



1. Introduction

[Hearing First](#) is a not-for-profit educational endeavor that supports families and professionals around the world with the resources, education, and online communities they need to help children who are deaf or hard of hearing develop their listening and spoken language skills (LSL) just like their hearing friends.

In 2016, Hearing First hired me to help design and implement a program that included live instructional sessions and self-paced materials. ***The goal: To teach a global audience of parents, audiologists, auditory-verbal therapists, and teachers of the deaf how they can best support deaf and hard of hearing children learn to listen and speak.***

Upon my recommendation, we chose Adobe Connect as the platform on which to run the live, online sessions of this initiative. In this case study, I highlight the thinking and actions we pursued in creating a blended-learning model that would advance Hearing First's mission. So far, our initiative has served nearly 10,000 registrations from participants from 66 countries. This paper covers:

- Basics of the flipped-classroom model
- Roles of key team members
- Production, preparation, and planning steps
- Technical considerations
- What our team at Hearing First wishes we had known in the beginning

2. Hearing First's Requirements

The learning experiences that Hearing First envisioned required several characteristics:

- Scalability, to accommodate hundreds of participants at one time
- Local availability, to allow presenters and participants anywhere in the world to participate without traveling
- Synchronous formats, for group activities whose value rises when participants and instructor engage in a live, immersive conversation
- Asynchronous formats, for self-paced activities that participants complete independently

3. Flipped and Blended Models Defined

Typically, corporate training sessions involve no prep work for the participants. Learners expect that the trainer will tell them what they need to know and do when they get there, and any assignments will be completed during or after the live session.

In a ***flipped*** model, however, the independent work happens first and the group work second. Think of a language course in which students read the material or listen to audio recordings first – and then, when attending the live class, expect to apply what they learned and get feedback.

The ***blended*** model describes the mix of formats available for conducting the independent and group work. Blended-learning design aims to match the delivery method with the content and desired type of interaction.

Asynchronous delivery works fine for independent activities such as reading articles on a website or on paper, watching videos, or responding to questions on a discussion board. In contrast, **interactions that require applying learning and receiving feedback make sense for live, group (synchronous) formats.**

Exercise 1: Let's use chat right now.

When I'm running a session, at this point I conduct this exercise: I ask learners to type in chat and mention the types of interactions they've seen or used in **live online sessions** – that is, any session with a live facilitator and logged-in participants. I tell learners I'm going to stop for a minute and read what they're posting in chat.

I ask: "What interactions have you used in this or other online sessions?"

Note to the person reading this paper: Please take a minute to think about this question, and make a mental list before reading the typical answers, below.

Answers might include: raising hand to vote, using the microphone to verbally respond, typing questions in the Q&A pod, using polling for quiz questions, and using breakout groups for team activities and role-plays.

I then ask participants: "Think about when you've been in a self-paced, on-demand, asynchronous environment. That would be any activity that's possible on a computer, smartphone, or tablet. What types of interactions have you used there? Go ahead and type in chat."

Note to the person reading this paper: Please take a minute to think about this question, and make a mental list before reading the typical answers, below.

Participant responses usually include: reading, watching recordings, using page turner, clicking and dragging eLearning modules, completing tests and assignments, talking on the phone, typing on a discussion board, applying, and reporting.

TAKEAWAY. While I could simply display my two lists first – "Live" and "Self-paced" – and read my items aloud, that would not engage learners. I would learn nothing about their experiences and ideas, and learners may question the value of joining this session live. By asking them to think and to use the tool to respond, I create a much more immersive activity than had I simply asked them to

4. Developing Content

The Hearing First team started with a design model developed by [Connie Malamed](#) based on Harold Jarche's "Seek, Sense, and Share" framework. [Jarche's model](#) involves three steps:

- Seek: Discover new information
- Sense: Apply that info, personalized for our own work and our own experiences
- Share: Present that info so that others can learn from what we're learning



Seek

Finding, filtering, and validating new knowledge, as well as discovering who and what to connect to



Sense

Absorbing the knowledge in the particular way you learn and then applying it to your daily life



Share

Customizing and presenting (sharing) the knowledge you applied, as well as collaborating with colleagues

Figure 1. Harold Jarche's "Seek, Sense, Share"; Creative Commons BY-NC 2012; Jarche.com

Corresponding modalities. For each of the three steps, we matched suitable activities as follows:

- **Seek:** Participants engage in "pre-learning" by visiting the custom, private community space we've set up using the Telligent online community platform. We ask them to consume curated content such as recordings of therapy sessions, **interviews** and lectures, articles, white papers, and case studies. They meet each other through personal profiles and posts as well as private messaging.
- **Sense:** Participants connect key learnings with real-life situations. We ask them to use what they learned right away in their practice, or talk to colleagues about it today.
- **Share:** Ultimately, learners comment on the videos, share stories, report outcomes, or write reviews.

Note: For more context on this project, read this [Personal Knowledge Mastery For LSL](#) blog post from the Hearing First team.

5. Assembling Our Team

Choosing facilitators to develop content. Crucial to the success of Hearing First's initiative was carefully selecting and preparing facilitators – auditory-verbal therapists, audiologists, speech teachers, and others trained to work with children who are deaf or hard of hearing. Those facilitators would develop the content – including pre-learning material, live-session content, and between-session content – and then deliver that content effectively.

We looked to industry leaders to help us identify and recruit 25 to 30 facilitators, who were paid a stipend. As they ramped up, we discovered where they needed help in developing content, formatting in PowerPoint (PPT), producing video clips, uploading materials, and managing in-session tools like audio, video, chat, and polls. We committed to coaching them 1:1 using a structured model.

Additional key people include:

- **Coach/producer.** Guides the facilitators to adapt materials and delivery methods for live, online sessions. The producer sets up the Adobe Connect session rooms, adds content to pods and layouts, clicks through and rehearses with facilitators, and adjusts audio configurations as needed. The producer also manages the live sessions, introduces facilitators, provides tutorials, provides technical support and microinstructions to participants, and runs the polls and videos.
- **Captioner.** Because some in our community is deaf or hard of hearing, we use a captioner who works the Caption Stream chat app loaded into an Adobe Connect pod to provide access as well as model best practices.
- **Document manager.** Ensures that all course content files get processed and posted in the right locations.
- **Visionary/team leader.** Determines learning goals for the entire course catalog.
- **IT support/programmer.** Adapted the Telligent interface (for asynchronous content) and Hubspot, linked to Adobe Connect logins. Also provides troubleshooting as needed.
- **Registrar.** Keeps track of participants, provides them essential info, and responds to questions.
- **Graphic designer.** Creates and applies a look and feel to video clips, images, handouts, and slide templates.
- **Communications and marketing professional.** Prepares messaging for emails and community posts.
- **Project manager.** Monitors the massive task lists to ensure everything is covered.
- **Visionary leaders,** whose love and determination brought this program together.

6. Delivery Platforms: Telligent and Adobe Connect

→ How we use Telligent online community software

The Hearing First program uses Telligent for all the “seek” and “sense” items such as:

- Communication
- Content including handouts, job aids, articles, and recorded lectures
- Embedded video clips of therapy sessions with inline captioning and transcription documents
- Optional “Dig Deeper” material for the advanced or extra-curious students

Telligent also enables asynchronous tasks for participants including:

- Communicating with discussion boards
- Posting their own files
- Accessing downloadable files per Continuing Education Units (CEU) requirements. *Note: Some 75% of our content is user-generated.*
- Replaying recorded sessions

Pre-learning. In this phase, participants register, receive an ID, and log in. We ask them to spend up to an hour watching provided videos, reading provided articles, completing the assignments – and coming to the live session prepared to apply what they’re learning. Adjusting to completing the pre-learning in advance requires a culture shift for many; we help ensure this happens by sending clear messages up front and reminders later.

Pre-learning content includes:

- Discussion boards, which provide excellent collaboration opportunities for participants and facilitators. Facilitators can see what the participants are thinking and talking about before the live session, and can answer questions, make suggestions, or adjust their plans if necessary.
- Recorded video lectures that contain core content and exercises, concluding with a quiz that generates a trackable data point showing the participant watched the video. Because Hearing First has met the requirements of the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA) and the AG Bell Association, we can provide CEU credit for the pre-learning modules.



- Recorded therapy examples of kiddos in sessions – which are the most-used pre-learning element. [See baby Archer on YouTube](#). Charming and frequently hilarious, they provide an authentic experience of behaviors and language to analyze. A facilitator can include longer versions of such videos in pre-learning and ask participants to identify issues or opportunities, and request their advice or recommendations. The facilitator can then use shorter versions of these asynchronous clips synchronously, too – as elements of live, group sessions – for deeper, focused analysis and structured discussions with feedback.
- Dig Deeper includes extra articles and recordings that are not required, but valuable.

→ *How we use Adobe Connect virtual classroom software*

The Hearing First design model uses the following functions:

- Live Seminar session rooms, 90 minutes + 20 minutes for early login
- Uploaded video files and backup links
- Status indicators such as Agree, Disagree, Stepped away, and Raise hand
- Voice over IP (VoIP) for audio
- Webcams for facilitators who choose them; webcams remain off for participants, unless in breakouts
- Polls, including a tech setup poll. (See Figure 7.)
- Chat pods, including regular and a tech chat pod
- Presenter Only Area (POA) with a presenter-specific chat and presenter notes pod
- Layouts that display needed pod configurations
- Recordings of all sessions, with URLs posted to the resources page in the community space
- Tracking and reporting
- Captioning. We load the Caption Stream app into a Share pod that I keep in the lower left. A professional captioner from [Caption First](#) logs into Adobe Connect as a host, and types as we talk. We post transcripts along with the session recording link under Resources in the community space.

We initially used – but then discontinued – breakout rooms, telephony for audio, and webcams for participants. They involved a difficult-to-manage variety of network connections and devices.

Additional applications. Our Hearing First team uses the following applications to support our work:

- **CaptionStream** with [Stream Text](#) application.
- **Zoom** for team meetings, small-group sessions, and breakout activities in longer programs
- **Google Docs** for communications text around alerts and news items
- **Dropbox** for transferring large files, including videos; facilitators upload them, and we collect them on the other end and move them to the right places.
- **Wistia** for secure, HIPAA-compliant video file storage
- **Microsoft Teams** for day-to-day communications
- **Microsoft Outlook** for email
- **HubSpot** for tracking attendance and reporting CEUs
- **Wrike Project Management** for forecasting and for tracking project details

7. Additional Ways Hearing First Uses Adobe Connect

In my experience, Adobe Connect's feature set far outperforms that of Zoom, GoToMeeting, and other virtual classrooms for live, instructor-led training. Templates allow me to skip several setup steps -- pod configurations are pre-set but customizable. Because session rooms are **persistent**, I can pre-upload and test materials days rather than minutes in advance.

Note: I consider it risky to rely on the facilitator's network connection to function 100% when showing shared screens and maintaining audio; therefore, we limit our screen sharing to live demos only.

Basic participant interactions for Zoom, GoToMeeting, Adobe Connect, and others include:

- **Set Status** to raise an electronic hand or change to **Agree** or **Disagree** by showing green check mark or a red x (or alternate icon) next to the participant's name. (All of these are part of the Set Status menu.)
- **Polls**, multiple choice and multiple response, short answer
- **Type in chat**, to everyone and/or privately
- **Live application or desktop sharing**

But Adobe Connect also offers:

- **Stepped Away** status, which allows participants to indicate they're distracted from the live session
- **After-market applications** available for upload; some are free
- **Presenter Only Area**, for staging pods and private messaging of presenters and hosts
- **Multiple pods**, which enable the presenter to capture participants' responses and messages. I typically use five or six, but can use more if I want. I can name them uniquely and number them to keep them in order.
- **Pause webcam video** for when the presenter wants to show a still of his or her face rather than continue to stream video
- **Pre-set Layouts** for quick pod changes

More Adobe Connect features that Hearing First relies on:

1. Host control of what everyone sees. In Zoom, windows are free-floating, and participants and presenters can be looking at different things and not realize it. In Adobe Connect, the Host determines what to show participants and what to hide.

2. Pre-set Layouts. These are session room "pages" that support quick transitions from showing one set of needed pods to another. (See Figure 6.)

3. Storing elements in the cloud. The advantage of cloud-based storage isn't obvious until you don't have it. If I want to show a PPT slide, for example, I upload it into a Share pod in the Adobe Connect session room before the session begins. When I display that Share pod, the users are not actually downloading, but instead are receiving or caching the static item from there. My personal upload speed and throughput do not affect the participants' ability to receive it.

In contrast, sharing in Zoom involves broadcasting my displayed file to the cloud before anyone can receive it. Because that streaming happens while I'm also broadcasting my audio over the same connection, any network problems I experience will slow us all down. In Adobe Connect, we simply upload in advance and encourage all to use consistent network connections with good download speeds, for best performance.

(Note: To understand your speeds, check your real-time connection regularly; I use [Ookla Speed Test](#). If your download speed is EVER below 2.0 Mbps, expect audio to be choppy and videos to hiccup, if they play at all. Your application-sharing to others will be slow for them. Forget streaming HD webcam video; in fact, deliberately reducing your webcam video quality – see Figure 2 – will improve throughput on mediocre connections. See: [Adobe Tech Specs](#).)

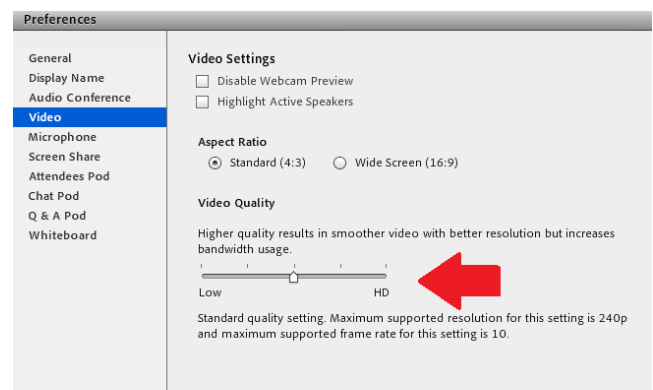


Figure 2. Reducing webcam quality to improve network throughput

4. Session rooms are persistent, which means anything I upload today I can access tomorrow or next year, at the same URL. Because at Hearing First we planned to repeat our multi-week courses at least twice a year, we built unique session rooms, then uploaded that course content. Anytime we want to run that course again, we change the date, reset the polls, clean out the chats, rewind the PPTs to the first slide and the recordings to the first frame, attach a new username file to the room, and we're ready to go.

5. Private chat. The chat capability in Adobe Connect is quite robust, and I urge participants to use it as the primary communication channel among themselves. Learners can send a Private chat to anyone in the session. Giving them an outlet for, say, connecting with a friend or former workmate allows us to **keep the Everyone chat text on topic**. (Note: Neither the host nor participants can see others' Private chat messages, and Private messages are excluded from the Everyone chat text that the host typically shares to all after the session.)

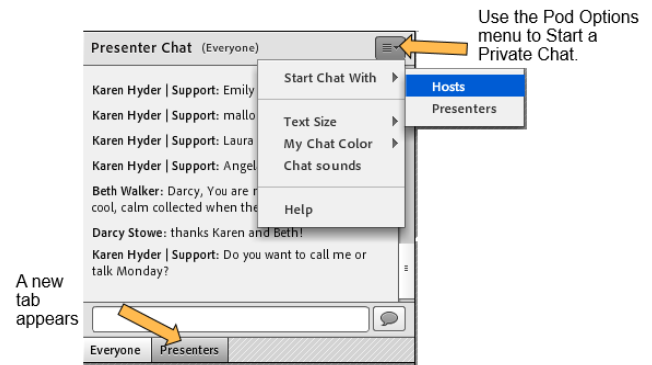


Figure 3. Starting a private chat and showing tab

6. Support for multiple chat activity. In a recent session, Hearing First's Teresa Caraway used an exercise that allowed participants to practice "narrating" – choosing just the right words, in the right syntax, in order to elicit the ideal response. Built on some of the pre-learning content, narrating activities involve saying aloud what you're doing as you're doing it. If a little boy is putting his shoe on, you say, "He's putting his toes in first, then pushing down on his heel." The phrasing differs based on the child's age (baby, toddler, preschooler). Teresa prompts participants to tell her exactly what words they're going to use with each age group.

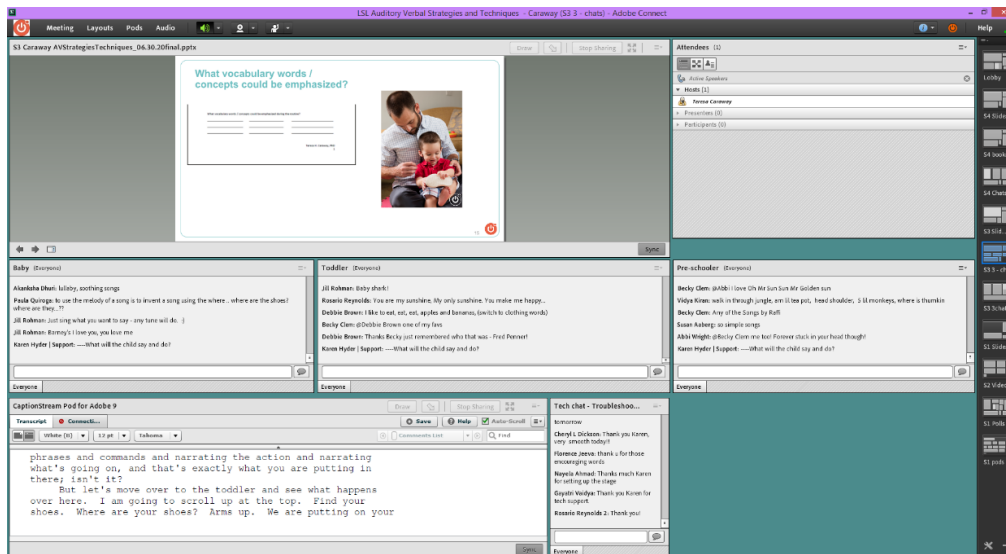


Figure 4. Using three chat pods. © Copyright Teresa Caraway and Hearing First, LLC. ALL

The exercise involves three chat pods; participants pre-group their responses by baby, toddler, or preschooler. Though it creates a crowded screen, using three chat pods across invites autonomous participation, and generates a list of excellent examples that our facilitator can validate or correct. The presenter must ensure the pods are large enough for participants to use. (Remember that only the presenter can move pods.)

In Teresa's session, she asked, "Considering a BABY, TODDLER, or PRESCHOOLER, what are examples of age-appropriate vocabulary words and/or concepts that could be emphasized? Type an example in each labeled chat pod."

7. Managing mobile-app differences. With more participants switching from using desktop or laptop computers to mobile apps, it's important to prepare them for the differences. On the mobile app, toolbars and buttons appear on the edges, and the shared items appear in the middle of the screen. Chat pod display can be changed using the Chat button menu.

To ensure users don't get lost, I include mobile-app instructions in my live-session intros.

8. Polls. I'm a fan of poll questions. They're quick and much more usable than chat when you need to see aggregated answers and total tallies. A poll can indicate that people are not only participating, but answering correctly or incorrectly, giving you the feedback cues you don't often get online. A poll can answer important questions like: "Do we need to go back and review, or can we move on?"

Polls are easy to create and versatile. I can copy blocks of text from another document or from a PPT slide and paste them into the poll pod. And they can be large: I've included 60 responses in a poll when asking, "Which of these software products do you use?" I use a poll as a technical setup checklist for participants as they join, to help them self-manage their systems.

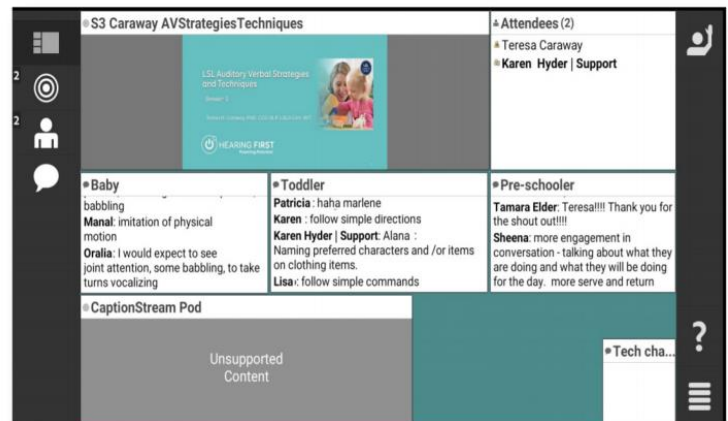


Figure 5. Mobile app view of three-chat layout. © Copyright Teresa Caraway and Hearing First, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

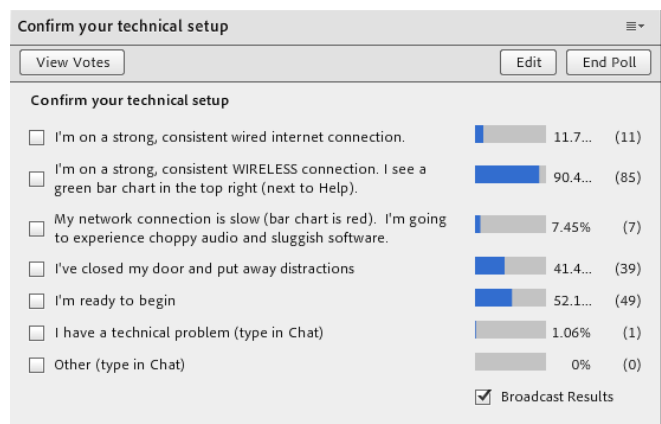


Figure 6. Technical setup poll. © Copyright Hearing First, LLC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Exercise 3: Using poll questions.

I ask participants: "How are polls different from 'type in chat'-style questions?" Responses will likely include: "While chat-style questions are typically open-ended questions, polls have only a few possible answers, and participants must pick one or more."

Note to the person reading this paper: Please take a minute to think about this question before continuing.

Next I say: "Write a poll question you might ask in a live session."
And then: "Now list three possible responses to the question."

9. Set Status. There are at least three situations when we ask our participants to set their status:

- At the beginning, when they Agree to participate
- When a video has finished playing for them, so we can close the pod and move on
- When they want to raise hand and speak up on the microphone

More confident facilitators ask for status feedback as they might in any conversation. Those might include:

- “Are you hearing me?”
- “Do you agree with my recommendation?”
- “Can we delay our break 5 minutes? I want to get you set up for your next practice activity so you can get started when you come back.”

Participants typically don’t change their status on their own. I regularly ask participants to agree, confirm they can hear, are ready to move on, or have experienced something like what I’ve described – anytime it would be helpful to see the equivalent of heads nodding.

I’ll admit, though: When you have to ask participants to change status to laughter to react to your joke, it’s less satisfying than real applause and laughter! The Hands Up pod – an aftermarket app from [Refined Data](#) – addresses that.

Remind participants who are using a mobile device that, in order to set status to Agree or Disagree, click the Raise Hand button first to see the choices, then select.

Facilitators often use Stepped Away in the minutes leading up to the start time.

10. Video clips. Video clips can be a joy or a struggle, depending on network throughput. Participants’ connections vary and cause files to cache and play at different rates. Therefore, the playback finishes sooner for some than others. For live sessions, we limit videos to 2 minutes in duration and 30 MB. Larger files frustrate our learners who are on low-bandwidth, high-traffic, or irregular wireless network connections. (We post large videos in the pre-learning.)

Before we play a video, we say: “Please show Agree when the video has finished for you.” Once I see lots of green checkmarks, I know we can move on and I hide the video share pod. We often use a Layout with the video pod to the left and chat pods on the right side with questions for participants to respond to, such as: “What pragmatic skills did you observe?” and “What could I say to Mom about what I see?” As folks are watching the video, they’re able to start responding. If we want them to wait, we cover the chat pods with the video pod.

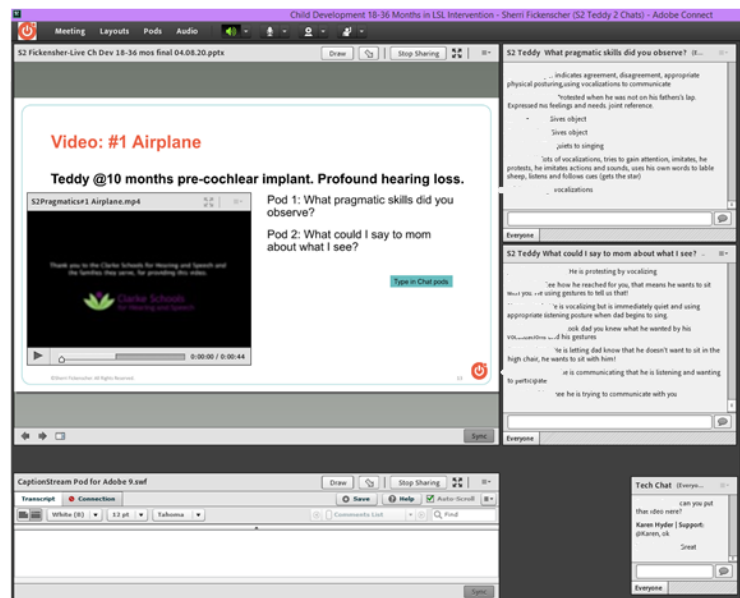


Figure 7. Live session Layout with video and chat pods.
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Used with permission.

11. Tech chat. In addition to the main participant chat pod, I include – in the lower part of each layout, next to the Caption Stream pod – a small tech chat pod for troubleshooting help. Tech chat helps keep separate the messages that the facilitator needs to see and the technical issues I need to troubleshoot now. When we have 100 to 250 participants, invariably someone reports their audio is cutting out, or they hear an echo, the recording won't play, or an arrow is spinning – and they are looking for answers. Tech chat messages can be seen by all, and participants with similar issues can learn from posted instructions.

12. Layouts. In Adobe Connect, we pre-group pods onto layouts, which are like separate pages within this session room. Like a workspace on a smartphone or tablet that groups apps in one view, layouts display configurations of pods that serve a specific purpose. Our standard slide layout shows:

- A share pod with the PPT slides
- A chat pod for messages from participants to the facilitator and to one another
- A tech chat pod for troubleshooting conversations
- A Captioning pod
- An Attendee list, if there's space

For Teresa's activity involving narrating for the right age group, I created and organized a layout with three chat pods. Another popular configuration is video plus two chat pods.

I pre-create all Layouts and name them; then I create, name, and put all the pods in all the right places. With a click of a button on the Layout bar on the right side (seen only by Hosts), I move easily from one Layout to another. I never have to drag and size multiple pods in front of a live audience. Because the room is persistent, I can reuse what I've set up each time we run the course. Initial setup costs may be high, but I end up saving time and effort later.

To create a new layout, I click the plus icon at the lower right of the Layouts toolbar; a dialog box prompts me to "duplicate an existing layout" to essentially take a snapshot of what's already there and gives it a new name. Once I create a Layout, I can change pod positioning or swap out pods until I have the right configuration. The new layout might still include the PPT file, the chat pod, Tech chat pod, and Captioning pod, but it might also include a video recording in a share pod and a poll with a quiz question unique to this Layout. If the screen gets too crowded, I can hide the PPT file, while the video is playing.

13. Inventory. Session rooms for multi-week courses can become unwieldy once several files are uploaded and custom pods are created. When resetting the room and clearing data, hiding and showing pods one at a time can be tedious. To do my future self a favor, I create inventory Layouts that store all the pods used in that session. For example, in a session with six video clips, I created a Layout with six share pods and preloaded the files. I changed the title bar text to session number and order. Each time I prepare for that course, I check the recordings to make sure I have the correct ones, they're in the right order, and are rewound to the beginning.

I create an inventory Layout for all poll pods, too. I go in after the live session, and save the polls if the response data are important to keep. Then, I clear the polls and uncheck Broadcast Results, and they are ready to use again.

Exercise 4: Pod layouts.

I ask participants: "What pods would you include in a Layout to support your activity?"

Note to the person reading this paper: Please take a minute to think about this question before continuing.

14. Presenter Only Area. What you might not know about Adobe Connect is that, on the right side where Hosts see the layout buttons, there's an offstage space called the Presenter Only Area that's hidden from participants. Presenters and Hosts can communicate in a Presenter Only chat, stage upcoming polls or other pods, and keep track of tasks. If I see something that came up in chat that the facilitator didn't notice, I copy and paste it from the left-side regular/normal chat to the POA chat, to draw the facilitator's attention. I change my text color, too, to make messages stand out. I often use this space when we have a large Attendees list, so that I can see all Agrees and Disagrees or move names to Breakouts.

A small team of our committed facilitators have agreed, on their own, to help each other manage live sessions by answering questions in chat. They know how challenging it can be to respond to questions while presenting.

15. Presenter Notes. Also in the Presenter Only Area, I use a Presenter Notes pod to keep track of tasks for each session. I include login reminders, times, and my phone/SMS number (in case they need to reach me outside of the Adobe Connect room). I have a simple list of all the slide numbers and interactions so I'm ready to display the right pod or Layout. The list of cues helps the backup producer, too, when someone needs to fill in for me.

16. Pasteables. Also in the Presenter Notes, I keep common instructions and reminder text that I can quickly copy and paste into the chat pod when needed. "Pasteable" items include:

- URLs such as the link where participants can view the real-time captioning app outside Adobe Connect
- Any site, book, or article the facilitator might reference
- The page where handouts and resources are posted

My backup option includes keeping the links to the uploaded videos we have planned for the live session. If the playback fails for a participant, the link will allow them to view the recording outside the live session room – in few minutes, if and when their connection improves.

Exercise 4: Pasteables.

I ask participants: "What text would you include in your pasteables?"

Note to the person reading this paper: Please take a minute to think about this question.

17. Breakout Groups. If you decide to use Breakout Groups, you'll find it easy in Adobe Connect to move participants into them. When you're logged in as Host, click the second button at the top of the Attendees pod. Breakout room names are displayed. Drag and drop participant names onto Breakout group names as though you're moving files into file folders. I can move myself from one room to the next, the way I would move anybody; I'm just dragging and dropping or using a flyout menu. I can send broadcast messages just as I can in Zoom that warn participants, "Hey, you've got 2 more minutes" or "Remember to assign a spokesperson who will speak for your group when we come out of the Breakout activity" or "Remember to assign a typist to type in the Note pod while you're in that Breakout group."

I often set up Breakout rooms with unique note pods and instructions where participants can read and type in, plus an optional video/webcam pod. I create a unique chat pod for the folks in each Breakout room so that, if somebody's mic doesn't work, they can still communicate to complete the assignment. I keep the tech chat pod visible so if they run into trouble, they can type to me. (Note: For more information about Breakout rooms, see Adobe's tutorial: <https://helpx.adobe.com/adobe-connect/using/breakoutrooms.html>)

I recommend that if you are going to use Breakouts, be thorough in providing the assignment and instructions, preparing the participants fully, and troubleshooting early. I don't send participants to Breakouts if they don't know what's going on. I give all the instructions up front so they know what to expect. I make sure they have the files that they need. I show them a Breakout layout with the webcam pod, the extra chat pod, the Note pod where they can type their notes. Before they go, I ask them to show Hand Raise to let me know they're ready to move to breakout rooms. And if they don't raise their hand, I assume they're not ready. If someone chimes in and says, "Hey, what's going on? How come everything got quiet?" I can quickly catch him up with instructions and move him into a Breakout room.

Once a Breakout room is used, it shows up in the Pods menu. I can bring the pods that participants used in Breakouts back to the main room to debrief. Before participants arrive for the session, I've already created a Layout for all Breakout Notes pods.

18. Self-test. Anytime you plan to include people in a live session, I recommend sending them this self-test: [https://\[your_account_name\].adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm](https://[your_account_name].adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.htm) Add your domain to this URL and urge participants to run the test days before the first live session, and to report any issues so that you can address them. The self-test determines whether their connection and their system are ready to run Adobe. In addition, this system status link – <https://status.adobe.com/products/3011> – allows me to identify any network incident or maintenance that could cause difficulty.

19. Force session to run in Adobe Connect app. Here's a tip from Karen Gleason at the Learning Guild: If you want participants to launch sessions in the Adobe Connect app rather than browser tab, add **/?proto=true** to the end of the session room URL. It runs more stably and provides more space to display pods and tools. It helps keep the window on top should the user have multiple browser tabs open.

20. Event time announcer. We use the event time announcer at <http://www.timeanddate.com>, which shows when the session starts, in any time zone.

8. Things We Wish We Had Known from the Start

- **Unlearning habits and mastering the flipped classroom.** Participants needed coaching to unlearn habits and commit to the flipped-classroom model. They discovered the hard way that if they didn't complete the assignments up front, they would be lost in the live sessions. Facilitators also needed coaching to understand how to present their content and interact with participants.
- **Tech inexperience and varied hardware and network connections.** Many participants are inexperienced with technology but often resist the orientation sessions we offer. In addition, many use WiFi connections, which can be unreliable. We urge participants to find the best connection available and use a PC rather than a mobile device. We invite participants to sign in up to 20 minutes early for a technical tutorial and troubleshooting, if needed. By the second session, we've addressed most issues.
- **Breakout rooms unnecessary for learning outcomes.** Robust video scenarios plus polls and chat interactions as well as the community discussions provide the engagement we need.
- **The draw of CEUs.** We also didn't realize how motivating earning CEUs would be. Many participants are eager to attend all the live sessions and complete all the CEU requirements; we don't struggle to keep them coming back.

Exercise 6: Takeaways.

I ask participants: “What ideas are you taking away? What will you share with colleagues?”

Note to the person reading this paper: Please take a minute to think about this question before continuing.

9. Wrap-Up

At Hearing First, we're very proud of what we've accomplished already. Since Q4 2016, we've delivered 60 of these learning experience programs with nearly 10,000 registrations and participants from 66 countries. Our participants have earned some 5,000 CEUs. Our learners are thrilled with what we're doing, and they're surprised at how much they can learn quickly. In particular, they love the pre-learning content.

Appendix A. Tutorial: Getting Started in Any Successful Session

- **Teach the tools.** I start every session by showing participants how to use the interface's tools. Differences from interface to interface can confuse participants, as can the difference between using a mobile app versus a desktop. If you expect people to participate using the tools, show them how they work and make it clear how you want learners to use them.
- **Seek agreement.** Ask learners to agree to participate – to resist distractions, to ask questions, to contribute to the discussion by typing in chat. For some, that will mean showing Agree to let me know you're with me and ready to participate. Ask learners to locate the Set Status menu and click agree.
- **Tips for managing technology.** Ask participants to run the Adobe Connect system test. For Hosted accounts, add your name to this URL and share [https://\[your_account_name\].adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.html](https://[your_account_name].adobeconnect.com/common/help/en/support/meeting_test.html) . Prompt participants to check network speed using Ookla Speed Test. If performance is sluggish, I urge them to close unnecessary applications to free up network throughput and system resources. Closing unneeded apps also helps reduce distractions.

Appendix B. Adobe Connect Meeting Extensions



Figure 8. Adobe Connect Clock App available to upload in your session room, from Adobe

Adobe offers further pod-based applications for Adobe Connect session rooms, including:

- **Analog clock** to help maintain schedule
- **Timers** to count down to start time, assignment, or break-time end
- **HandsUp** from Refined Data Solutions, which broadcasts sounds including tracks of much-missed laughter and applause
- **Vantage Point** to manage all webcam videos on one pod

About the Author

Karen Hyder has been using technology to teach about technology since 1991 when she delivered instructor-led software applications courses at Logical Operations in Rochester, New York. Later, as director of Trainer Development, she taught classes that helped trainers improve skills and earn certifications.

In 1999, after living abroad for more than a year helping trainers achieve certification, Karen was hired to create a train-the-trainer course for people using virtual-classroom software to reach learners in China. She's been coaching and teaching online ever since!

In 2004, Karen helped launch The eLearning Guild Online Forums, a series of online conferences for eLearning development professionals. For the Guild, she continues to produce and host online events including the impressive Best of DemoFest, a multi-presenter, live-demonstration event.

In 2017, The eLearning Guild honored Karen with the Guild Master Award, recognizing her contributions to the Guild community and the eLearning industry. Karen provides presenter coaching and live event support for online learning experiences at Hearing First LLC, a not-for-profit that serves professionals earning CEUs and families supporting children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

