

Design Your Virtual Training For Collaboration



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Your virtual training needs to have interaction every 4 minutes but I'd suggest that you should

Designing for Collaboration.

Let me explain, we need to engage/involve our learners every 4 minutes in the virtual training room. If we don't then they'll Alt+Tab and check eMail etc. Interactions include:

- Adding something to the whiteboard.
- Commenting in chat.
- Using an emoticon
- Making notes on a placemat

etc.

BUT, if we say that training is about learners leaving being able to perform a skill or apply knowledge, then we need to see them practicing and mastering this. In the virtual training room, this will be applying knowledge eg creating a pricing proposal or using the knowledge eg interviewing a candidate during the recruitment process.

I'd suggest that your virtual training needs to mirror your face-to-face training ie 70-80% of the training time is your learners practicing. After all, *'If you want them to hear it, you talk. If you want them to learn it, they do it!'* In the virtual world, this is likely to be in small teams in breakout rooms ie via **collaboration**.

Here are 8 tested and proven ways to add collaboration into your virtual training.

General notes that applies to all the following activities.

Adding files to breakout rooms for different platforms

Adobe Connect – you can pre-create the breakout rooms and upload different content into each room prior to learners entering the room.

Zoom – When you send the invite to learners, include the files you want learners to share and ask them to share these to their PC. During the breakout, ask one person in each breakout room to share the file. Nb, ensure learners have the right's to share files when you start the meeting (Security/Allow Participants To Share Screen).

Teams – Create private channels that your invite your learners to. Add their content to their channel. When learners join their channel meeting, ask them to share their content document.

WebEx Training Center – As soon as you start the breakout session, quickly enter each room and upload that rooms content.

Sharing work from breakout rooms in the main room – different platforms

Adobe Connect – Pods/Breakout Pods/Select room to share.

Zoom – Ask learners to save their work/whiteboard before leaving their breakout room. In the main room, ask a participant to share the saved file so that everyone can see it.

Teams – Ask learners to save their work/whiteboard before leaving their channel meeting room. In the main meeting, ask a participant to share the saved file so that everyone can see it.

WebEx Training Center – From the main menu, select Breakout/ Share Breakout Session Content/Select the room – this will send a request to share to the last presenter in the room. When they accept this will add their work as a tab above the whiteboard. Click on their tab and the content will be shared with the main room.

Collaboratie Activity 1 – Ask The Expert/Press Conference



This virtual activity let's your learners dictate the content they need and *pull* that from the facilitator/expert.

Consider the whole of the virtual training being around this one activity. You can do that because this activity will uncover all the content of the training.

Preparation

- Create a breakout room for each of the groups you want to have.

Facilitating

- Let learners know that there will be an expert on [your topic] joining their training.
- Say, "But, they are not going to give you any content unless you ask for it. What I'd like you to do is to imagine that you are journalists. As such, you need to ask our Expert for the information you need. The information you'll need is the information that will enable you to..."

The content and learners will determine the next part of the sentence eg

- *Salespeople with a new product* – "Introduce the key benefits of the new product to your existing and potential customers."
- *Legislation/policy update* – "Create a briefing document for your team that couldn't make this training that includes all the key changes and what those changes mean to their current working practice."
- *Trainers moving into using Virtual Training* – "Create a 'Dummies Guide' to virtual training."
- *Recruitment – Conducting an Interview* – "Create a Step-by-Step guide for the interviewing candidates."
- *Induction – HR re Employment terms* – "Create a guide to your employment."

- Say, "I'm going to organise you into breakout rooms in teams of 3 or 4. I'll give you 8 minutes to generate the questions you'll need to ask our experts to enable you to create your [what the task is]. I'd suggest that you have 2-3 questions per team member and that you know your own questions as it will be up to you to ask them and note the answers. I'm going to start your breakout rooms now."
- Start the breakout rooms.
- Visit each of the rooms at least once while teams are working to ensure things are going well and to answer any questions they may have.
- End the breakout session.
- Introduce the expert (which could be a real guest expert that you've invited, or it could be yourself).
- Say, "How this will work is, I'd like you to use the *raise hand* emoticon (use a different emoticon if your platform doesn't have a *raise hand* option). The first

person to raise their hand will be invited to turn on their microphone and ask their question and our expert will answer it. This will continue for approximately 7 minutes. But pay attention, because other teams questions could generate some of the content you'll need – so do make notes with all information given.”

nb – if learners don't have a microphone, they can ask their question via chat.

- Allow 7 minutes or so for learners to ask their questions.
- Say, “Our expert needs to leave. What I'd like you to do is re-join your teams and create the [task]. Also, if someone in each team could volunteer to share/talk through their [outcome] when we come back. I'll give you 9 minutes to be ready.”
- Re-start the breakout rooms and visit each room during the 9 minutes.
- Return everyone back to the main room.
- Ask someone from each room to share their results. Allow 3 minutes per team.

What you achieved

- You engaged everyone and had teams work together.
- Rather than a boring presentation, learners actually *pulled* the content they needed from the expert rather than the expert trying to guess what might be useful. That's why the task needs to be something learners will be doing in their everyday work eg presenting a product.
- Stepped back and let the learning happen.

Collaborative Activity 2 – Divide and Conquer

This is a great way to uncover content by breaking it up into small parts, getting teams to work on different parts of the content and then they teach other learners their content. By the end, all learners have all the content.

For the purposes of writing this idea, let's assume you have 3 pieces of content and 9 learners.

Suggestion – 3 pieces of content seems to work best with this activity.

Preparation

- Divide your content into 3 logical pieces. Maybe it's:
 - 3 steps of a process.
 - 3 different products eg financial products or products for sale.
 - 3 different departments eg for induction.
 - 3 different features or screens of an IT system or software.
- Create 3 breakout rooms and add a different piece of the content into each of the room.
- Ask learners to have notepaper and a pen with them.

Assign learners into the 3 breakout rooms.

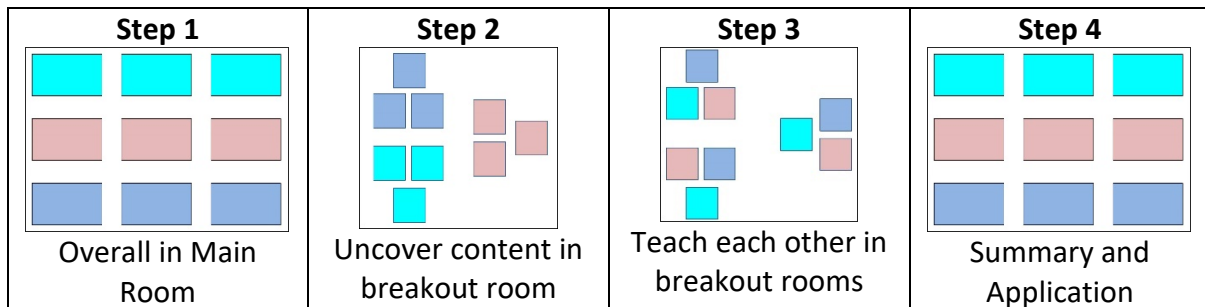
Facilitating

- Give a short overview of the content eg the process, system, products etc
- Let learners know that you have divided the content into pieces and that they will work in a small group to uncover the key parts of their piece of content - AND to think about how they will teach this content to other learners – not as a team but each member of their team will need to teach this.
- Let them know that they will have 11 minutes to uncover the key points and how to teach these key points to other learners.
- Start the breakout rooms and make a note of the learners in each team
- Visit each room to ensure everyone is on track and to answer any questions a team may have.
- Bring everyone back to the main room.
- Re-assign learners into new breakout groups ensuring you have a least one person from each team in each room ie an 'expert' for each piece of the content in each new breakout room.
- Let learners know that they will be in a different team with experts for each piece of content. Their task is to teach the rest of their new group the key points of their content ie if you have content 1 you teach your content, then someone with a different piece of content teaches you and the rest to the group that content and then the third person. If there is more than one person in the room with say, content one, then they can share the teaching or one of the pair does the teaching.
- Let everyone teaching know that they will have 2 minutes only to do their teaching.

- Allow 8 minutes in total (time to nominate *trainers* etc plus the 6 minutes for content).
- End the breakout session to bring the group back together and summarise the new content or create a task where learners need to demonstrate their new skill or knowledge.

Here you really have *facilitated* the learning rather than *presented* the content. Because your learners did all the work, you can be sure that it's more memorable and that the learning has more chance to stick.

Visual Summary of Activity



Collaborative Activity 3 – Google Doc's?

This is a great way to collaboratively work on a document (or spreadsheet) eg: to ...

- Write a proposal
- Create a report
- Amend text for 'simple' English or Legal writing
- Use a pricing model

Breakout teams can share a specific document for them, or all breakout rooms can work on different parts of the document.

Preparation

- Create the document to share in Google Docs. Make sure that you set the shared link to anyone with the link can edit the document.
- Copy the share link from Google Docs
- Create your breakout rooms and assign learners to a breakout room



Facilitating

- Describe the task to learners ie what they have to do with the document.
- Send the link via chat if everyone will work on the main document or after you start the breakout rooms, visit each to give them their own link.
- Give them the time allocated for the activity – eg 15 minutes.
- Start the breakout sessions.
- Visit each room to ensure that they can access the document and are following the task set.
- End breakout session.
- Either share screen and select Google Docs or ask everyone to click the link again to go to Google Docs.
- Discuss and offer feedback on the task requested.

nb - Any shared platform such as OneDrive, Dropbox etc could be used instead of Google Docs.

Collaborative Activity 4 – Interactive Lecture

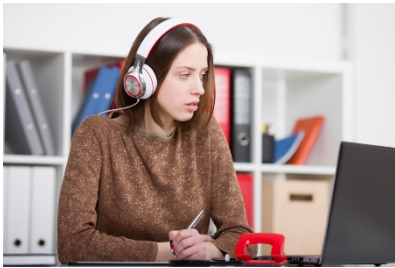
This activity removes what might be classed as dry material. It involves learners in the presentation of the material but more importantly, gets them to actively use that material to complete a real-life task

For this example, let's say the training is about the changes in practice that need to happen as a result of some legislation change – something like when the new GDPR legislation came into force.

Preparation

- Summarise the legislation changes into about a 10-minute or less presentation.
- Create breakout rooms and assign learners to rooms.
- Ask learners to have paper and a pen.

Facilitating



- Ask learner to have a pen and paper to make notes.
- Let them know that they will be working in small teams after the content.
- Explain that you're going to present their content and that they should make as many notes as possible because they'll have to create 2 questions to challenge another team – one easier question and one trickier question. But that another team will be challenging them, and they don't know what they'll challenge them on.
- Start presenting the content (keep reminding learners to be making notes). Continue for around 7-10 minutes.
- Say to people that you will put them into small teams (breakout rooms) and that they should spend around 3 minutes comparing notes and adding to their own notes anything they hadn't written during the presentation. They should then spend another 3 minutes creating one easier and one trickier question to challenge another team.
- Start the breakout rooms and allow around 6-7 minutes. Visit each room to check how things are going.
- End the breakout rooms to bring everyone back to the main room.
- Ask team 1 to read their first question to team 2 and someone in team 2 should answer. If they answer correctly, they get a 1 point, if incorrect, the asking team gets the point.
- Then team 2 asks team 3 followed by team 3 asking team 1.
- Continue until all questions have been asked.

Nb – to speed-up the question and answer section, ask all teams to add their questions to a blank whiteboard. Then ask people to answer these. Any question that remains unanswered gets the asking team 1 point.

- Say, “Now that you have all the new GDPR legislation, their team task is to put together on the breakout whiteboard a ‘To Do’ list that will outline the changes that will need to be made for everyday working to ensure everyone is compliant with the new legislation. You have 9 minutes to create this in your breakout room.”
- Start the breakout rooms.
- Allow 9 minutes.
- End the breakouts session.
- Share the ‘To Do’ lists in the main room

General points

- Depending upon time, this can be facilitated with or without the quiz element.
- The quiz element is really there to encourage learners to make notes. Without the quiz, there is little incentive to make notes.

What you achieved

Not only have you presented the content (which normally in virtual training is all that happens), BUT your learners have used this content to generate what actions and changes in work practice they need to apply in order to remain compliant.

Duration

20-30
minutes

Collaborative Activity 5 – Create a Case Study

We often create case studies for our learners to work through, but I'd suggest that it's easy to complete a case study – you either know or you don't – the tricky part is creating the case study. So, consider swapping this around. Give your learners the information and ask them to create the case studies. After all, to create the case study, you *really* need to get to grips with the content.

Preparation

- Determine how you will give your learner the content ie will you present the content prefacing this with the task that at the end of the presentation they will be put into teams and that each team need to create a case study for another team. Suggest they make plenty of notes during the presentation.
or
You'll provide resource material for teams to work through and then create a case study for other teams.
- Create the breakout rooms – add resources or case study.

Facilitating (for this example, I'll provide resource materials for teams)

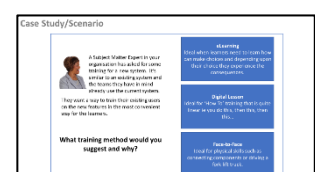
- Let learners know that they will work in teams to review xxx (product specifications, legal update, scenario etc) and then create a case study based upon what they learn to pose for another team. They should add this to the whiteboard. Suggest that they will have 15 minutes to complete their task.
- Start the breakout sessions.
- Keep visiting each room to check the team are on track and to answer any questions they may have.
- End the breakout session, returning everyone to the main room.
- Ask each group to share their case study and have the rest of the team offer answers and the team who created the case study to agree/disagree and suggest why.

Nb – you could ask teams to present their case study and return groups back to their breakout room to consider and discuss prior to offering an answer.

What you achieved

- You've ensured that your learners have delved deeply into the content. If they didn't delve deep, then they wouldn't be able to create the case study. This is very different to when they answer a case study where they will quickly scan information and only look at the information they need to answer the case study.
- It get's your learners interacting/using the resources they'll have in their real work.
- You don't need to create the case studies.

Suggestion – If time is short, then of course, you can create the case study and send the slide into the breakout room for discussion and suggestions.



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Collaborative Activity 6 – Padlet



This is not just about Padlet, but the idea that you don't need to keep your learners locked into the webinar platform. Use collaborative applications outside of the platform. Here are a couple of ideas (some free some paid):

Padlet – <https://padlet.com/>

Mural - <https://www.mural.co/>

Micro - <https://miro.com/>

Ideas for using Padlet

- Sharing ideas/brainstorm – these can then be organised and categorised eg questions to ask in an interview or sales meeting, questions that can be used during a coaching session, key changes that need to be applied re new legislation etc.
- Putting together a flow-chart or steps in a process.
- Team project during something like an Induction – creating a collage of text, images, videos of the parts of the organisation etc.
- Resource links for research.
- Not an idea for during the webinar, but consider using a Padlet as a resource location and information area prior to the start of the webinar. Learners can even share experience, questions etc before they take part in their virtual training.

Preparation

- Create the shared Padlet in Padlet (or several if teams will use separate Padlets) and copy the links (nb make sure the padlet is either secret or public).
- If learners will be working on different Padlets, create breakout rooms and assign learners. Start the breakout rooms before learners go to their Padlet to ensure they hear only the people from their team.

Facilitating

Let's assume it's to generate a set of questions salespeople could ask during a sales meeting.

- Introduce the types of questions salespeople could ask during a meeting eg open, close, probing, funnelling etc
- Let learners know that they will be working in small teams and need to generate a set of specific questions that they could ask during a sales meeting.
- Let them know that they will be using Padlet to store their questions and that to add a new question, simply double click on the main board in Padlet.
- Share the link to their Padlet in Chat and ask them to click the link and start to add questions. They can talk to each other during this.
- Allow 10-15 minutes.

- Visit the Padlet(s) and ask them to return to the main room.
- Ask teams to share a few of their questions in Chat.
- Ask teams to use the Padlet link again to revisit their questions and to put them in order from meeting opening, body of the meeting and towards/including the close.
- Start breakout rooms.
- Allow 5 minutes.
- Bring learners back and ask them share what some of the questions in the order they would use them.

Collaborative Activity 7 – Learning Stations

This is a tried and tested face-to-face activity that works equally well on-line as a collaborative. The idea behind Learning Stations is that teams of learners work on different tasks simultaneous in different breakout rooms. After completing one task, teams rotate to the next breakout room for the next task.

I'd suggest that this activity uses 3 teams each consisting of no more than 4 learners ie 12 learners maximum.

Preparation

This activity takes a little time to set-up but works really well.

- Divide your content into 3 logical pieces.
- For each piece create a different method for your learners to uncover the content. Examples might include:
 - a document to read and then discussed by the team.
 - a video – either produced by you or via YouTube etc
 - research task eg internet
 - a series of PowerPoint slides you've created
 - an interview with an expert that you bring in
 - a flowchart of a process
- Prepare materials needed for each activity.
- Populate (or prepare for population) each room with a different piece of content (remembering each piece of content will have a different method of discovery).

Facilitating

As an example to help explain this activity, let's assume that this is training for new sales people who should leave being able to prepare a client meeting. We'll also assume that the 3 parts are, opening the meeting, needs questioning, concluding the meeting.

- Explain that you're going to form teams. The overall team task will be to create a meeting outline for their next client visit. The outline should include the opening, fact finding for needs and concluding with next steps.
- Explain how it will work ie there are 3 breakout rooms each containing information about one part of the meeting process. They will visit one of the rooms and work together using the information and create that part of their meeting on paper. They will be allocated 15 minutes, after which they will return to the main room.
- Start the breakout session.
- Visit each room to ensure teams are on track and keeping them informed of remaining time.
- After the 15 minutes, return everyone to the main room.



- Assign each group to the next breakout room.
- Restart the breakout session.
- Continue until each group has spent time in each breakout room
- Bring everyone back to the main room.
- Working with teams, summaries the 3 parts of a client meeting and what needs to happen within each part.

What you achieved

- Learners being totally engaged throughout their learning.
- Teams working together.
- Each learner leaving with their own client meeting prepared.
- No boring presentation from the facilitator.

Nb Maybe the next virtual training in the series will be how to facilitate the client meeting (applying what was created during this virtual training).

Collaborative Activity 8 – Practice

Just as in face-to-face training, 70-80% of your learners time within the virtual training room should be used for them to practice performing the skill or applying the knowledge.

Working in pairs or 3's in breakout rooms is a perfect place for this to happen. It allows you to visit each room, listen/watch what's happening and offer feedback and encouragement – exactly as you'd do in the physical training room.

This last idea is not the activity itself but ways in which you could utilise virtual training room breakout rooms to set-up and observe learners practicing with content.

Ideas

- Role play eg
 - Facilitating an appraisal meeting
 - Coaching a team member
 - Conducting a sales meeting
 - Conducting a recruitment interview
 - Having a difficult conversation
- Using software/application
 - Within breakout rooms, ask learners to share a screen/application and use the application to perform a task eg financial model, pricing a quote, adding people into a database, selecting products from an on-line catalogue etc
- Creating reports
- General practice eg
 - Writing objectives
 - Writing a sales proposal
 - Writing written warnings
 - Storyboarding for eLearning and digital lessons

In fact, the list is endless.

The only things you cannot really do are the skills that require physical components eg connecting electrical components onto a circuit board, performing CPR, practicing driving ...