

GO VIRTUAL TOOLKIT

PROJECT LEARNING TREE
An initiative of SFI

INTRODUCTION

Technology has the potential to support and deepen learning. With COVID-19 and social distancing measures that restrict the traditional in-person delivery of Project Learning Tree (PLT), virtual learning became crucial to provide educators with the knowledge and skills needed to use PLT with students.

This toolkit is designed for PLT Coordinators and Facilitators to provide options for virtual delivery of PLT Professional Development (PD) and at the same time, take advantage of the opportunities that virtual environment offers over what might be possible in a face to face setting, including:

- Use of technology tools to **engage participants in different ways** with PLT activities
- **Model how PLT can be a part of virtual learning** in formal and informal settings
- Create more **sustained engagement** with workshop participants by incorporating synchronous and asynchronous activities.
- **Increase access to PLT** workshops for everyone in the state
- **Increase flexibility in attending a PLT workshop** with opportunities for both live (synchronous) components and/or working at one's own pace and timing (asynchronous) learning

There are several ways you can deliver PLT virtually. When choosing your approach, here are some considerations:

- Based on your audience and outcomes, should you offer your PD event as an on-demand professional development or as a cohort, like a traditional workshop where a group of people are going through the workshop at the same time?
- How much professional development should be live (synchronous), versus independent (asynchronous) in a virtual setting? Synchronous time is important for social learning and building a community of practice, while asynchronous allows for flexibility on the pace and timing.
- What are you most comfortable and able to use for online learning (Zoom, Google Classrooms, Moodle, YouTube, Google Docs, etc.)?
- How much time do you have to set up, monitor and provide feedback for participants?
- How much do you need/want to customize your PD to your audience and outcomes?

VIRTUAL OPPORTUNITIES DEFINED

The following terms are used throughout this toolkit as well as in the activity adaptations to describe the activity setting.

SYNCHRONOUS

Participants are in the same place at the same time, whether that is in a physical or virtual space (e.g. Zoom, Hangouts, Teams, etc.)

ASYNCHRONOUS

Participants are completing work at different times and places.

BLENDED

A combination of synchronous and asynchronous PLT activities or events.

COHORT

Participants progress through the PLT activities and/or PD event as a group.

VS

INDIVIDUAL

Participants start and complete the PLT activities and/or PD event individually.

OPTIONS FOR VIRTUAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ON-DEMAND ONLINE PLT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Customize the existing PLT online PD courses to your state and promote it to your network to drive people to sign up for the course. This allows for revenue-sharing with National PLT and is an option that is fully online and on-demand. There are three levels of customization possible: Basic (include a welcome letter and a certificate signed by the PLT State Coordinator), Intermediate (Basic elements+ State-Specific content and resources) and Advanced (Intermediate elements + assignment graded by PLT Coordinator/Facilitator).





Coordinator/Facilitator Responsibilities: Depends on the level of customization chosen. At minimum, engaging with online participants and encouraging course completion with opportunities to reach out via email to more directly connection and providing participant support during the online course. Review PLT On-Demand Online PD interactive document for more information about this option and how to set it up.

Pros: Reporting is done automatically through the system. Saves time as the materials and interactions are already created.
Cons: Lower level of customization when compared to other options. No interaction between participants.

ONLINE PLT CLASSROOM

Create your own "online classroom" using tools such as Google Classroom, Moodle or Run the World, (all of these have free versions) or add direction to activities to a Google Document for a low-tech alternative. You may use some of the Virtual PLT Activities provided here, modified for completely asynchronous experience. Work is completed mostly independently with feedback from the facilitator. Colorado's On-Demand Sample Workshop Agenda

Coordinator/Facilitator Responsibilities: Setting up the instructions in the chosen platform or other shared document. Provide participant support, request participants to complete the Participant Information Form, and report the PD event in the quarterly report form.

Pros: Higher level of customization.
Cons: Time and resource intensive as it requires platform set up and management and participants' monitoring and feedback. No interaction between participants. Forms completion and reporting are required.

BLENDED EVENTS

Synchronous Online Meeting(s) + Online PLT Professional Development

Using this model, participants are in a cohort with a set start and completion date and experience a combination of live online meetings using platforms like Zoom, GoToMeeting, Adobe Connect, etc. as well as working individually to complete the Online PLT Course. You can mix and match these two modalities as appropriate for your audience and outcomes. You may use some of the Go Virtual Activities during the live meetings as icebreakers or the main activity. Examples of potential structures include:

- Live meeting to introduce PLT and how to access the online course, followed by completion of the online course. Florida PLT Sample Agenda, South Carolina PLT Sample Agenda

- Live meeting to introduce PLT and the online course, online course completion and a live wrap up session with workshop participants to debrief and share next steps. Virginia PLT Sample Agenda
- A series of live meetings to introduce, expand ideas and debrief interspersed with the individual completion of the PLT Online course, before, during or after live components. Colorado Sample Agenda, North Carolina Sample Communications

Coordinator/Facilitator Responsibilities: Setting up the live meetings, agendas for live meetings and facilitation of live activities. Provide participant support during online course. Request participants to complete the Participant Information Form and report the blended PD event in the quarterly report form.

Pros: Allows interaction between participants while maintaining some level of flexibility on PD schedule. No need to setup new platforms.
Cons: Time intensive as it requires the design and implementation of live event(s). Forms completion and reporting are required.

Synchronous Online Meeting + Online Classroom

Use a combination of live online meeting(s) similar to the above, but rather than using the Online PLT workshop, create your own "online classroom" for the asynchronous element using tools such as Google Classroom, Moodle or Run the World (all of these have free versions). The online classroom might use some of the Virtual PLT Activities provided here, modified for asynchronous work.

Coordinator/Facilitator Responsibilities*:* Setting up the live meetings, agendas for live meetings and facilitation of live activities and online classroom space with facilitator feedback. Provide participant support. Request participants to complete the Participant Information Form and report the blended PD event in the quarterly report forms.

Pros: Highest level of customization. Allow for interaction between participants while maintaining some level of flexibility on PD schedule.
Cons: Time and resource intensive as it requires platform set up and management, design and implementation of live events and participants' monitoring and feedback. Forms completion and reporting are required.



RESOURCES

- PLT Virtual PD Checklist and Tips
- Zoom Basics for PLT Workshop Participants
- Virtual PLT Webinar Recording & Resources
- DCNR Distance Learning Best Practices

GO VIRTUAL: ACTIVITY ADAPTATIONS FOR REMOTE LEARNING

To support you in taking PLT virtual, the following activities have been adapted for virtual settings. Visit the Go Virtual Google Drive to find all available activities or select the hyperlinked activity name below to access activity specific materials. *Activities not linked are in progress and will be available soon.*

Each of the activities has alternative ways they could be used and, with some modifications, could also be used in virtual settings with students by formal or informal educators. When appropriate, there are short video tutorials which can be shared with participants providing "how-to" on different tools. Activities also indicate the level of difficulty for using technology tools from beginner, intermediate, and advanced.

ACTIVITY	GUIDE	GRADE LEVEL	BEST USE	WORKSHOP THEMES	TAKE OUTSIDE?
Adopt a Tree	K-8	PreK-8	Asynchronous Cohort	Sustainable Forestry, NGSS, STEM	Yes
Are Vacant Lots Vacant?	K-8	K-8	Cohort Synchronous Asynchronous	NGSS, STEM, Environmental Science, Careers	Yes
Energy Sleuths	K-8	3-5	Synchronous Cohort	Energy, GreenSchools!	No
Forest of Many Uses	K-8	1-4	Synchronous Cohort	Sustainable Forestry, Social Studies	No
Have Seeds Will Travel	K-8	K-8	Synchronous Cohort	STEM, NGSS, Sustainable Forestry	Yes
If You Were the Boss	Green Jobs	Middle School High School	Synchronous Cohort	Sustainable Forestry, NGSS, Social Studies	No
Personal Places	Places We Live	Middle School High School	Synchronous Cohort Icebreaker	Foundations and importance of EE	Possible
The Closer You Look	K-8	PreK-6	Asynchronous Cohort	STEM, NGSS, Sustainable Forestry	Yes
Tree Cookies	K-8	3-5 (with variation for K-2)	Synchronous Cohort Icebreaker	STEM, NGSS, Sustainable Forestry	No
Viewpoints on the Line	K-8	6-8	Synchronous Cohort Icebreaker	Sustainable Forestry, NGSS, Social Studies	No
Who Works in the Forest	Green Jobs	Middle School High School	Synchronous Cohort	NGSS, STEM, Environmental Science, Careers	No