



How to Facilitate a Robust Social Learning Experience for Geographically Dispersed Teams

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Social learning is any activity that is designed to allow individuals the opportunity to share and learn from each other, even if they are not directly in contact with each other at the time of learning.



4 KEYS TO SUCCESS

1 OBSERVE BEHAVIOR PATTERNS

Consider how your learners are already engaging in social learning: Are they using existing chat groups? Are they using a modality for synchronous group discussions? Are they using blogs, informal mentoring, and/or social media groups for self-supported learning?

2 ASSESS WILLINGNESS TO ENGAGE

Personality: Is the team chatty or more reserved in nature?

Guidance needed: Is the team proactive and willing to take on a challenge and run with it or do they need accountability measures put in place?

Is learning a priority? Do the learners actively make time for learning? Is this supported in their schedule?

3 RESPECT LEARNER TIME AND ENERGY

Account for **longer completion time** due to multiple steps involved with social learning activities.

Activities that require critical thinking and reflection **increase the cognitive load** for learners.

Most activities require **cooperation from others** which involves managing schedules.

How does your activity fit within the context of their day? Avoid scheduling intensive activities on days reserved for project deadlines.

4 USE TECHNOLOGY WISELY

Keep it simple: Use technology tools and platforms that are already in use, and limit the number of technology induced steps needed to participate.

Create an enjoyable learning experience, not a barrier to learning.



SOLUTIONS TO INTEGRATION BARRIERS

GAIN EXECUTIVE SUPPORT

- **Demonstrate the ROI of social learning** by assessing engagement, quality of interactions and resulting behavior change.
- **Get them involved:** It's hard to criticize a project that you play a key role in. If you have a manager that fails to see the value in social learning, recruit them to help make it better.

CREATE AN AUTHENTIC AND RELEVANT LEARNING EXPERIENCE

- **Every activity should provide engagement and value**
- **Establish the WIIFM for the learner at the beginning**
- **Create forward momentum with each activity**

GET LEARNERS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIVITY

- Overcome a **lack of cohesion** by creating face to face and synchronous experiences and sharing photos, stories and prior experiences. Create a team "thing!"
- Identify potential **cultural barriers** as you design the experience and create a plan for all learners to feel safe when participating.
- Be aware of **language barriers**. Consider how you can accommodate those who may struggle with a rapid pace of communication. Avoid idioms and euphemisms, use globally appropriate references and limit the use of acronyms.

EXPLORE MORE

Facilitating a Robust Social Learning Experience for Geographically Dispersed Teams, by Daila Boufford - http://www.nxtbook.com/nxtbooks/trainingindustry/tiq_20180102/index.php?startid=24

Jane Hart's blog, "Learning in the Modern Workplace" - <http://www.c4lpt.co.uk/blog/>

Julian Stodd's "Learning Blog" - <https://julianstodd.wordpress.com/>

