

# FUNDAMENTALS

## E-Facilitation

Here are some activities for inductive learners.

By Jean Barbazette

Adult learning is most effective when participants are involved in activities that appeal to their different learning styles. Trainers, therefore, need to think beyond visual, auditory, and kinesthetic teaching methods and consider how the information is organized. For example, some participants learn better when information is presented in a deductive manner: The lesson is overtly stated in an objective and reinforced with planned activities. But others prefer

an inductive approach, in which parts of a whole are gradually revealed and summarized to disclose the objective.

To appeal to the inductive learner, synchronous and asynchronous trainers can facilitate online learning more effectively by rearranging the way information is presented. That helps to increase participation, which encourages learning and retention.

Here are three types of inductive activities to try.

### Instant puzzles

Instant puzzles present participants with a problem to solve. Inductive learners are not only challenged, but also are fascinated by the variety of processes that can be used to solve the problem. Without revealing too much about the objective of the activity, show a multiple-choice instant puzzle on the screen and give participants a moment to solve it. Use the polling feature on your LMS to determine which answer was selected, and then ask participants to explain their rationale, the point of the puzzle, and how it can be applied to the lesson. The summarization and description processes appeal to the nature of the inductive learning style.

### Drawings

Drawings are learning tools that captivate participants because illustrations can be symbols of situations or expressions of opinions.

Again, without telling too much about the activity, give each participant a different color pen and location on the shared electronic whiteboard. Ask participants to draw a square in their space to represent an acre of land that they must divide among their heirs. Tell them they have four grown children, but one child is cruel and doesn't get along with the other three. Then ask them to place a symbol on each parcel of property to represent the house they will build for each child.

To help inductive learners gain the most from the activity, ask participants to identify the underlying values or beliefs in their drawings. For example, equally divided property shows a belief in fairness and equal treatment. Disinheriting the "bad" child might reflect a belief in

bearing the consequences of one's behavior. Placing the houses in the middle of the property shows intent to occupy all of the property, while houses drawn to the side allow room for future growth. After they complete their drawings, have participants discuss how the exercise can be applied to the content of your e-learning session.

### "Off-air" assignments

Because participants are concerned about how long an e-learning session can last, have them prepare beforehand. By assigning those "off-air" tasks, you can use "on-air" time to develop more challenging and in-depth activities. Those assignments also give participants a stake in the learning process. Here are several types of off-air assignments to increase participation, understanding, and retention.

**Read.** Assign text readings prior to or in-between sessions, and accompany them with discussion questions for maximum retention. Also consider giving a quiz to increase the probability that the materials will be read.

**Investigate.** Have participants complete an activity that can be a benchmark for refinement during the workshop. For example, participants could prepare for an in-depth topic discussion by surveying co-workers on that subject before

the discussion.

**Gather samples.** Have participants identify and bring along real information or products from their office that can be used during the training. For example, participants can gather department expenses or this year's earnings estimates in preparation for an activity about budgeting.

**Preview ideas.** Ask participants to complete an online survey and post it before sessions. That way, each participant will know in advance the group's skill level, interests, or expectations on topics to be addressed in the sessions.

### Bond with participants

No matter what your participants' learning styles are, e-learning is a challenge to trainers because they can't see their students or read their body language. Make up for that lack of face-to-face contact with these suggestions:

- Email a confirmation letter when registration is received, and send a reminder the day before the workshop.
- Use pictures of yourself and participants to show which person in the group is speaking.
- Greet participants with a visual and auditory welcome during sign-in. Display directions, music, and a countdown clock to the program's start time.
- Encourage participants to post comments following the session, and send follow-up emails with information that supplements the training.
- Forward a summary created by the participants following the workshop.

With some planning, you can use activities that stimulate inductive thinkers and get them involved in their own education. By catering to a variety of learning styles and overcoming the challenges of the virtual class-

Summarization  
and description processes  
appeal to the nature  
of the inductive learning style.

Assign  
“off-air” tasks,  
such as reading a  
book or completing  
a survey, so you can  
use “on-air” time  
to develop more  
challenging activities.

room, you can significantly increase participation, retention, and results.

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