

IANLP International Association for NLP

Buckstrasse 13, CH-8311 Pfungen, Switzerland
info@ia-nlp.org | www.ia-nlp.org



Online vs. On-site Training

Benefits of in-the-room, in-person trainings

Presuppositions

- *Online and on-site modality have different strengths and weaknesses. They are not fundamentally better or worse.*
- *Online training is particularly suitable for achieving knowledge-oriented training goals.*
- *The more actional competencies or profound personality development (social and emotional competencies) are part of the training objective, the more demanding it becomes to achieve this through online training.*

Antidote: Under this heading, we have noted tips for measures to make online events as close as possible to the benefits of on-site events. (updated as of, see footer)

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Benefit 1: Engagement

Most students struggle to stay focused on a screen for a full day of training. Although many facilitators make attempts to keep virtual learning engaging, in-person training is usually more engaging. Plus, on-site training is a great break from screens for those workers who spend all day using computers as part of their daily work.

Antidote: Include as many action sequences (possibly away from screen) and sharing in groups as possible.

Benefit 2: Kinesthetic Anchoring / Touch

Many of the most powerful personal change intervention of the NLP work best with the aid of kinesthetic anchors. In a world where many people lack the closeness and touch of other people (with corresponding psychological and emotional consequences), the work with kinesthetic anchors is particularly valuable. The execution of kinesthetic anchors (touch) must be trained repeatedly in order to gain the competence to execute them correct and respectfully in client coaching.

Antidote: Ask students to meet locally in small groups and join online session. Ask students to train kinesthetic anchoring in homework. Ask students to bring a friend to the online session and have assistants supervise them closely.

Benefit 3: Spatial Anchoring in Presentation as well as in Exercising

Accelerated Learning; Walk the talk. By using the space on stage, the trainer delivers her presentation using spatial anchors. In this way, both content-related and process-related understanding are trained at the same time. State-of-the-art NLP training should always convey both elements simultaneously. This is one of the outstanding assets of the NLP methodology.

This technique may be used to allow students the benefit of going full second position. Or utilizing the benefits of the different senses (kinesthetic, auditory and visual) for accelerated learning. Thus making presentations attractive for different learning styles of students.

Spatial anchoring is also used for delivering and practicing different NLP techniques. Each step can and will be a full body experience where body and mind work together in living the change instead of talking about it only.

Antidote 1: Have enough cameras and assistants to being able to switch professionally during presentation from full body-view (on stage) to face-view when talking to side-view when moving on stage.

Antidote 2: Participants must attend with screens large enough to easily interpret/read all body movement (spatial anchors) presented.

Antidote 3: The participant's space (background) must be large enough to also allow standing up and walking in full view (full body) of the camera. And a microphone must be placed so that the participant can be heard from anywhere in the room.

Benefit 4: Hands On

Especially for NLP, whose strength lies in its practical applicability, it is particularly important that the training includes many practical action sequences. In-person training provides just this. The opportunity to practice skills, and participate in real-world drills with real people in real situations. And rest assured, coaching people in real situations is a completely different challenge than accompanying them with the help of digital media.

Antidote 1: Ask students to meet locally in small groups and join online session. Ask students to train kinesthetic anchoring in homework. Ask students to bring a friend to the online session and have assistants supervise them closely.

Antidote 2: Make it clear in your announcements (marketing) that students in the online training will acquire competencies primarily for the online application of NLP.

Benefit 5: Personal Growth

This brings us to the third benefit of in-person training. If you want to accompany and support people in personal processes (be it in family, management, education, social work or any professional context), rather sooner than later you will also be confronted with your very own strengths and weaknesses.

In high-quality NLP training, ample time is devoted to provide students with personalized feedback so they can understand behavioral patterns, reflect on their experience, acquire new optimized patterns and work on emotional issues as well.

Also, it is in the context of a in-the-room, face-to-face environment that trainers and co-students can provide best the kind of personalized feedback that will help learners to acquire the presuppositions of NLP on a conscious and unconscious level, which are essential for high-end verbal and non-verbal communicative skills and their overall ability to perform.

Antidote 1: Ask students to meet locally in small groups and/or to bring a friend to the online session. And have assistants supervise their training in groups closely.

Antidote 2: Ask for the participant's space (background) being large enough to also allow standing up and walking in full view (full body) of the camera. And a microphone must be placed so that the participant can be heard from anywhere in the room. This will provide the assistants with the basis for more in-depth feedback not only on linguistics but also on nonverbal behavior.

Benefit 6: Confidentiality

All Fellow Member Trainers of the IANLP will create a safe environment for learning and get the participants to agree that anything that is said or done in the classroom is confidential ("What's done in the classroom stays in the classroom"). Every good NLP training also includes working on very personal growth issues. In a synchronous e-learning environment, the student may be leery of talking about a personally more challenging topic. Firstly because she/he can never really be sure who else is watching and/or if the session is being recorded by anyone of the participants. Secondly, because s/he may not trust, that the topic can be adequately addressed and dealt with from a distance.

Antidote: As of today, we are not aware of any truly effective measure to prevent this phenomenon. With the formation of a trusting atmosphere, this problem is usually defused considerably in the course of a training.

Benefit 7: Individual Attention to Participant Needs

In a face-to-face in-the-room class, the trainer may notice that one or more participants are having specific problems, either in understanding some topic or in applying the learning to their particular situation. A good trainer will watch for signs of these problems and will either utilize these signs to improve the training and/or will offer to help those participants during breaks or after class.

It is easier in a in-the-room training to be aware of these signals and to use the momentum to utilize what is happening for the benefit of learning. Also it's easier to pick up signals from a peripheral vision and have the entire 'bodies' in view instead of the faces close to each other.

Experience in synchronous online settings shows that it takes some expertise to read these kinds of (often unconscious) body language signs. In addition in an online environment, it is not easy for participants to recognize where the trainer's attention is focused. The trainer may look at a particular student in the upper left corner of his/her screen, while this student is shown in a different place on the screen for other participants.

Antidote 1: Take frequent breaks (even short ones) and remain responsive to students at the screen to allow for spontaneous one-on-one contact.

Antidote 2: Schedule individual supervision meetings with each student, allowing ample time for questions and feelings to be expressed.

Benefit 8: Learning From Other Participants

If you are an experienced learner, you will have noticed that a good half of the value you get out of trainings comes not from the training content (no matter how good it may be), but from the informal interaction with other participants, during the class, at breaks, or over lunch, dinner, or drinks. While on-line training groups can offer such opportunities for informal interaction, they cannot match the experience of these often unplanned and chance encounters.

Antidote: Schedule opportunities for informal meetings. Possibly using platforms such as Welo Visual Breakouts or similar, where participants can navigate virtually and meet the people they are attracted to.

Benefit 9: Interaction

Whilst virtual classroom technology is very advanced and equips trainers with the tools they need to interact effectively with students and carry out group activities online, it remains more impersonal than good old-fashioned, in-the-room face-to-face communication and interaction.

Despite state-of-the-art technology, the exchange flows more naturally/organic in an in-the-room meeting versus more forced rather unspontaneous and organized communication in online trainings. It can sometimes be difficult to make your voice heard when typing or talking over the internet. Face-to-face communication in a classroom setting tends to flow better and is easier for the trainer to direct.

In-person communication also makes it easier for both attendees and trainers to build a good rapport with each other and even allows for valuable networking opportunities that would be more difficult in a virtual classroom.

In-the-room experienced trainers may perceive verbal and/or nonverbal cues (from peripheral vision or hearing) that allow training to be supplemented and enhanced in informal ways.

Antidote: Ask students to take notes on their ideas. Interrupt your presentations regularly in favor of short question/answer sequences to pick up on these notes.

Benefit 10: Accelerated Learning

A scientific study titled *'Measuring actual learning versus feeling of learning in response to being actively engaged in the classroom'* (PNAS 2019) found that students believed that they were learning more during passive lectures than during active learning, but the opposite was actually proved to be true. The study stated that *"Students learn more when they are actively engaged in the classroom than they do in a passive lecture environment"* and *"research also shows that active teaching strategies increase lecture attendance, engagement, and students' acquisition of expert attitudes toward the discipline."*

This research suggests that it is more beneficial to choose face-to-face learning wherever it is practical to do so.

Antidote: Resist the tendency to teach more cognitive content in online training simply because it is technically easier to do so. Yes, an action-oriented online training is not only more demanding, but also more expensive (enough assistants and appropriate hardware). Do it anyway!

PNAS 2019 --> <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1821936116>

Benefit 11: Autonomous, self-directed, and incidental cross-fertilization learning.

In an in-the-room event, participants are free to choose who they meet, where they stay, and which of the materials on display they engage with. While browsing through a professional publication on display, they might engage in conversation with co-students and learn about other points of view. Diversity learning at its best.

