



# Virtual Engagement Strategies for Asynchronous Learning

## Competency

The facilitator uses a variety of strategies and digital tools to engage learners in asynchronous learning.

## Key Method

Facilitator uses a variety of engagement strategies to connect with learners of multiple ability levels, creates a safe and comfortable virtual learning environment, and encourages respectful collaboration between participants.

## Method Components

### Asynchronous Learning

Asynchronous learning includes forms of education, instruction, and learning that do not occur in the same place or at the same time. The term is most commonly applied to various forms of digital and online learning in which students learn from instruction—such as prerecorded video lessons or game-based learning tasks that students complete on their own—that is not delivered in person or in real time. It may also encompass a wide range of instructional interactions, including email exchanges between teachers, online discussion boards, and course management systems that organize instructional materials and correspondence, among many other possible variations. Whether learning is synchronous or asynchronous, the facilitator establishes an environment that is engaging, motivating, safe, and respectful.

## Why is Virtual Engagement Important?

People learn socially, even in an online setting. Effective online learning requires facilitation that allows participants to interact with content, apply skills, and discuss their learning and questions with others in similar settings.

## Tips and Strategies to Motivate Learners

Sessions include opportunities for participants to acknowledge, embrace, and learn from others with different backgrounds and perspectives in a safe learning environment where collaborative dialogue can occur. In a professional learning setting, the participants bring unique experience and knowledge to the group. Facilitators encourage networking, sharing of ideas, active listening, and new learning.

- There are a variety of interaction strategies to foster an inclusive environment.
- Participants actively use technology to share their experiences
- Time is given to ask questions and to interact with the material and each other
- Routines and expectations, such as “netiquette,” are established

## Tips and Strategies to Engage Learners in Online Discussions

Discussion boards should allow learners to delve deeper into the content and encourage participants to learn from one another through respectful, open dialogue. Online discussions should include rubrics to guide participants on online protocol, content, and expected responses, rather than focusing on recall of facts. Facilitators create open-ended questions that encourage the participants to respond to both the question and to each other. The post schedule allows time for thoughtful responses to questions and opportunities to respond to each other.

- Collaborative discussions
- Questions and feedback promote deeper thinking, not just recall
- Questions are intentionally open-ended

## Creates a Safe Environment

A facilitator in online learning will allow learners to participate at a comfortable level that respects students' backgrounds, situations, and individual learning needs. Tasks should be manageable for learners and safe for them to participate in. Participants should be expected to engage in the learning and ask questions.

- Tasks are relevant to the learning.
- Participants are encouraged to join activities and share work
- Activities allow participants to interact with the content and apply their learning.
- Feedback is positive and timely.

## Digital Platforms for Asynchronous Learning

- NEA edCommunities
- Facebook Groups
- LinkedIn
- Google Classroom
- Digital Promise
- Online class LMS with discussion boards
- Schoology

## Supporting Rationale and Research

The Power of Virtual Coaching

<http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/oct11/vol69/num02/The-Power-of-Virtual-Coaching.aspx>

Laxton, Amber, et al. *A Guide to the Adult Learning Ed-Tech Market*. Digital Promise, 2017, *A Guide to the Adult Learning Ed-Tech Market*.

<http://digitalpromise.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/accelerating-learning-for-adult-education.pdf>

McConnell, Tom J., et al. "Virtual professional learning communities: Teachers' perceptions of virtual versus face-to-face professional development." *Journal of Science Education and Technology* 22.3 (2013): 267-277

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZAKnVW1BUazlZgJuDJFUCdMI5tNGFI7/view?usp=sharing>

King, Kathleen P. "Professional learning in unlikely spaces: Social media and virtual communities as professional development." *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (IJET)* 6.4 (2011): 40-46.

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dEjyJukVBz\\_aVd5sNybk3lejYaMsLWq\\_/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1dEjyJukVBz_aVd5sNybk3lejYaMsLWq_/view?usp=sharing)

Knight, Jim. "What Good Coaches Do." *Educational Leadership*, vol. 69, no. 2, Oct. 2011,

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1J5vI5fKsja-TbKpMtlYuev4qmA0N1JWh/view?usp=sharing>

Rodezno, S. A., & Shahjahan, R. A. (2025). *Cultivating engagement: Innovative practices for online adult education*. *Adult Learning*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10451595251357244>

West, Lucy, and Antonia Cameron. Challenging Assumptions About Coaching. Challenging Assumptions About Coaching. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vBA9LXPNIo6VX9MZ-9Hn68nqirpA2T0I/view?usp=sharing>

## Resources

Facilitating Online Learning  
[5 Instructional Technology Coaching Strategies that Support Continuous Teacher Growth](#)

[4 Tips for Productive Online Discussions](#)

[Blended and Online Learning](#)

[A Checklist for Facilitating Online Courses](#)

Ice-Breaker Strategies  
[IceBreaker Activities](#)

[Icebreakers](#)

[The Importance of Icebreakers in Online Learning](#)

[Ten Online Icebreakers](#)

[Five Creative Icebreakers and Assignments for the Online Classroom](#)

Discussion Strategies  
[Online Discussion Strategies](#)

[Techniques of online discussion](#)

Collaboration Strategies  
[Reasons Why Collaborative Online Learning Activities are Effective](#)

[How to Make Group Work Collaborative](#)

[Fostering Collaboration in the Online Classroom](#)

## Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must answer the questions with a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and receive a proficient score for all components in Part 2.

### Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

**(175 - 250 words)**

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation. *Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. What do you hope to gain or change in your practice on asynchronous learning as a result of engaging with this competency?
2. What experience, if any, do you have with supporting learners in a face-to-face or virtual capacity?
3. What tool did you decide to use to create your learning environment? Why did you choose this tool? If others chose the tool, please share that information.

**Passing:** Response provides reasonable and accurate information that justifies the selection of this micro-credential to address the specific needs of both the virtual coach and the learners. The facilitator includes a learning goal that describes what they hope to gain from earning this micro-credential.

### Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

Submit the following **two artifacts** as evidence of your learning. *Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

**Artifact 1: Virtual Learning Group**

Create an asynchronous virtual learning group using one of the platforms listed in the resources section or another platform of your choosing.

Upload annotated screenshots of your group, or paste a link to your group in the submission box.

**Artifact 2: Description**

In 400 to 700 words, describe the intentional design and facilitation decisions you made when creating and implementing your asynchronous virtual learning group.

Your description should explain the reasoning behind your engagement strategies and how they support adult learners in an asynchronous environment.

1. Purpose or expected outcomes of the group
  - What are the intended learning outcomes of the group?
  - How do these outcomes support meaningful learning in an asynchronous setting?
2. Evidence of motivating learners
  - What specific strategies did you use to motivate learners and encourage participation?
  - How do these strategies support adult learning principles (e.g., relevance, reflection, application, collaboration)?
  - How did you intentionally structure time for participants to engage with content and respond to one another?
3. Discussion Design
  - How did you craft open-ended prompts to promote reflection and dialogue rather than recall?
  - How did you support learner-to-learner interaction?
  - If you used a discussion rubric, explain how it clarifies expectations and promotes deeper thinking.
4. Safe and Respectful Environment
  - How did you establish norms or expectations for respectful participation?
  - How did you ensure the environment is inclusive and accessible to learners with diverse backgrounds and experiences?
5. Facilitator Presence and Feedback
  - How did you provide timely and meaningful feedback?
  - How did your feedback encourage deeper thinking, continued dialogue, or application of learning?

Focus on explaining your decision-making process and how your design supports engagement in asynchronous adult learning.

Do not include any information that makes you or your learners identifiable.

Part 2. Rubric

	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Developing</b>
<b>Artifact 1: Virtual Learning Group</b>	<p>Submitted screenshots or a link clearly demonstrate an established asynchronous virtual learning group that includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clearly stated purpose or expected outcomes</li> <li>Posted norms or expectations for online interaction (e.g., netiquette)</li> <li>At least one open-ended discussion prompt designed to promote reflection and dialogue</li> <li>Evidence of participant interaction (learner-to-learner responses)</li> <li>Evidence of facilitator presence (e.g., feedback, guiding questions, prompts that deepen thinking)</li> <li>Screenshots or links are clearly labeled so the reviewer can identify how</li> </ul>	<p>Submitted screenshots or link demonstrate an asynchronous virtual learning group with a stated purpose and discussion prompt.</p> <p>Some elements of norms, participant interaction, or facilitator feedback are present but may be limited, unclear, or inconsistently applied.</p> <p>Screenshots or link may not clearly indicate how elements align to expectations.</p>	<p>Submitted screenshots or link show an online space, but required elements are missing or unclear.</p> <p>Purpose, norms, discussion prompts, participant interaction, or facilitator feedback are absent or not evident.</p> <p>Screenshots or link do not clearly demonstrate an established asynchronous learning group.</p>

	each element is demonstrated.		
<b>Artifact 2: Description</b>	<p>The description clearly states the intended outcomes and explains how they align with asynchronous learning.</p> <p>Specific engagement strategies are described and clearly linked to participants' interactions with content and peers.</p> <p>The description explains how participation was structured over time to allow thoughtful responses.</p> <p>Discussion prompts are described as open-ended and reflective, promoting dialogue rather than recall.</p> <p>If a discussion rubric was used, its purpose and expectations are clearly explained.</p> <p>Norms for respectful participation (e.g., netiquette) are clearly described and connected to</p>	<p>The description identifies outcomes and engagement strategies, but explanations may lack clarity or depth.</p> <p>Participation structure may be mentioned but not clearly explained.</p> <p>Discussion prompts may be open-ended, but lack a clear explanation of how they promote dialogue.</p> <p>Norms or feedback are mentioned but not clearly connected to engagement.</p> <p>Writing may lack organization or specificity.</p>	<p>The description does not clearly explain outcomes or engagement strategies.</p> <p>Participation structure is not described.</p> <p>Discussion prompts are primarily recall-based or unclear.</p> <p>Norms and feedback are missing or not explained.</p> <p>Writing is unclear or incomplete.</p>

	<p>a safe and inclusive learning environment.</p> <p>Facilitator feedback is described as timely and purposeful, and the explanation demonstrates how feedback promotes deeper thinking or continued engagement.</p> <p>The writing is clear and well-organized.</p>		
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## Part 3 Reflection

### **(350 - 500 words)**

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please answer the following reflective questions. *Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.*

1. How did focusing on the engagement of your participants change the way that you set up the course? In what way did you change your teaching strategies?
2. What strategies did you find the most helpful as you reflect on the engagement of the learners in this course?
3. How will the learning from this micro-credential change the way that you plan and implement coursework change in the future?

**Passing:** Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on both Facilitator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.