



## Knowledge to lead

# Designing Social Learning

Social learning requires effective design to engineer social processes such as interactions, collaboration and sharing. All social learning activities require at least two people and occur as a result of the feedback received.

Designing effective social learning requires the following steps:

- **Define the objective(s)**

Social learning works well in some situations but not always. Moreover, it can be combined with other forms of learning. The designer should be aware of strengths and weaknesses of social learning and use it appropriately in order to::

- refine ideas through discussion;
- provide social interaction and make work less lonely;
- provide emotional support to learners;
- facilitate decision making processes;
- build teams;
- implement learning quickly and inexpensively, because it does not require creating interactive content and delegates much of the management of learning to learners themselves;
- build lifelong learning since it helps the creation and growth of networks.

Another important aspect is clarifying whether the objective is to learn something specific, or to improve social skills and enhance team capabilities.

- **Define the target**

It is important to identify the exact group you will educate

- **Define the expert**

The designer should ensure that an expert is available and gets the learners through social interaction. This expert can be a teacher, experts or from the learners collectively.



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- **Define pre-requisite skills for learners**

Social learning requires certain abilities, attitudes and competences, including:

- Communication abilities:
  - Reading and writing knowledge of the language used in discussions, messages, material;
  - Speaking and listening knowledge of the language used for interactions;
  - Ability to ask questions and produce concise answers;
- Attitudes:
  - Openness to new and better ideas;
  - Acceptance of criticism;
  - Spirit of cooperation;
  - Work ethic.
- Competences:
  - Basic knowledge of the field of inquiry or special social skills to share with others;
  - Ability to use social media tools.

- **Define pre-requisite skills for the organization/environment**

The environment in which learning takes place must meet some requirements for social learning to succeed. These requirements include:

- A Culture of sharing
- Lateral communication, as opposed to hierarchical/authoritarian communication
- Flexibility and adaptation
- Information security
- Legal security



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- **Define social activities that best achieve the objective**

The designer should specify activities according to the pattern of interaction to be achieved.

Here a list of the main ones:

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Tools</b>	<b>When to use</b>
Tutoring interaction	An expert and learner interact on a one-to-one basis	In person, email, text, phone call, video conference.	Coaching, counselling, Mentoring
Presentation	One person directs information to others	Face to face meeting, Video conference	Announcements, live presentations, lectures, speeches, demonstrations
Question-and-answer	Learners ask an expert questions	Email, texting, chat, discussion forums, phone calls, video conferencing, micro blogging	Organized or sporadic sessions
Post-and-comment	An expert, teacher or facilitator posts a message and learners comment on it	Discussion forums, blogs.	To provoke discussion, make assignments and collect results within a course.
Collaborative work	Learners work together to create and refine a document or piece of work.	Wikis, collaborative authoring tools	Teaching subjects as writing, visual design...
Group discussion	Learners interact with one another	Chatting, video conferencing, discussion forums	To refine ideas, correct misconceptions, and get feedback
Panel discussion	Experts discuss a topic as learners watch and listen	Live presentation, video-audio podcast.	Panel discussions, debates, interviews, role playing





Symposium	A group of experts discuss a subject with learners	Audio-video conferencing, online meeting tools	Extended question-and-answer sessions
Ask- expert community	The learner consults a community of experts	Discussion forum	Answering advanced questions, getting professional advice
Ask-peers	A learner consults a group of which he is a member	Discussion forums, social networks	To ask questions of relevance for the community

- **Write the rules**

The designer should set up policies, standards and procedures that guide social interaction

- **Set grading criteria**

The designer should set how the learners' performance will be rated and if group performance will be considered over individual performance.

- **Monitor and guide social learning**

The designer should set model standards of behaviour and coach social interaction

- **Specify technical requirements**

The designer must ensure that the technology enables the type of interaction needed.

- **Design templates for learners**

The designer should produce some guidance to assist learners in producing content such as slides, video clips...

- **Specify social learning components in other forms of learning**

Specify the existence of social learning components in other forms of learning such as face-to-face, e-Learning, mobile learning...



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