continued learning.

- Learning Outside the Organization: You have teaching options, books to read, association meetings to attend, and people to meet. There are endless things you can do and learn about as long as you keep your eyes open and your options in focus.

- Do Well by Doing Good: Providing time and talent by volunteering is a way to learn new skills and give something back at the same time. Volunteering comes in many roles and sizes. Volunteers may have skills that they can share with others, or it may be a learning experience for them. Volunteering may occur within the same skill set and profession or may be something completely different.

Activity Design

Each of the 101 strategies is arranged in a similar format, making it easy for you to go directly to the activity that you need. Five elements describe each of the 101 activities:

Overview: A statement about the purpose of the strategy and the setting and situation in which it is appropriate.

Participants: The number of participants that are appropriate for the strategy and, in some cases, a definition of the type or level of employee that benefits the most from that strategy.

Procedure: Step-by-step instructions about how to use the strategy and things to remember to make it successful. In many cases, the debriefing questions are built into the procedure.

Variations: Suggested alternatives for ways to use the strategy.

Case Examples: Situations in which the strategy or examples of templates are used to help you visualize how the activity can be successful.

Whether you use the 10 tips list or the 101 strategies, they serve to build a range of "active learning" methods and offer tools to design and inspire active learning beyond the classroom.

200 Tips to Make Training Active and Learning Successful

Active learning beyond the classroom requires that you be aware of a myriad of details. I've continued the 101 Activity Books' tradition of opening with 200 tips that address many of these details. The tips cover everything from opening to closing a virtual learning session. You'll find ideas for engaging virtual learners and using annotation tools. There are tips for using breakout rooms, QR codes, polling, and Twitter in both physical and virtual classrooms. The tips will help you get started with using gamification, social media, and shooting a video for a learning session.

Have you been asked to lead a virtual team? Conduct virtual coaching? Check into m-learning for your company? These new 20 Top 10 lists, totaling over 200 training tips, summarize best practices and ideas on how to address some of the issues and challenges that you face. We are fortunate to have tapped into some of the best trainers in the world for these tips to make your life easier. And there is a bonus. Starting on page 297 David Powell of the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) shares "10 Ways to Think About Learning in the Future." What an exciting way to end this book!

You may have heard of some of these tips and may already have used many of them. If you have others, we would love to hear from you and would post them on the book's website along with those listed here. The organized lists provide ideas in a flash for some of the questions that you may have.

Top 10 Lists

1. 10 Tips for Successfully Implementing a Virtual Learning Platform
2. 10 Ideas to Create a Prewebinar Checklist
3. 10 Slides to Organize Your Virtual Learning
4. 10 Tips for Opening an Interactive Online Training Session
5. 10 Webinar Warm-Ups
6. 10 Ways to Engage Virtual Learners
7. 10 Tips for Using Annotation Tools
8. 10 Tips for Using Breakout Rooms in a Virtual Classroom
9. 10 Tips for Using QR Codes in Learning
10. 10 Polling Tips for Virtual Classrooms
11. 10 Phrases to Regain Virtual Participants' Attention
12. 10 Tips for Using Twitter for Ongoing Learning
13. 10 Tips to Get Started with Games and Gamification
14. 10 Ways to Use Social Media Tools to Support Learning
15. 10 Tips to Be Successful with m-Learning
16. 10 Tips for Shooting a Video
17. 10 Tips for Virtual Coaching
18. 10 Tips for Virtual Teamwork
19. 10 Tips for Leaders as Teachers
20. 10 Tips and Options for Training in Virtual Reality Environments

1   10 Tips for Successfully Implementing a Virtual Learning Platform

Kevin Costner was told in *Field of Dreams,* "Build it, and they will come." This mind-set may work for an Iowa corn farmer and a magical baseball team, but it does NOT work for a new learning system. To meet and exceed business objectives for a virtual learning program, it is important to deploy these tips with the virtual learning platform. The experience will be like a great baseball game with the crowd going wild. If you choose to ignore some of these essential steps, you will find yourself sitting on an empty bench looking at a corn field.

1. **Effective communication.** If the target audience does not know about the new learning system, they will not participate, and the desired results will not be realized. During communication, highlight why the new learning system is good for the target audience. Communicate about the online learning system with references on related websites, in newsletters, in email campaigns, on LinkedIn, on Twitter, and so on. Use physical media to highlight the availability of training (getting-started cards, posters, mouse pads, table tents in conference rooms, etc.).

2. **Set and measure goals.** Have obtainable and measurable goals for the online learning center (e.g., 1,000 new users by March 25; 5,000 users by April 20; and 3,000 completed courses by July 20). Measure and communicate the progress on a monthly basis.

3. **Access and ease of use.** Create easy access to the training (minimize barriers). A rule of thumb is that a user should be able to find and access a specific learning object within two mouse clicks from logging in. Enable easy visibility for learners to see the courses they need to take as well as completed courses.

4. **Substantial and meaningful content.** The learning site needs to provide relevant and engaging content. A new course or updated content should be available on a regular basis. Take this opportunity to communicate additional material to all learners.

5. **Think multiplatform.** Learners should be able to access training from their PC, tablet, and mobile device through multiple browser types. Insure the training is tested to work across browsers on multiple platforms.

Should you also consider a need for learners to be able to access via wearables (e.g., Google Glasses, the Apple watch, or others)?

6. **Leverage search engine optimization (SEO) to promote your website.** If the training is for external audiences, effective SEO helps users find and access the new training system through organic or paid searches. Optimizing a virtual classroom may require changes in content and HTML coding in order to improve search engine indexing.

7. **Use website analytics to optimize learning site performance.** Website analytics (like Google Analytics) help firms realize important updates that need to be made based on web page statistics. By using website analytics, firms can improve the performance of a virtual training platform by making changes to site navigation, organization, and content. Reviewing analytics will provide insight into usage trends around web browser usage, operating system usage, along with key data around times of access, the path of learners, and the region where training occurs.

8. **Secondary support.** Connect the online training with in-person training, national meetings, and webinars. Obtain senior leadership support and communicate results.

9. **Incentivize and promote engagement.** Highlight participation success. Think about a contest to jump-start the program. Highlight performance success based upon learning participation. Respond immediately to feedback or suggestions.

10. **Encourage feedback from learning.** Collect feedback in a systematic way via ratings and comments. Respond to feedback from learners in a timely and instructive manner.

Ideas from Charlie Gillette, Knowledge Anywhere, Inc.

2 10 Ideas to Create a Prewebinar Checklist

Many things can occur during a webinar over which you may have no control. You do, however, have control over the time prior to the session while you are engaged in setting it up. Create a checklist that will help you remember all of the things that you want to do to either prevent problems or to be prepared if a problem occurs during the session.

1. **Set up an "away-message" and log in at least 30 minutes prior to the session.** Ensure that you use your "away-message" in your email that includes the webinar link and dial-in information. Participants will automatically have the information needed to join your webinar so that you will not be distracted while you are setting up or starting your meeting.

2. **Log in on an extra computer.** Use a second computer and log in as a participant so that you can see what participants see.

3. **Create a memory stick and script backup.** Save your presentation on a memory stick in case you need to use a different computer at the last moment. Also, script what you will say/do so that you have a guide to follow. It's easy to get off track, especially if you experience technical difficulties.

4. **Plan to wear a headset and plug into a landline phone.** Wear a headset, preferably wireless, so that you can move about as you facilitate the session. This will project more energy in your voice. Use a landline phone for best audio results and be sure to have an Internet connection with a high bandwidth. Wi-Fi connections can vary, and you may become disconnected from the meeting.

5. **Expect differences in platforms.** Recognize that some formatting, animations, or slide transitions created in your slide program may not work with your webinar platform. Also, what works in one platform may not work in another.

6. **Close your email.** Reduce your distractions and avoid an embarrassing situation by closing down your email and instant message notifications.

7. **Script your session with a partner.** Tag-team with another facilitator. Switching voices and personalities is a good way to give yourself time to handle the technological aspects of facilitating online, and you and your

partner's personal banter will keep the audience engaged. Always use a script—with a partner or not—to keep you focused.

8. **Mute participants.** While you are presenting content, mute your audience to reduce background noise.

9. **Plan to record your session.** Recording your session allows participants to go back and key in on topics of interest. It also provides you a way to critique yourself and make improvements for the next go-round. Were there technical difficulties? Did you pause too frequently? In what parts of the session did the conversation lag? Did you say "umm" too many times?

10. **Insert a greeting slide.** Insert a slide at the beginning of your sessions with a picture of you as the host(s) so that the participants can relate to the person behind the voice(s). Go beyond the typical headshot and post pictures that show you in action—perhaps conducting a session in front of a group or even at your desk, replete with headset and computer screen. If you work with the group often, change your picture and start including pictures that show what you do outside of work, too: working in your garden, riding your horse, practicing Pilates, baking a cake, taking in a ballgame, ice skating, or whatever makes you, you.

3　10 Slides to Organize Your Virtual Learning

When you deliver training in a virtual classroom, add a few slides to help you communicate clearly with participants. This will help you maintain your focus and organization. Here is a list of slides you can use for your training session:

1. **Facilitator slide.** Photos, names, titles, and locations of the facilitating team.

2. **Participant slide.** Photos, names, titles, and locations of participants.

3. **Interactive features slide.** Instructions on how to interact using the features of the virtual classroom (e.g., chat, raise hand, whiteboard tools) with a screen shot of each feature.

4. **Audio slide.** Description of how the audio works (one-way or two-way audio) and how the teleconference works.

5. **Agenda slide.** Show the order and timing of topics and break times. Insert this slide between sections throughout your training as you conclude a topic and start a new one.

6. **Materials slide.** If you sent materials to participants prior to the session, show a photo of the materials and describe what materials participants need and how they will be used. For example, show an image of the participant workbook and then describe what the participants should do next.

7. **Exercise instructions slide.** For each exercise, create a slide with clear instructions describing the exercise, how long it will last, which interactive features will be used, and any materials needed to complete the exercise.

8. **Transition slide.** This slide signals the transition to a new topic, a new activity, or a new facilitator.

9. **Break slide.** This slide indicates that the class is on a break and shows the time when the break ends.

10. **Concluding slide.** This slide indicates that the class has concluded. Include your contact information or website here, if appropriate.

Ideas from Darlene Christopher, author, *The Successful Virtual Classroom*.

4   10 Tips for Opening an Interactive Online Training Session

An engaging virtual training session begins from the moment participants join in. Set the stage for interactivity right from the start!

1. **Begin early.** Invite learners to join the session 10 minutes early so that they are ready to begin at the start time and in order to resolve any technical issues.

2. **Say "hello."** Greet each learner by name when they join in to make them immediately feel welcome.

3. **Engage them upon connection.** Engage learners with an activity, such as a poll question, as soon as they connect.

4. **Display the logistics.** Post a rolling slide show to inform learners about administrative items so that you don't need to spend time reviewing logistics at the start.

5. **Tell them about the tools.** Help learners get comfortable with the platform tools one at a time by inviting them to click and type on screen.

6. **Play music.** Play upbeat music to set an engaging tone.

7. **Show your face.** Turn on your webcam to say "Hello" and invite participants to do the same, even if you don't plan to use it throughout the session.

8. **Clarify what's ahead.** Set expectations by letting learners know that this will be an interactive session.

9. **Remove diversions.** Ask learners to remove surrounding distractions in their work space and to let you know once they have done this step.

10. **Chat early.** Invite learners to connect with each other via the chat feature, to form relationships, and to help them realize they are in a virtual "room" with others.

Ideas from Cindy Huggett, CPLP, Cindy Huggett Consulting.

5   10 Webinar Warm-Ups

You may have encouraged participants to join your virtual classroom early. What can they do if they have logged on and everything is working well? Lots! Here are a few ideas.

1. **Brain teasers.** Show a continuous series of brain teasers.

2. **Video.** Show a brief video clip that illustrates a concept from your program.

3. **Discussion question.** Post a discussion question and show instructions on how to use the chat feature.

4. **Survey.** Post two or three survey questions, and give instructions on how to "vote." Remember to show the survey results when you begin the webinar.

5. **Whiteboard response.** Post the whiteboard with a standard quadrant grid and show instructions for how to use the arrow feature. Pose a question and let participants use the arrow feature to display their answer. Example: "How long have you been a supervisor?"

Over 6 years	4 to 6 years
1 to 3 years	New and eager to learn

6. **Cartoons.** Show a series of cartoons related to your topic. Be sure you have obtained permission from the author. If all of your participants are in the same industry, the cartoons could all relate to that one industry.

7. **Quotes.** Show a continuous series of quotes related to the topic.

8. **Fast draw.** Show a "Fast Draw" story depicting a concept from your program.

9. **Foundation.** Show a series of slides reviewing the foundational concepts that precede your program.

10. **Surprising facts.** Show a series of interesting or surprising facts, such as, "Did you know…?"

Ideas from Jo Lynn Feinstein, EdD CPLP, DaVita—HealthCare Partners.

6   10 Ways to Engage Virtual Learners

Have you had times when you were facilitating a webinar and no matter what you tried, you simply could not get a response from your learners? Expect engagement and participation—otherwise, why are they called "participants"? Here's a list of great ideas from colleagues for ways to engage virtual learners. How do you do all of this and still keep your sanity? Provide behind-the-scenes support. Prepare alternative ways in which participants may reach you if they are having difficulty (via email, text, chat box). Work with a producer or a partner; take turns providing behind-the-scenes support as needed.

1. **A strong introduction.** Online courses have the reputation of experiencing high truancy rates as the courses progress. Some of this can be curtailed by ensuring that you start strong. In typical face-to-face classes, trainers often spend the first meeting allowing participants to tell their fellow classmates a bit about themselves. This practice is just as important as reviewing the course agenda and should be maintained in the online setting as well. As the first assignment, have participants submit a post to the group outlining their interests as related to the course and outside the course as well.

2. **Face time.** The best way to facilitate introductions is through a video. A majority of participants will have at their disposal the capability to record and upload a short video introduction, likely via their smartphones. The value of seeing one another's faces and hearing each other's voices, although it may not be the primary mode of communication throughout the rest of the session, is invaluable. This practice initiates a sense of community learning, no matter the physical location of each participant and, when repeated throughout the duration of course, maintains that sense of community.

3. **Foster communication.** Do not hope that online discussion will blossom as it normally would in a physical classroom; ensure that it does blossom by setting clear guidelines and allowing opportunities for it to happen. As the facilitator, you should not talk the entire time. Give participants avenues to chat with one another, discuss ideas, and ask questions of each other. This allows them to benefit from the group's experience and make connections. If the class uses posts, establish minimum requirements for how and when participants