AMA American Managemer Association®

Ten Best Practices for Designing Online Learner Engagement

In virtual training, getting the attention and interest of your participants immediately—and keeping them engaged throughout the training—is critical to your program's success. That level of engagement depends on adequate preparation and design of your program, as well as such real-time concerns as asking relevant questions during training, including interactive exercises and engagement-building tools like polling, being able to address technology concerns, and much more.

Use the following table to review 10 Best Practices for designing your program for learner engagement, and in the right-hand column, write down notes as to how you might apply each practice for your program. If additional ideas for your particular situation occur to you as you're reviewing the best practices, also note those in the appropriate area on the table.

BEST PRACTICE		HOW I COULD APPLY IT
1	Research the technical features and limitations of your delivery technology. Try to confirm that learners will have the required computing and network infrastructure to view the training. Understand bandwidth issues and, if possible, test the slowest connection speeds.	
2	Access, research, or create your own design and development templates to capture details of what will occur during the session.	
3	Learn about cultural preferences of your audience and adjust delivery methods accordingly.	
4	Investigate the interactive features and limitations of your training technology. Test video, webcam, and screen-sharing capabilities.	
5	Find ways to engage learners at the very beginning. Use interactive openers, and have people introduce themselves.	
6	Vary the methods of interaction. Use annotation tools, whiteboards, worksheets, polls, chats, etc.	
7	Build in frequent interactions throughout your program. Ask questions or provide other interactions every three to five learning points or slides.	
8	Secure copyright approval for any videos, materials, or other intellectual property created by others.	
9	Allow for plenty of advance time to design and develop training materials. It takes more time to create, design, and develop online training than face-to-face training.	
10	Keep things as simple as possible. Complexity raises the risk of potential technical problems.	

For immersive learning in virtual training techniques, check out our live online program, AMA's Virtual Training Certificate.