



LUMA CONNECTIONS:

Building Learning Communities to Connect Learners Remotely

Authored by Dr. Gina Anderson and Elizabeth Lind

Illustrated by Elizabeth Nordquest

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About the Authors

Dr. Gina Anderson is the CEO of Luma Brighter Learning, an award-winning instructional design and learning company. Since 2014, she has focused on studying professional driver learning behaviors to improve strategies for engagement. Dr. Anderson routinely publishes new, measurable, science-based techniques specifically focused on driver learning to help companies improve their safety scores and uphold compliance. She is the author of *Teaching Without a Teaching Degree: Luma Learning Lessons*. Dr. Anderson holds a Doctor of Education in instructional systems technology from Indiana University, where she also minored in learning science. She has a passion for helping people learn.



Elizabeth Lind is the instructional designer at Luma Brighter Learning and is a former public school teacher. Elizabeth holds a master's degree in educational technology and a bachelor's degree in secondary social studies education from Florida Gulf Coast University. She is passionate about designing engaging, motivating, and equalizing learning experiences that touch the hearts and minds of learners.



Elizabeth Nordquest is the director of art at Luma Brighter Learning and published illustrator of the book *Teaching Without a Teaching Degree: Luma Learning Lessons*. Elizabeth is a graduate of Ohio University's School of Visual Communication with a Bachelor of Science in interactive multimedia and holds a specialization in art history. Elizabeth started her career designing in-person and digital museum exhibitions, then transitioned to educational software and online training. She enjoys drawing the Luma monsters as they take part in their various learning activities.



Background

Collaboration and connection are important for our social-emotional well-being. The academic concept of community of learners (COL) has existed in one form or another for over 100 years. This is not a new concept, but it is a concept that has been missing in the trucking industry. Schroeder and Mable (1994) define COLs as “small subgroups of students ... characterized by a common sense of purpose ... that can be used to build a sense of group identity, cohesiveness, and uniqueness that encourage continuity and the integration of diverse curricular and co-curricular experiences” (p. 167).



Simply put, COLs involve students in learner-to-learner interactions. In its earlier use, the strategy for these communities showed not only the ability to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, but the potential to create new knowledge (Lenning & Ebbbers, 1999; Rogoff et al., 1996). The concept of COLs is influenced by Vygotsky’s theory of social constructivism, which recognizes the importance of the social nature of learning. Studies of these types of environments when designed for an online format has shown, for decades, the benefits of these environments on learning (Palloff & Pratt, 2007), but there has been little use of these communities in the trucking industry.



The benefits of such environments have been discussed at length to improve academic performance and social achievement (Gabelnick et al., 1990; Calderwood, 2000). In fact, research has shown that the benefits for adults include diminished feelings of isolation, increased satisfaction with learning, increased collaboration, and engagement (Collier, 2002). Anderson et al. (2021) describe the widely documented benefits of building

communities of learning in education:

1. Require learners to think abstractly and build on existing skills and knowledge structures.
2. Use real-world experiences to make applications relevant to learners' immediate lives.
3. Show learners that the knowledge they bring to the learning experience is valued.
4. Keep engagement going, both during and beyond the formal educational learning experience.



To help you build such environments, we offer this book to you. There are many opportunities to build Luma Connections with your learners.

Luma Connections #1: Create Divergent Questions

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Embed divergent questions in an asynchronous discussion board.

Questions must be thought-provoking and lead to additional questions and thoughts. A divergent question is one that cannot be answered by a yes or no. These questions are thought-provoking and can lead to additional questions.

Why are there so many deaths related to railroad crossings?

Answer at least two questions, or come up with your own question that your peers can answer.

1. Why is this question important?
2. Can you give us an example?
3. What caused you to feel that way?
4. What is an additional question we need to consider on this topic?



Luma Connections #2: Provide a Mixture of Discussion Board Sizes

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Create social presence in an asynchronous discussion board by providing a mixture of discussion board sizes.

Small groups enhance social presence and can create a greater sense of commitment than large groups. However, there are times when larger groups are appropriate and appreciated.

- Example 1: Coffee House or Juice Bar (open to all users)
- Example 2: Eating Healthily (Create breakout groups of five users. Assign users to the groups, and let them name their group/team.)



Luma Connections #3: Communicate Expectations

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Set and communicate expectations.

Every learner wants to know what to expect. Consider whether this is the first time they have participated in an online discussion. Make it a safe place. Some learners may struggle with spelling or grammar. Some learners may not be comfortable with the technology. Encourage respect. You set the direction and culture of your learning communities.

1. Be respectful.



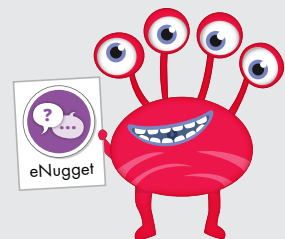
2. Thoughts count.
Spelling and punctuation are not evaluated.



3. Connect with your peers often.



4. Share ideas and knowledge.



5. Get help with the technology. (See help material.)



6. Be professional.



7. Show empathy.



8. Be a positive influence.



Luma Connections #4: Give Learners a Choice

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Give learners a choice in how they can respond in the discussion board.

Give learning communities a choice in how they respond and participate in the discussion. Providing choices instead of dictating a specific learning path appears to increase participation.

Q. When you face someone with road rage, how do you respond?

Example Choices:



Respond to the instructor with an example and a non-example.



Respond to a peer with a thought-provoking question.



Offer an original idea.

Luma Connections #5: Avoid Being the Sage on the Stage

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Avoid being the "sage on the stage."

As the instructor, you are the knowledge expert. But did you know that you can be the barrier to a lively learning community by being a sage on the stage? The learners will wait for you to answer. The community is about the learners. Let their knowledge shine, and guide as needed.

How to be the "guide by the side":

1. Limit the number of times you post.
2. Waiting is difficult, but wait for several people to join the discussion.
3. Ask thought-provoking questions instead of solutions.
4. Recognize learners who interact with each other by making statements like, "Hey team, check out this interaction between X and Y. Have you ever eaten these healthy options while on the road? Where do you go to find options like this? Keep up these types of discussions. They are valuable to our entire group."
5. Provide redirection as needed.
6. Summarize the discussion and recognize discussion highlights at the end of the discussion.
7. Provide further questions for consideration.



Luma Connections #6: Use Photos to Connect Learners

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.





Tip: Use photos to connect learners over an extended period.

It is important for learners in a learning community to get to know each other. Photos can help connect learners. Consider having a pet discussion board or a monthly photo discussion board.

What I am thankful for...

This discussion board will be open for the month of November. Post photos of things you are thankful for. Name your photo and why you are thankful for what is in the picture.

Comment on at least two peers' photos by sharing what you appreciate about their photos.

Discussion	Authored By	Last Post Date
Thankful for my happy dog (6 messages)	 Orbee	11/02/23 4:17 pm
11 years on the job! (13 messages)	 Widget	11/01/23 8:35 am

Luma Connections #7: Start With Low Stakes

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Make the first discussion low stakes.

If this is the first time your learners have participated in a learner-to-learner interaction, do not make the discussion something that is high stakes.

Follow these tips to make the discussion low stakes.

Consider the number of posts.



Example: To complete the assignment and get credit, you must post two times (one original post and one post to a peer).

OR

To complete the assignment and get credit, you must post five times (all original posts).

Consider the technology.



Example: If your learners do not know how to use the technology, they might get frustrated. Post step-by-step directions on how to create and respond to a post. The first post might simply require the learner to successfully share a post.

Consider the question.



Make the question an introductory type of question.

Example: Introduce yourself to the team by sharing your top five favorite songs.

Luma Connections #8: Create Spaces for Fun

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Create discussion board spaces where learners can connect and have fun.

Truck Stop or Road Closures

Have a non-academic space where learners can share for a purpose. Set up a Truck Stop discussion board where drivers can post their favorite stops and their locations. Maybe you open up a Road Closure board where drivers can post different alerts for their peers. If they follow a discussion board, they can get real-time edits via new posts.

Example 1. Truck Stop

This board's purpose is to post tips for the road.

- Where is your favorite place to stop for rest breaks? Why?
- What was the best part of your day?



Example 2. Road Closure

Did you plan ahead today? Or maybe you found a road closed unexpectedly because of an accident. Share any alerts to this discussion board.



Luma Connections #9: Create a Discussion Leader

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.

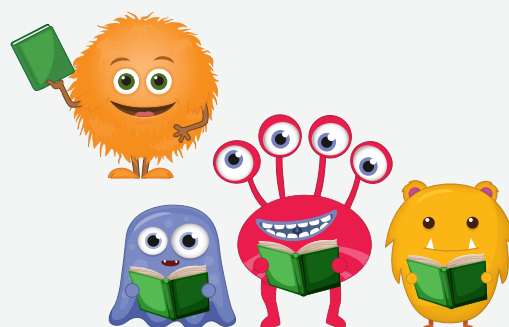


Tip: Create learning discussion leaders.

Give your learners the opportunity to lead a discussion. For example, you could set up a Book Club discussion board that is open all year. One month, learners read a book, and the next month, learners discuss the book, with the discussion led by a different leader each time. This could be structured in several different ways.

Example 1. The leader chooses the book. Everyone reads the same book and answers the same questions.

- Read Book X and answer these questions.
- What was your favorite part of the book?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?
- What will you always remember about this story?



Example 2. The leader chooses a theme. Everyone reads a book on that theme and answers the same questions.

Read a book on the theme of love.

- What book did you read?
- What was your favorite part of the book?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?
- What will you always remember about this story?



Luma Connections #10: Create a Safe Place for a Debate

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.





Tip: Use discussions as a safe place for debates.

Find relevant hot topics in your industry that learners want to discuss and debate. Provide the space to do it in a safe online environment. Create the debatable question and rules for the discussion. Depending on the topic, you might want to moderate the discussion to keep learners on track.

Driver shortage: What should be done to hire and retain drivers?

Rules for discussion:

1. Answer the question with two specific examples.
2. Respond to at least one classmate, but be respectful in your response. Tell them why you agree or disagree.

Discussion	Authored By	Last Post Date
Here's what I think (12 messages)	 Pebbles	01/06/23 4:17 pm
In my opinion... (3 messages)	 Squiggles	01/06/23 8:35 am

Luma Connections #11: Get to Know Your Learners

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Take the time to really know your learners.

How many things can you recall about your learners? Do you really know them, their backgrounds, and their interests? Do you know how they prefer to learn? It will be difficult to truly create a community without really understanding the individuals who are participating in it.

We want to build a community of learners. Pick one of the prompts to respond to with our community.

Prompt 1

Tell us about a time when you had a great learning experience. What made that experience so memorable?

Prompt 2

Write a letter to your younger self. Be sure to include several lessons that you wish you had learned back then.

Prompt 3

Tell us about your favorite pastime hobbies and why you enjoy them.

Discussion

Authored By

Last Post Date

| My learning experience... (7 messages)



Widget

05/12/23 4:17 pm

| My hobby (6 messages)



Buttercup

05/11/23 8:35 am

Luma Connections #12: Teach Respect in a Safe Environment

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

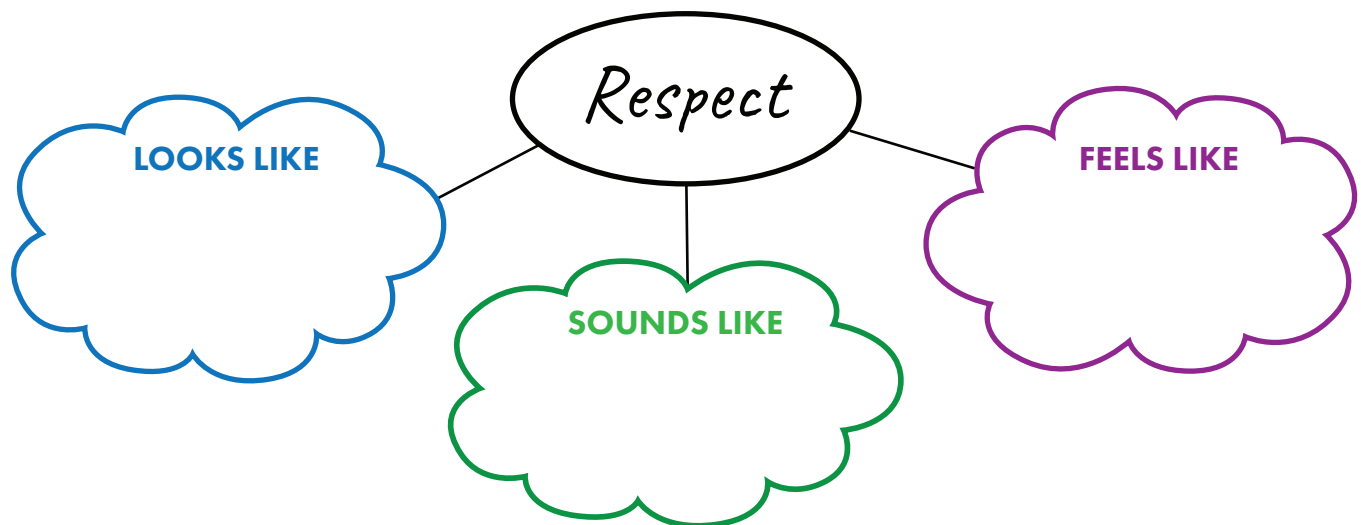
This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Create respect word clouds in groups.

In discussion groups, provide the opportunity for groups to work together to create a visual of how respect looks, feels, and sounds. Invite groups to fill in their word clouds with words, and share them in newsletters, in terminals or buildings, and even on social media sites.

Fill in the word cloud, describing what respect looks like, sounds like, and feels like. We will showcase the best ones.



Some ideas for answers:

Looks like: Opening the door, letting someone go in front of you in line, eating healthily, picking up your trash, helping someone carry something

Sounds like: Saying *thank you*, *please*, and *no, thank you*; using kind words; using a kind voice

Feels like: Community, friendship, warmth, help

Luma Connections #13: Set Up Just-in-Time Safety Communication

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.








Tip: Create discussion boards for just-in-time safety communication.

The community of learners can help each other with just-in-time safety communication. Maybe there is an accident on a highway or unexpected riots. Discussion boards can provide a place where messages, moderated by users, can be shared anytime, anywhere.

Important safety messages

Are you running into something urgent you want to share? Use this discussion board to share instant messages with your peers.

Discussion	Authored By	Last Post Date
There is a riot in downtown Atlanta. Avoid the area. (12 messages)	 Nugget	12/06/23 1:24 pm
There is a terrible snow storm in Ontario and I have pulled off the road. Be safe! (8 messages)	 Widget	11/24/23 6:45 pm
A tornado came through Houston and there are power lines down near our terminal. (3 messages)	 Orbee	11/18/23 7:22 am
I dropped off my delivery and there is an active shooter. I have called 911. (17 messages)	 Pebbles	11/12/23 9:17 am
The wind has tipped over my truck! Avoid driving on I-90 west! (2 messages)	 Buttercup	11/11/23 3:49 pm

Luma Connections #14: Voice a Need. Respond to a Need.

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.






Tip: Provide a platform for learners to voice their needs, and provide the space for others to respond to those needs.

It can be difficult when you are virtual to connect with a mentor, colleague, or teacher to tell them what you need emotionally. Being on the road as a driver can be tough, and having a space to voice a need is important. Maybe more support is needed; maybe a phone call is needed; maybe a hug is needed; maybe suggestions for healthy eating options are needed. Do you know what your learners need? Being part of a community of learners may help users feel more comfortable voicing a need and others in the community responding to a need.

In this discussion board, post what you need. If you see that someone needs something, give advice or see if you can help them or put them in touch with someone who might be able to help them.

What do you need?

Discussion	Authored By	Last Post Date
Safety director's cell number? (2 messages)	 Nugget	07/05/23 1:24 pm
I am feeling depressed. Do you know who I can talk to? (8 messages)	 Widget	07/04/23 9:45 pm
I am stuck on I-90. Help. (3 messages)	 Orbee	07/01/23 3:22 pm

Luma Connections #15: Use Learning Communities to Evaluate Places

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.







Tip: Use learning communities to evaluate places.

Communities on the go: you know what this looks like. What if, together, we could evaluate the places we visit? This could help us make decisions on the road, like where to get gas, where to pull over and rest during our drive, and where to eat.

A community of learners can help with this. Set up a discussion board for learners to post evaluations on specific topics.

Want to share your favorite places and things? Looking for recommendations along your route? This is the place!

Discussion	Authored By	Last Post Date
The best radio show (22 messages)	 Nugget	08/13/23 1:24 pm
The best rest stop (14 messages)	 Widget	08/12/23 9:45 pm
A good music playlist (3 messages)	 Orbee	08/11/23 3:22 pm
Helpful training (7 messages)	 Buttercup	08/06/23 6:46 am

Luma Connections #16: Create an "I Wonder" Board

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Create an "I Wonder" board.

Give learners the space to post questions they are wondering about or questions they have about the organization or their jobs. Monitor the board, but encourage peer-to-peer interactions.

- Do you have a question about our company?
- Do you have a question about your job?
- Do you have something you have been wondering about?

This is your opportunity to ask a question and answer a question. As you explore your peers' posts, see if you have the expertise to answer a question.



Get a point for posting a question and 5 points for responding to a question. Remember: You can trade in your points at our company store in Luma's platform!

Discussion

Authored By

Last Post Date

| Can someone help me? (3 messages)

 Orbee

06/08/23 3:22 pm

| I have a question... (7 messages)

 Buttercup

06/08/23 6:46 am

Luma Connections #17: Ask the Learner

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Ask the learner for feedback.

Most discussion boards are directed by the instructor. Have you ever thought about why Facebook is so successful? People like to talk and share things about themselves. Ask the learners what types of discussion boards they would like to have set up for them.

Send out a survey, like those offered through Luma's platform, and get their feedback.

Survey

We are going to have spaces where you can connect with others at our organization and discuss topics with your peers.

Would you like to connect with your peers in a virtual discussion area?

a. ☐ Yes

b. ☐ No

Submit

For those who would like to participate, what topics or types of discussions would you want us to set up?

Submit

Luma Connections #18: Learn Through Show-and-Tell

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Set up show-and-tell opportunities for learners.

So much happens in a person's life each week. To stay connected, set up a discussion board where learners share more about their worlds and interests.

**Choose an item that represents the best part of your week.
It could be a person, place, or thing. Explain why you chose that item.**



Luma Connections #19: Create Space for Passion Posts

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Set up opportunities for learners to create passion posts.

These types of discussions get at the heart of learners' passions. When people are passionate about something, they will talk a lot about it. If you want learners to connect, give them a space in which to discuss their passions. Here are some potential questions you could use.

If you had unlimited time, what would you spend your time doing?

What do you love to do?

What do you care a lot about?

If you could write a book, what would it be about?



Luma Connections #20: Share Healthy Options

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Share options for staying healthy in different areas of life.

Health can encompass lots of different aspects of a person's life: physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual. Building a learning community can provide support for a learner in the areas they need it. You could set up different discussion boards that focus on each of these health aspects.

Here are some example questions. The possibilities are endless.



PHYSICAL

- How do you stay physically healthy?
- What resources do you use?

Share some exercises you do out on the road.



EMOTIONAL

- How are you feeling today?
- What makes you happy?

Share some strategies you use to cope with difficulties in your life.



SOCIAL

- Do you describe yourself as a social person? If so, what do you like about being social? If not, why don't you see yourself as a social person?
- What are strategies to for coping in social situations when you don't feel social?



SPIRITUAL

- What is the difference between values and priorities?
- What values are important to you?



INTELLECTUAL

- What do you like to learn about? How do you learn it?
- What are your goals for the next 2 years?

Luma Connections #21: Facilitate a Newsroom

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Facilitate a newsroom.

1. First, define the topics you want the newsroom at your company to cover. For example, the news could include current events, articles, or personal events.
2. Then, set the rules or guidelines for posting.
3. Monitor the newsroom to guide and extend the discussion. Be there to support learners and to ask questions that further their thinking and understanding.

Welcome to our newsroom.

This newsroom is for posting current events in the news.

1. Share a picture of the article or a link if it is something you read online.
2. Post a summary of the article. Tell us why you wanted to share the article. Feel free to post a question, comment, or something that made you go *hmm*.
3. Be kind.
4. It is okay to disagree, but keep disagreements healthy.
5. Respect others' perspectives.
6. Justify your opinions.
7. Be kind.

Discussion

Authored By

Last Post Date

| What do you think? (9 messages)

 Orbee

09/30/23 3:22 pm

| Did you hear about this? (17 messages)

 Buttercup

09/29/23 6:46 am

Luma Connections #22: Hold a Creative Coloring Contest

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.

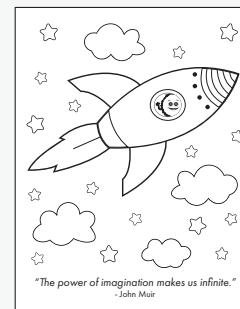
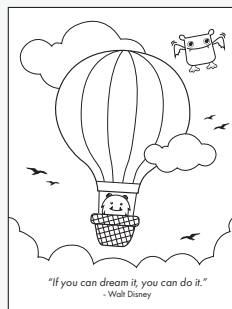


Tip: Open a creative coloring contest.

Set up a space for your learners to showcase their creativity. Post coloring sheets that learners can choose from to color. Coloring can help a person relax and release stress. Invite the learners to post their completed pages. One option is to have learners vote on their favorites, or you can select coloring sheets to showcase in newsletters or calendars.

Creative Coloring Contest

1. Choose one of these coloring sheets to color.
2. Post your page to this discussion board.
3. Share two fun facts about you that we might not know.
4. We will choose select pages throughout the year to highlight in the newsletter.



Discussion

Authored By

Last Post Date

What do you think? (8 messages)



Nugget

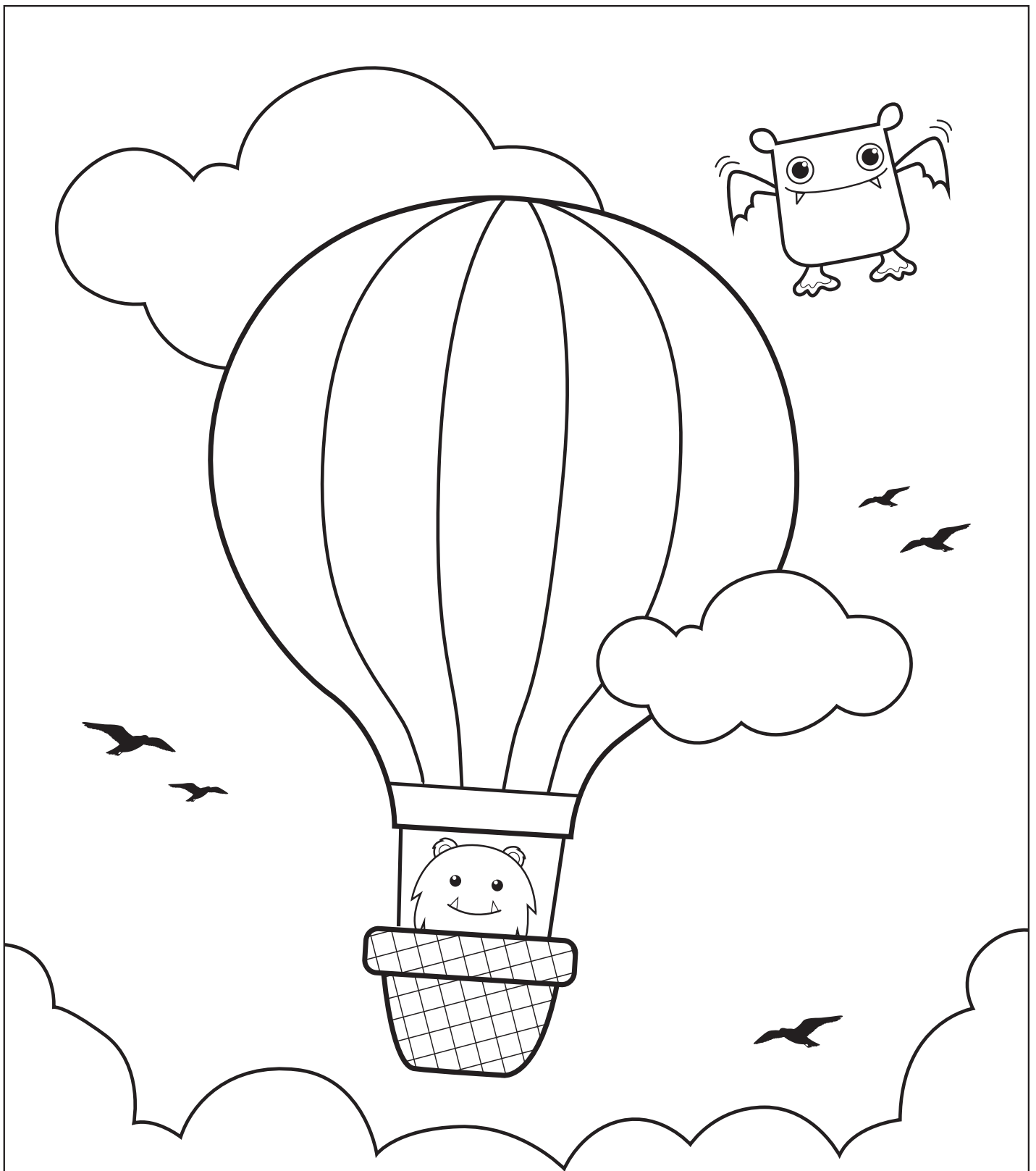
03/21/23 4:17 pm

Check out my page (12 messages)

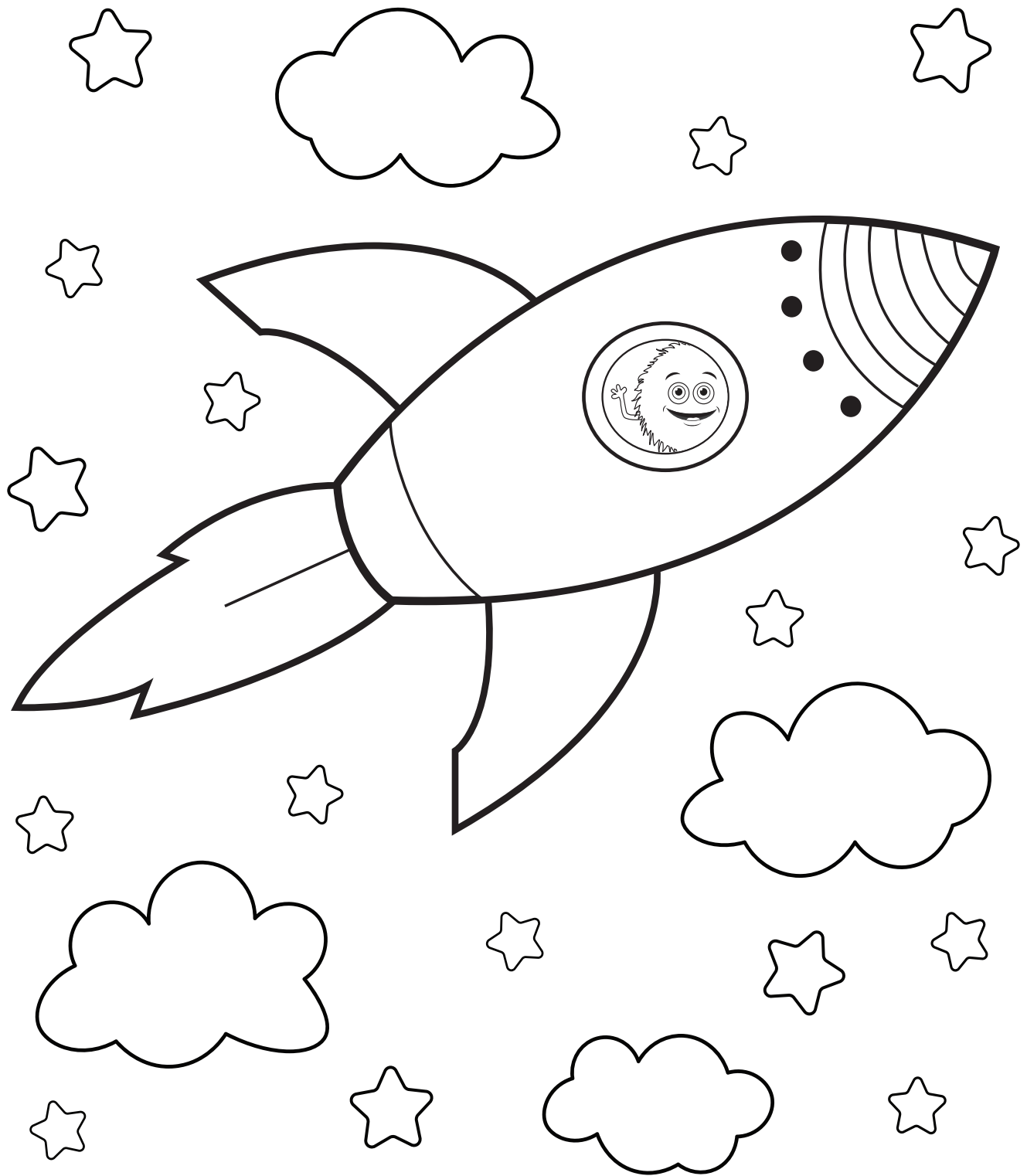


Widget

03/20/23 8:35 am



"If you can dream it, you can do it."
- Walt Disney



"The power of imagination makes us infinite."

- John Muir

Luma Connections #23: Share an Act of Kindness

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Share an act of kindness. Kindness matters!

When we do something kind for someone else, it makes us feel better. Challenge your learners to perform an act of kindness, share what they did, and share their reaction or how they felt. Have a kindness corner in the newsletter where learners can share their acts of kindness as examples for others.

Kindness matters.

Did you know that when you do something kind for someone else, it will make them feel good and will make you feel good, too?




- Do something kind for someone else.
- Share what you did and how they reacted.
- Share how that made you feel.

We will showcase our stories in our company newsletter.

Discussion

Authored By

Last Post Date

Squiggles helped me yesterday! (12 messages)	 Nugget	07/26/23 1:24 pm
Helping Buttercup (8 messages)	 Widget	07/24/23 6:45 pm
Helped a few friends today... (3 messages)	 Orbee	07/08/23 7:22 am

Luma Connections #24: Create a Dance Challenge

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.

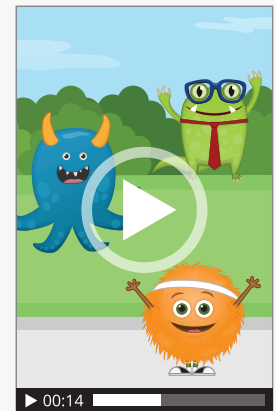


Tip: Use videos to create a dance-off.

Get learners moving and working together as a way to create memories and make positive connections with each other. Divide learners into teams. Have each team post a video of the team dancing to a particular song. Then, challenge learners to connect with a friend, colleague, or family member to create a dance video using the same song.

Let's have fun!!

1. Watch this video of our team dancing. I think our group is a lot of fun.
2. Ask a friend, colleague, or family member to create a dance with you using the same song.
3. Set your camera up to record your dance.
4. Post your video to the discussion board or publish it to TikTok and share a link to the discussion board.
5. Watch and vote on your favorite video.



Discussion

Authored By

Last Post Date

Don't laugh too hard!! (8 messages)



Orbee

06/05/23 4:17 pm

Check out my moves (12 messages)



Widget

06/05/23 8:35 am

Luma Connections #25: Cultivate Effective Responses

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Cultivate effective responses to posts from peers.

Nudging learners to meaningfully and specifically respond to peers' discussion posts can be a challenge. However, establishing clear and specific guidelines around responding to other learners' discussion posts will foster meaningful conversations and connections that lead to deeper learning.

Here are some tips for helping learners more effectively respond to peers' discussion posts:

- **Rate it.** Make it a component of the discussion to have peers rate or vote on each other's posts.
- **Provide examples and non-examples of discussion post responses.** Review these examples and make them accessible for learners to reference.
- **Model best practices.** Randomly respond to learners' posts and create discussion summaries. **Note:** When responding to specific posts, keep comments positive and avoid providing improvement feedback in a public setting.
- **Provide a list of response topics.**
 - Provide a link or article with additional information related to the post, and provide context.
 - Compliment a specific point that was made, and provide a rationale with evidence.
 - Share something that was learned, and provide a rationale with evidence.
 - Start a friendly debate by providing an alternative perspective with information to support it.



Luma Connections #26: Manage Discussion Posts

Teaching Tool: Discussion Board

This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions. Interactions do not occur in real time and can be mentor-to-learner and learner-to-learner interactions.



Tip: Prevent learners from becoming overwhelmed by managing discussion posts.

Reading and responding to discussion posts can feel overwhelming, especially with larger groups. However, there are strategies for managing responses to avoid burnout while still building community and relationships with learners.

Here are some tips for managing discussion board posts:

- 1. Be strategic.** Rather than aiming for one discussion board post a week, focus on creating one relevant and engaging post per lesson. This will also allow learners time to process, post, and respond to peers. **Note:** For class-building posts, focus on creating a few worthwhile posts and spreading them throughout the timeline of the course to maintain engagement and avoid discussion fatigue.
- 2. Use groups.** Divide learners into discussion groups, and have learners collaborate within their groups on a message to post to the main discussion board. You can keep the groups the same throughout or change them up. You can also assign learners to groups randomly or assign them by project groups.
- 3. Post discussion summaries.** Rather than respond to individual posts, create a post that summarizes the discussion and acknowledges learner contributions.



Weekly Summary

A lot of fun posts this week! Here's a quick summary...



Luma Connection #27: Use the Think-and-Write Strategy

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Use this Think-and-Write learning strategy to help learners organize their thoughts before facilitating a live discussion.

Learners require at least 5-15 seconds of think-time to process and formulate responses to closed-ended questions. This is longer for open-ended questions, which require more than a one-word answer. When posing discussion questions in a live classroom setting, use this Think-and-Write learning strategy to help learners organize their thoughts before facilitating a discussion. This will increase participation and engagement.



Here are some tips for the Think-and-Write learning strategy:

1. Pose the discussion question.
2. Provide 15 seconds for learners to think.
3. Provide 45 seconds for learners to jot down answers/ideas.
4. Call on learners to respond.

Luma Connection #28: Break the Ice

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: A great way to start any meeting or training session is to have an icebreaker discussion.

Icebreakers foster connections, facilitate community, and begin the session/training on a high note. Effective icebreakers should be fun and non-threatening, meaning questions should not be too personal or uncomfortable to answer. The sillier the questions, the better!

Here are five icebreaker topics to help break the ice!

1. Name a cartoon character you would like to hang out with and tell us why.
2. Name something you would like to get in the mail.
3. Of all the places you could go, name one place you would most like to go.
4. Name your superhero alter ego.
5. Name the movie genre that best fits your day/life (comedy, romance, drama, horror, etc.).

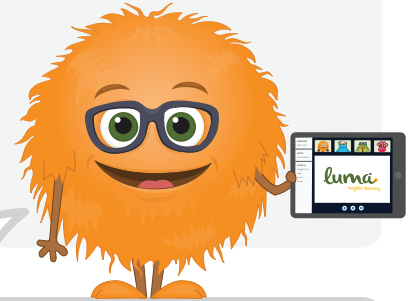


This is just a short list of topics. What new icebreaker can you think of or find to turn up the volume on your next training?

Luma Connection #29: Tap Into the Power of Why

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Tap into the power of why.

Asking *why* is such a natural part of thinking. Humans are programmed to wonder and ask *why*. This one-word question holds the power to unlock deeper thinking in live classroom discussions.

Here are some tips for unlocking the power of why in a live discussion:

- Provide the why or rationale for the discussion or discussion question. Knowing the why or relevancy increases learners' satisfaction, which leads to greater learner engagement.
- When learners provide an answer, push their thinking further by asking them to explain the reasoning behind their answers, including answers to opinion and icebreaker questions.
- Ask learners to explain why an answer is correct or incorrect before providing the correct answer or having another learner provide it (which is an even more powerful learning tool).
- Use the Socratic method (named for the philosopher Socrates) of responding to every wondering by asking *why* to nudge learners toward the answer.



Luma Connections #30: Use Polls

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Make review polls a game by turning them into friendly competitions. Those with the most answers correct win!

Polls are a great tool to have in your toolbox to increase engagement in a live, online class.

Here are some tips for using polls in synchronous discussions:

- **Create an icebreaker poll.** Ask a novel or funny poll question at the beginning of a session to decrease tension and build interest and trust.
- **Create a thought-provoking poll.** Use this to introduce the lesson and peak interest. Pose novel, thought-provoking poll questions that get learners thinking about the topic.
- **Create an opinion poll.** Encourage friendly debate by posing statements and having learners agree or disagree in a poll. Then, conduct a friendly debate by having learners share reasons and evidence.
- **Create a rate-your-understanding poll.** Use this to have learners gauge their own understanding. Then, have learners identify remaining questions about the topic and facilitate a Q&A discussion. Have other learners act as instructors and answer the posed questions.
- **Create a review poll.** Ask closed- and open-ended questions to review key concepts. Pose each question one at a time, and review questions based on how the majority of learners respond.



Luma Connections #31: Chat About It

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Use chats to engage learners and reinforce learning.

Extra! Extra! Chat all about it! Another great way to increase engagement in synchronous discussions is to pose questions and have learners respond in the chat. Giving learners a chance to read each other's posts can keep them engaged and reinforce learning.

Here are some tips for using the chat feature in synchronous discussions:

- **Provide adequate think-time.** Provide learners with 20 seconds to 2 minutes to think and respond to open-ended questions that require more thought and elaboration.
- **Drill down deeper.** Use the chat feature to have learners provide the why to a correct or incorrect answer and to respond to additional questions stemming from the original question.
- **Spotlight responses.** Share responses that fully and accurately answer the question to have learners dissect and discuss why it is correct. This reinforces and clarifies understanding.
- **Build on responses.** Use incorrect and partial responses to clear up misconceptions and fill in gaps. Have learners add to partial responses and revise incorrect responses. Avoid sharing names when using student responses for teachable moments. Focus on the response, not the learner.
- **Have fun with it.** Use the chat feature for icebreaker and pre-session questions to engage learners in community, build trust and relationships, and ease tensions.



Tip: Remember to pose questions one at a time to allow learners time to fully process and engage with each question.

Luma Connection #32: Invite Special Guests

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Invite special guests to join the conversation.

Inviting industry experts and relevant speakers to share and engage in online conversations can be a meaningful and satisfying experience for learners that can validate learning and increase learner engagement. This type of activity can be considered authentic instruction when it is relevant and immediately applicable to the learner.

Here are some tips for engaging learners in conversation with special guests:



Vet speakers. Ensure that the guest speaker is a credible and reliable source on the topic. Ensure the speaker and discussion are relevant to what is being learned and can add to or provide additional information and insight on the topic.



Prep learners. Build interest by notifying learners when the discussion will take place and providing learners with background information about the speaker, including the speaker's expertise on the topic and how the speaker's expertise will benefit learners.



Provide structure for interaction. Prompt learners to bring questions to the meeting. Set a specific number to target. For example, all learners should bring two questions they have for the speaker. Also, determine the format in which questions will be asked. Will learners submit questions in advance to be vetted? Will the format be likened to a panel discussion? Will it be more conversational in nature? These details should be determined and communicated to the learners and the speaker(s) before the discussion.



Set expectations. Establish a code of civility and expectations for how learners should interact with the speaker, how the speaker should interact with learners, and how learners should interact with one another. Also, ensure that learners understand the types of questions that would be appropriate for the conversation. It might be a good idea to have them submit their questions before the meeting.



Use the chat feature as a back channel. Consider using the chat feature as a secondary discussion where learners can pose additional questions, add comments, and respond to one another. This will increase engagement in the discussion. Make sure to monitor the chat to ensure the code of civility is being followed and that comments and questions are relevant.

Luma Connection #33: Facilitate Breakout Room Discussions

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Facilitate effective breakout room discussions.

Breakout rooms are a virtual way to facilitate online discussions and follow many of the same best practices as traditional small-group discussions. The core philosophy remains the same: create structure so discussions are productive.

Here are some best practices for facilitating breakout room discussions:



Establish expectations. Communicate clear expectations for how participants should engage in breakout room discussions. Create 3-5 easy-to-remember norms.



Prepare learners for the discussion. Make sure to clearly explain the *why*, *what*, and *how* of the discussion. Provide learners with the topic or discussion questions in advance, and give them time to think about their response(s).



Establish structure. Communicate and demonstrate a structure for sharing (for example, allow 30 seconds for each person to share). Instruct groups to delegate accountability roles, including timekeeper, presenter, recorder, and facilitator.



Limit group size. Aim to create groups of 2-4 people. Personal accountability shrinks when group size increases.



Set the time. Make sure to set an appropriate time for the discussion and clearly communicate it. Use the breakout room timer. Be willing to adjust the time as needed and within the bounds of time constraints.



Engage in the conversation. Make sure to visit each breakout room to observe, answer questions, and ask *why* questions to deepen conversations. Plan in advance how long to spend in each breakout room so each one can be visited.



Be responsive. Be willing to pivot based on observations made while visiting breakout rooms, such as adjusting the topic or questions or converting to a whole class discussion.

Luma Connections #34: Use the Chain Response Questioning Technique

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Use the Chain Response Questioning Technique.

A simple and effective way to deepen the conversation and get learners talking in online discussion is to use the Chain Response Questioning Technique in which you call on learners to add onto a previous response until the response is completely flushed out. Each response is a link in the chain for the conversation topic.

Here is how to use the Chain Response Questioning Technique:

1. Pose the question.
2. Select a learner to respond.
3. After the learner responds, say "And?" or "What else can we add to that?"
4. Select the next learner to respond and add to the initial response.
5. Repeat this until there is nothing left to add.



Remember: Make sure to provide enough think-time before calling on learners to respond. Consider selecting learners at random rather than calling on volunteers to respond. This sets the expectation of participation, especially if you explicitly state this is the procedure for soliciting responses.

Luma Connections #35: Ask Learners to Assess Their Participation

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



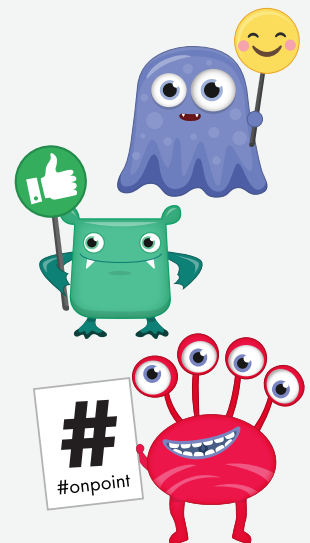
Tip: Ask learners to assess their participation.

Integrating self-assessment into any learning setting increases learner accountability. Doing so for online discussions is a great way to get learners thinking about their own engagement in discourse, including opportunities to grow, personal wins, and goals for success.

Note: Self-assessment is the evaluation of one's own performance, actions, and attitudes, and is different from self-reflection (which will be the focus of our next Luma Connection).

Here are some ways learners can assess their own participation:

- **3-2-1:** Have learners identify three successes, two challenges, and one goal for the next discussion.
- **Likert Scale:** Have learners rate their participation on a scale from no participation to active participation, and instruct learners to explain their rating.
- **Hashtag It:** Have learners describe their participation using a hashtag, such as #onpoint. Giving learners the freedom to create their own hashtags gives them the opportunity to really think about their own participation.
- **Rate It:** Have learners rate their participation using star emojis. Provide criteria for each star rating. Have learners identify the criteria they met for participation and the criteria they are still working toward, with a goal to work toward for the next discussion.



Tip: When engaging in any type of self-reflection or self-assessment, it is important to have learners identify the reasons for their self-assessment, which includes examples and criteria met.

Luma Connections #36: Ask Learners to Reflect on Their Participation

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Ask learners to reflect on their participation.

Where the previous Luma Connection focused on having learners assess their participation in online discussions, this Luma Connection focuses on having learners reflect on their participation. Self-assessment and self-reflection are not the same.

Self-assessment evaluates one's performance, actions, and attitudes in a snapshot in time. In contrast, self-reflection compares one's past and present performances to compare progress over time.



Here are some ways learners can reflect on their participation:

- **Wins and Stairs:** Have learners identify successes, or wins, in areas where they have improved, and have them identify stairs, or opportunities, for areas of improvement for the next discussion.
- **Last Time, This Time, and Next Time:** Have learners reflect on the goals they set after the last discussion. Then, have them identify how they performed during the current discussion. Finally, have them set goals for the next discussion.
- **Visualize It:** Have learners illustrate and describe how they picture their progress across discussions and why. Maybe they picture a line on a graph going up and down but still going forward, or they picture themselves going up a mountain.
- **Rate It and Compare:** Have learners rate their participation using star emojis after each discussion, and have them compare their ratings from discussion to discussion, noting the differences in their ratings and the reasons for those differences.

Tip: Make sure learners understand that progress is not linear and they will experience peaks and valleys along the way, but the goal is to keep moving forward.

Luma Connection #37: Use Emojis to Check In

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.

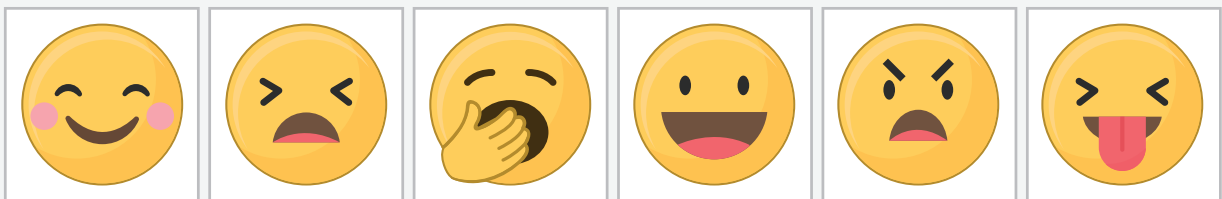


Tip: Use emojis to check in with learners.

Learners who are preoccupied with negative experiences and stressors from the day cannot fully engage in online discussions and learning. One way to help learners engage is to start training sessions with a quick emoji check-in that allows learners to express their feelings and refocus.

Here are the steps for the Emoji Check-In:

1. **Breathe:** Have learners close their eyes. Instruct them to do 10-20 seconds of intentional breathing. Encourage learners to focus on their breath and how they feel physically, mentally, and emotionally.
2. **Reflect:** Display a range of emojis with the emotions they depict, and have learners pick the emojis that represent how they currently feel.



3. **Share:** Have learners share the emojis they selected in the chat. Provide a safe space for learners to volunteer to share how they feel and why.

Tip: This is a great icebreaker to start the class, but this exercise should take no longer than 5-10 minutes. This is also a good activity to do after class discussions. Have learners use emojis to represent how they felt about the discussion. Then, allow learners to explain why and provide feedback.

Luma Connection #38: Use Structured Strategies in Breakout Rooms

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Use structured strategies in breakout rooms.

Conducting breakout room discussions is a great way to improve learning and increase active engagement in online discussions. Breakout room discussions should have structure and promote accountability so all learners participate, are focused, and remain on topic.

Here are a few structured strategies for breakout room discussions:



Timed Share: This strategy works best with discussion questions. Pose at least one discussion question. Provide a total time for the breakout room discussion, and specify how long each learner has to share. One learner should time each learner's share; another learner should facilitate the conversation to ensure the steps are followed and all learners have shared.



Jot Thoughts: This strategy works best with idea generation. Specify the topic. Provide learners with time to think and jot down all of their ideas. Instruct learners that each group member will take turns sharing one item from their generated list until all ideas are shared or the discussion time has ended. Groups that finish early should develop additional items.



Rotate Roles: This strategy works best for scenario-based discussions. Team member #1 reads the scenario/question. Team member #2 attempts to answer the question. Team member #3 provides additional considerations and ideas regarding the scenario/question. Finally, team member #4 provides positive feedback regarding the individual's response. The roles rotate for each scenario/question, so each person has a chance to respond. (For groups of three, team member #3 will also take on the role of team member #4.)

Tip: Make sure to clearly state, display, and demonstrate the steps for any strategy used.

Luma Connection #39: Incorporate Peer-to-Peer Video Discussions

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.

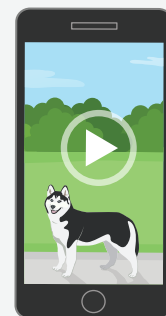


Tip: Engage learners in peer-to-peer video discussions.

Including videos in discussion topics is a fantastic way to engage and communicate with learners.

Here are some tips for unlocking the power of why in a live discussion:

1. Decide on the video type you want learners to post. Keep them short (less than 30 seconds).
 - **Favorite spot videos.** Learners share a video of their favorite spot.
 - **Pet videos.** Learners post a video of a pet.
 - **Job tip.** Learners post a video with a tip for being successful in a job.
 - **Demonstration.** Learners post a video demonstration.
2. Learners share a link to their video and put it on LumaLive®.
3. Hold roundtable discussions, and have peers guess what each video is about.
 - **Favorite spot videos.** Peers guess what the learner likes about the spot.
 - **Pet videos.** Peers write a story about what the animal is thinking.
 - **Job tip.** Peers respond with their personal experiences.
 - **Demonstration.** Peers post a question.
4. Provide some structure around the expectation for peer responses and learner responses. For example, peers post two replies, and learners respond to at least half of the comments.



Luma Connections #40: Create Open-Ended Questions

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Create open-ended questions rather than closed-ended questions.

Ask open-ended questions rather than closed-ended questions during online discussions. These questions increase learner engagement, motivation, and self-efficacy because learners think about and explore their current understanding of the topic, how the content connects with their current role, and how to apply the information on the job. Closed-ended questions include true or false and multiple-select question types. Open-ended questions require more elaboration and the use of critical and creative thinking skills.

Open-ended questions vs. closed-ended questions

OPEN-ENDED QUESTION	CLOSED-ENDED QUESTION
What is it like to be a safe driver?	Are you a safe driver?
How would you train someone on how to put out a fire on a truck?	Has your truck ever been on fire?
If you were in my position, what essential tips would you tell drivers to put in their safety toolbox?	Name a tip in your safety toolbox.
How do you feel about _____? Why?	Did that make you happy?
What suggestions do you have to better train drivers for inspections?	Are you comfortable with the inspection process?
Why is it important to eliminate hazards in the warehouse?	Can you drive a forklift well?

Luma Connections #41: Host Virtual Socratic Seminars

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Encourage critical and creative thinking by hosting virtual Socratic seminars.

Socratic seminars are formal discussions that allow learners to think critically and creatively as they discuss a series of open-ended questions in a structured environment. Socratic seminars are named after the philosopher Socrates, who valued learning through questioning. This type of discussion enables learners to deeply explore a topic and articulate their thoughts and feelings about a topic while responding to others.



Here is how to conduct a Socratic seminar:

1. Questioning occurs after the learner engages with the content.
2. Create 3-5 open-ended discussion questions that encourage learners to think critically about the topic.
3. Before the discussion, provide learners with the discussion questions so they may formulate their responses and prepare their evidence and critical points.
4. Establish the procedures and expectations, such as how learners should appropriately respond, the method for learners to respond (e.g., raised-hand chat feature), expectations about sharing, and expectations for friendly disagreement.
5. Consider providing learners with a limit on how long they can share per turn and how many times they may share for each question, so all learners have a chance to contribute to each discussion question.
6. To encourage learners to respond, ask learners, *what is your response?* or *what are your thoughts on what X just said?* Instruct learners to summarize what the person said before responding to ensure their response is related and on topic.
7. Ask *why* when a response requires more elaboration or reasons.
8. Select a discussion facilitator. Will you facilitate the discussion, or will a learner facilitate it? If the facilitator is a learner, ensure the learner feels comfortable and confident doing so.
9. Provide time after the discussion for learners to reflect on successes and troubleshoot challenges.

Luma Connection #42: Build Cognitive Connections

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.

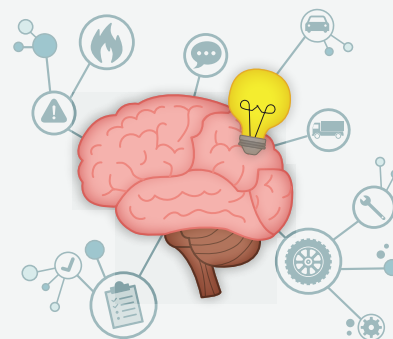


Tip: Use prior knowledge to build cognitive connections.

Did you know that when you learn something new, your brain immediately connects the new knowledge with existing knowledge by identifying similarities and differences between the information? Online discussions are a great way to build these cognitive connections.

Here are some tips for building cognitive connections during online discussions:

- Ask learners to identify similarities and/or differences between related topics. Use graphic organizers, such as Venn diagrams and three-column tables, to depict the similarities and differences.
- Ask learners to identify how new information and prior learning are related.
- Introduce the topic, and ask learners to brainstorm skills and knowledge they have already acquired that they need to know to understand the current topic.
- Use a KWL chart. (KWL stands for know, want to learn, and learned.) Present the topic, and ask learners to brainstorm what they already know about it and what they want to learn. At the end of the discussion, ask learners to identify what they learned about the topic.



Luma Connection #43: Use the Discussion Critics Strategy

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Use the Discussion Critics strategy to get on-demand feedback.

Do you want on-demand feedback to know how your discussion went over with learners? Use the Discussion Critics strategy to have learners rate the discussion on the spot.

Here is how you can use the Discussion Critics strategy:



Ask learners to rate the discussion topic and questions using a rating system, such as a scale of one to five stars.



Ask learners to explain what they did or did not enjoy about the discussion topic and questions.



Ask learners for ideas for relevant, future discussion topics.



Consider asking learners what they would ask instead to determine how specific questions could be tweaked or changed to solicit more interest.

Luma Connection #44: Lead a "Thankful for" Discussion

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Lead a "Thankful for" discussion to start training on a positive note.

Sharing gratitude is a mood boost and a great way to start training on a positive note. Consider beginning each training session with a 5-10-minute discussion in which learners share that for which they are thankful.

Here are some potential prompts to help provide variety.

- What are five things for which you are grateful, either today or in general?
- Who is someone for whom you are grateful? Why?
- What is something that happened today for which you are thankful? Why?
- What is something you learned today for which you are grateful? Why?
- What skills or talents do you have for which you are grateful? Why?

Can you think of other prompts for a "Thankful for" discussion?



Luma Connections #45: Conduct Research-Based Discussions

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Set up research-based discussions.

Constructivist learning is a theory of learning in which learners construct their understanding of a concept through exploration, such as research. Consider conducting research-based discussions to help learners find the information rather than telling them the information.

Here are some ideas for integrating learner research into online discussions.

- **Debate it.** Have learners research and defend evidence in a friendly debate.
- **Jigsaw it.** Have learners research different aspects of a topic. You can have multiple learners research the same element and compare and combine their research to present it to the class.
- **Teach it.** Have learners share their topic-related research with the class. Challenge learners to present their research in a way that helps their peers understand and remember the information. This can be used with the jigsaw approach.
- **Find the answer.** If a learner asks a content-related question, have the learner research the answer. Then, confirm the answer for the learner rather than provide it.



Tip: When having learners conduct research, create research questions or have learners generate research questions. Questions guide and focus research more clearly than broad topics.

Luma Connection #46: Identify Stars and Stairs

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Use the Stars and Stairs discussion technique to reflect on learning.

Stars and Stairs is a versatile discussion technique in which learners identify the pros, positives, or wins (stars) and cons, obstacles, or challenges (stairs).

Here are some ideas for using the Stars and Stairs Discussion technique:



Icebreaker. Have learners share the stars (wins) and stairs (challenges) of their day.



Self-Assessment. Have learners reflect on their understanding of a topic or performance by identifying the stars (what they understood or accomplished) and the stairs (what they did not understand or achieve).



Feedback. Have learners rate a discussion by identifying the stars (positives) and the stairs (suggestions for improvement).



Goal-Setting. Have learners identify a goal or win and identify steps or stairs to achieving that goal.

Luma Connection #47: Role-Play as an Expert

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Play the role of the expert.

In this role-playing discussion technique, learners take on the role of a particular type of expert (leader, industry expert, evaluator, etc.) and interact in the discussion from the perspective of that role by:

- Evaluating or critiquing a scenario, case study, or simulation
- Providing expert advice or feedback
- Debating a topic from that perspective
- Teaching or providing information about a topic
- Answering peer questions



The discussion can feature one or multiple types of experts (as long as they are relevant to the discussion topic and objective).

Luma Connection #48: Introduce National or World Holidays

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Introduce national or world holidays to engage learners in a discussion.

Start a lesson by introducing a national or world holiday to get learners' attention and engage them in a discussion. In other words, start a lesson with something authentic and meaningful and then follow up with a discussion that aligns with your learning objectives.

To conduct a discussion on a national or world holiday:

1. Pick a daily national or world holiday to discuss. Visit the National Today website at nationaltoday.com for a comprehensive list of holidays.
2. Introduce the holiday as a *Did you know?* question or a fun fact.
3. Pose an open-ended question related to the day.



Luma Connection #49: Discuss Scenarios

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.

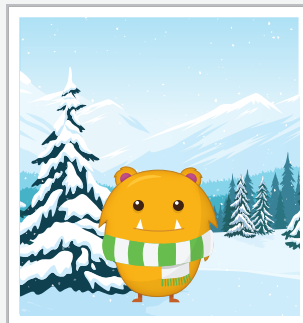
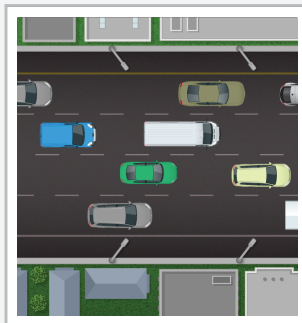


Tip: Discuss scenarios to illustrate the application of concepts.

Discussing scenarios or real-world situations is a great way to illustrate the application of concepts and bring learning to life. In addition, discussing scenarios is a highly effective way to build learner engagement, skill application, and confidence.

Here are some tips for discussing scenarios:

1. Ensure the scenarios are relevant, realistic, and challenging and that they tell a story.
2. Use example, non-example, and combination scenarios to demonstrate what to do and what not to do.
3. Have learners evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of actions taken by individuals depicted in the scenarios.
4. Ask learners to brainstorm potential solutions to problems presented in the scenarios.
5. Use the scenario to depict processes and procedures, and have learners identify aspects of processes and procedures that were followed or not followed.
6. Have learners explain what they would do differently in the same or similar situation.



Luma Connections #50: Pass the Torch

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.

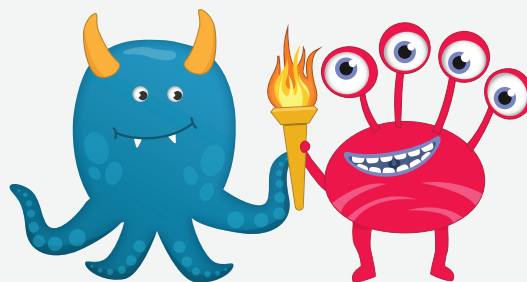


Tip: Empower learners to pass the torch in a conversation.

The instructor does not always need to direct the conversation or determine who gets to respond. Instead, try this Pass the Torch technique that lets learners lead the discussion by selecting who will respond next or elaborate on a topic.

Here is how to use the Pass the Torch technique:

1. Present the discussion topic or question, and give learners adequate time to think and write.
2. Select the first person to respond, and say, "I pass the torch to [learner's name]."
3. To add additional ideas, elaboration, or clarifying information to the current question or topic, that learner will choose the next person to respond, and say, "I now pass the torch to [learner's name]."
4. Repeat the process for each discussion question or topic.



Luma Connections #51: Host Review Sessions

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Host review sessions for learners.

Discussions can be a great way to help learners prepare for exams. Review sessions that empower learners with the content and tools they need to succeed can help learners feel more confident and prepared for tests and exams.

Here are tips for conducting review sessions:



Make it a game. One of the best ways to engage learners in review is to play a review game that promotes friendly competition. Create or have learners create review questions and compile them into an online quiz or *Jeopardy*-style game. Learners can win badges or virtual prizes.



Jigsaw it. Jigsaw out review questions: have learners prepare their answers and then review them as a class.



Conduct a Q&A. Take the time to have learners ask questions and have other learners answer those questions, either as a large group or in breakout groups.



Create study groups. Provide learners with study questions, and put learners in breakout groups. Then, have learners work together to answer the questions. Make it a competition by providing a badge or virtual prize to the first group that finishes.



Record sessions. Record review sessions and discussions for learners to go back to later to help them review content and more effectively prepare for exams.

Luma Connection #52: Award Discussion Badges

Teaching Tool: LumaLive®

This is Luma's synchronous, or same-time, meeting tool. This online tool allows learners to interact with each other to explore a topic and to discuss key concepts, share experiences, and ask questions in real time. Interaction types include learner to learner, learner to self, learner to content, and learner to instructor.



Tip: Assign and award discussion badges to motivate learners.

Assigning discussion badges to online discussions can promote authentic engagement and intrinsic motivation to participate in the discussion. Consider creating virtual badges to give to learners for participating in online discussions.



Tips for creating and assigning discussion badges include:

- **Be specific.** Avoid creating generalized badges for participation. Create badges that align with specific criteria and discussion expectations, such as the active listening badge or the excellent elaborator badge.
- **Front-load.** When presenting the expectations and etiquette for discussions, introduce the corresponding badges.
- **Be explicit.** Explain and illustrate how learners can earn each badge. Provide examples, point out when learners earn a badge, and call out what they specifically did or said to earn it.
- **Make it a friendly competition.** Make it a friendly competition to see who can earn the most badges or have learners aim to earn at least one of every badge type and earn prizes for doing so.
- **Avoid revoking badges or overdoing it.** Don't take back badges for unrelated behaviors or future incidents, as this can adversely affect participation and motivation. Also, avoid giving out so many badges (such as batch-giving badges) that it seems too easy and lowers the performance bar.

Find out how Luma Brighter Learning can help you create discussion badges!

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