VIRTUAL COFFEE TABLES

WHAT IT IS

A casual segment where learners can mingle and network with each other

IDEAL FOR

Creating a safe space for active participation and informal knowledge exchange. The casual format releases tension, regains concentration and can also be a networking opportunity

5-25

10-30 min

HOW IT WORKS

When sending invitations for the online session, explain this is an informal group segment where learners are encouraged to prepare a drink. Videos are encouraged to be on as well.

Schedule at least one Virtual Coffee Table segment for every 60 minutes of an online session. As the segment is about to commence, mention once again how this is an informal element with no meeting agenda. Learners are welcome to grab a drink and let the conversations flow freely in their group.

IT support assigns breakout rooms with 3-5 learners. Groups are formed by asking everyone a mood-related question like: "Where would you like to be right now: city, sea, or mountains?" This conversation starter allows groups to already have something in common when they enter the room. That way, they will not be assigned to virtual coffee tables/breakout rooms by their origin or job title.

REQUIREMENTS

Roles:

- 1x moderator
- 1x IT support

Software:

- Breakout rooms

CONSIDERATION CHECKLIST

☐ This activity is suitable when there is a change of energy needed in the online session and focused on participation-driven audiences.

☐ It's difficult to dive deep into a conversation in a short space of time, so try to keep this segment around 10-30 minutes.

☐ Do you think the group will feel comfortable with this format? Consider their expectations and cultural background. You can adapt the Virtual Coffee Tables accordingly and make them an optional part of the session.

☐ State in the invitation that the Virtual Coffee Tables will be part of the online session and what learners can expect. That way they can make sure that they are prepared to turn on their video and participate actively.

ADD ON

Don't be a floating head! Encourage learners to move further away from their cameras during this session so the group can read more body language (like hand and arm movements).

preparation · opening · **main** · **closure** · **follow-up**

social · input · assessment · reflection

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INSPIRATION

[1] Article: Virtual coffee break benefits for your team and why it should be involved in daily working routine

[2] Article: 25 Fun Ideas for Your Next 'Virtual Coffee Break

[3] Video (0:50 min): How To Set Up Virtual Coffee Tables In The Post-Covid Workplace | Cognizant

[4] Software tool: Wonder

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