

Fostering Social Learning through Online Communication

What Is Online Learning?

- Education delivered via digital platforms, either:
 - **Synchronous** (live, real-time)
 - **Asynchronous** (self-paced)
- Offers **flexibility, accessibility, and scalability**
- Common tools: Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Moodle, Canvas

What Is Social Learning?

- Learning through **interaction, observation, and collaboration**
- Examples: peer feedback, group discussions, shared problem-solving, modeling
- Supported in online settings through:
 - Chat and breakout rooms
 - Collaborative whiteboards
 - Polls and quizzes (e.g., Microsoft Forms)
 - **Peer-led activities**

Aligning Online & Social Learning

- Online platforms can foster social learning when **designed intentionally**
- Facilitators should create space for:
 - **Interaction**
 - **Reflection**
 - **Peer support**
- Benefits: boosts **engagement, retention, and community-building**

Reflection Questions

1. What barriers have you experienced when fostering social learning online?
2. How do adult learners benefit from peer interaction in virtual settings?
3. What tools or strategies have helped you build a connected online class

Best Practices for Online Facilitation

- Set clear expectations for participation
- Use breakout rooms for small group collaboration
 - Provide supervision and regular check-ins
 - If learners frequently disengage, consider alternative tools
- Encourage **peer feedback** and shared leadership
- Model effective communication and troubleshooting
- Use collaborative tools (e.g., Whiteboard, Forms, shared documents) to co-create knowledge

Demonstration Takeaways

When facilitating on Microsoft Teams (or similar):

- Prepare with a **pre-session checklist**
- Use clear **screen-sharing and chat strategies**
- Prompt **peer support** during challenges
- Invite learners to model and troubleshoot together

References

Cacicio, S., Shell, A. R., & Tare, M. (2020). *Beyond frameworks: Supporting adult educators to leverage technology to meet the needs of adult learners*. Digital Promise. <https://digitalpromise.org>

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