

TIPS FOR TEACHING ONLINE

Facilitating and designing successful online education takes preparation. In this factsheet we outline some online learning principles for teaching and activity design which encourage participant engagement.

ONLINE LEARNING DESIGN

When you design new online learning content, or you review and adapt existing face-to-face education material for online delivery, you should consider to:

- Choose an online platform that supports a number of media elements and engagement functions: visual, video, audio, whiteboard, annotation, break-out rooms, interaction and polling.
- Create a series of shorter online sessions instead of long sessions.
- Limit your online sessions to be no longer than 60-90 minutes.
- Design your content to be less 'presentation' heavy and more interactive to support participant engagement.
- Use a 'flipped-classroom approach' which means your participants are provided materials in advance of the online training and the time in the 'classroom' is spent discussing and bringing the content to life. This approach encourages participants to engage more deeply with materials.
- Use presentation techniques such as 'chunking' which means you break the content into smaller more manageable chunks.
- Allow for regular check-ins throughout the online education session.

- Build short breaks into your session to allow you and your participants to rest your eyes and have a stretch.

ACTIVITY DESIGN

Just as you would in a classroom situation, it is important to design appropriate activities and to consider how best to deliver them online. Make sure to:

- Be clear on the purpose, identify and communicate the intended goal or outcome for each activity.
- Consider how you will evaluate the learnings from the activity.
- Plan for some extra time to allow for instructions and for transitions between different engagement formats such as polls, break-out rooms and chat feeds.
- Provide learners with clear instruction on what to expect at each stage of the activity and be clear on time allocated for different activities and group work in break-out rooms.
- Design activities with interactive elements to maintain participant engagement and provide real-time feedback on learning outcomes. Consider including live polling, quizzes, word clouds and activities via one of the suggested applications below.



[Mentimeter](#)



[Kahoot!](#)



[Poll Everywhere](#)

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SUITABLE ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Activities that can be easily transferred into the online environment include:



- Whole group discussions
- Group tasks with report-back
- Live polling and quizzes followed by discussion of results
- Story sharing
- Virtual whiteboard to allow others to input ideas
- Short video clips
- Pre-reading for discussion during the session

USEFUL ENGAGEMENT FUNCTIONS

BREAK-OUT ROOMS

The 'break-out rooms' are available in some online platforms and provide the ability to separate groups of learners into virtual rooms where they can complete a group activity, as they would in a physical classroom. Many types of group activities can be adapted to suit the online environment by using the break-out rooms function.

CHAT FEATURE

The chat feature can be used to complement online learning delivery and enables two-way written communication between the learners and the facilitator without interrupting audio-visual transmission. Where possible, a co-facilitator or moderator can be useful to help manage the chat feed and other technology.

The chat feature is suitable for:



- Broadcasting messages
- Sharing content (links, etc)
- Troubleshooting AV issues
- Privately messaging

PREPARATION IS KEY

For a successful online session, preparation is key:

- Rehearse your session in a live setting to ensure you master the technology, different engagement features and can easily transfer between each activity, for example how to split participants into break-out rooms and then bring them together once the activity is complete.
- If possible set up a separate technology testing session or allow for 30 minutes at the beginning for all participants to test their required technology such as audio and video.
- Create a detailed facilitation activity plan for a smooth and timely transition between activities and engagement tools.
- Test the technology before the session to ensure it functions correctly.

CHECKLIST

DONE

Be clear on session purpose	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review and enhance education material for online learning environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Create a detailed facilitation activity plan	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allow sufficient time for regular check-ins and short breaks for a stretch	<input type="checkbox"/>
Enhance engagement and learning by integrating interactive activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide students with clear instructions before any activity is attempted	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rehearse and test the technology	<input type="checkbox"/>

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For additional resources, please visit hetti.nsw.gov.au/virtualenvironments