

Transcript for Key Takeaways from Class #2

Discovering HOW to Make Virtual Learning Wildly Effective

Hey everyone. Here's a quick recap of another day of learning around how to really support adult learners, well, really learners of any age, in terms of discovering how to make virtual learning wildly effective. One of the things we talked about was the importance of choice, and we'll come back to that in just a minute. However, one of the things is choice of movement. So if you hear some background noise during this audio recording, it's because I'm walking on my treadmill. And so I have a walking desk and oftentimes will work much of the day while standing or walking. And it's so important, especially if you're sitting a lot, teaching and/or receiving content or having meetings, we need to make sure that folks move and give our self that allowance. So maybe a little background noise, but that's what I'm doing.

So today we kick things off with the spoken word poetry. We talked a little bit about poetry in general. We kicked it off with our friend LeDerick Horne, which was a keynote speaker at our Summer Leadership Institute. But really talking about how poetry, spoken, written, drawn, can be another way to connect the learner with the content. And so you can start making a collection of poets, you can dig around on the internet, you can even just start with LeDerick's work and think about, how can I use that as an opening? We also talked about how to do introductions for repeat sessions or for groups who may know you well and then there's a few that don't know you well. How can you make everyone feel like they're a part of the inside group? And we talked a little bit about how to extend our introductions to things you may not know about us, but again, make us feel more connected to each other.

So the big ideas or, I guess, the real big idea for the session on discovering how to make virtual learning wildly effective was, how do you make sure that neurons are firing so they are wiring together? We can get really caught up in a lot of web-based technologies. We can get a lot of ideas from our colleagues and we always need to come back to how do participants get connected and prepared for the session so they get the most out of your time together. I always let this when we were in person, let alone virtually, if I'm going to have people travel all over the world, all over a province, all over a state, why am I bringing you together? Why can't we just do this virtually? Why couldn't we do it asynchronously? Why couldn't we do it in an email? So you really need to make sure that we're thinking about how to get the most out of our time.

How do we open it? How do we close it? How do we increase learning by those neurons firing? All about choice? How do we get choice from the beginning to the middle, to the end, to the preparation, to the debrief? And then really, how do we make sure that we have secure attachments with our colleagues, with our staff, with those other humans so they feel safe, seen, soothed, and secure. We didn't get as far into the four S's. And so that will be another pickup, but it was introduced in terms of our overview. So we did do the openings, how to get ready to learn? How to be clear? How to leverage fun? How to offer choices? And then we touched on the four S's, safe, seen, soothed and secure, which comes from the work of Dan Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson. And we talked about knowing the brain.

So let's recap the big takeaways of each of those. So again, openings, that was that comment about poetry. You don't always have to be crazy fun and that's me. It can also be very grounding, very reflective, even a personal reflection that folks can write, draw, or consider. Then we talked about how do we get our learners ready? And how do we prepare not only our physical and social space, but our virtual space. And so we really want to be thinking about, how do I help folks know how to learn? And that's one of those mix of six objectives, which is matching whatever it is we're doing from an opening slide rotation, to the first 15 minutes of our time together, how is that tied to a learning outcome? And that outcome might be learning how to learn.

Then we went on to, how do you be clear? And we covered three big DS of clarity, decide on the number of points or big ideas you want to do, decide what your through line is, and determine what before how. So that's just a reminder of, we always want to connect to folks why, then we want to think about what, then we think about how. And so you might have lots of activities and lots of evidence and lots of support, and you can have lots and lots of that. However, you want to keep the number of big ideas or the number of key points maybe to three, especially if you're in an hour or less of time together. That through line is that sort of, what is the connective tissue? What's keeping everything from your opener, to your agenda, to the closing, what's keeping it all together? And again, for us, it was the neurons firing so that they wire.

And we looked at this sort of flow that might be, okay if I'm going to do a virtual offering, what would be a typical outline? What would be a good outline? And so we want to think about how do I get your attention? How do I connect to your why? How do I let you know, as a learner, what's in it for you? And why should they listen to you? What's your credibility? Then you can get into content. That doesn't mean we take up a lot of time, this can be done in five minutes, in three minutes, it's just setting the stage of why and what, before the how. We also looked at some matrices that compare different outcomes with either Zoom features like the chat, the screen sharing, why you would record it? Why you would use a dry erase board? Why would you do video on/video off? All those sorts of things as well as other web-based technologies. So if you really want to be thinking about pairing your what and your how, you'll want to take a look at our significant learning outcome matrices.

And that brought us to fun. This was sort of a carry over from our first session. And we talked about fun theory. We talked about the research behind fun. We even talked a little bit about how to use rubber chicken, but more importantly, how to give your Zoom room a make-over. And we gave you 70 different ideas about how to do a make-over. It doesn't matter, 22 ideas, 70, the idea is we want to be thinking of doing things differently, not just virtually. And that brought us to offering choices, which was the key content of the second session. We just loved this from a universal design for learning perspective, that there's choice everywhere and there's choices within choices. There's sometimes forced choices. Sometimes there's a choice that is something that maybe doesn't feel comfortable to me, but I have to honor it in my learner.

So we always want to remember that we're teaching diverse humans, that they are diverse in multiple ways at the same time. And that the big way we can give them choice is even how they take a break? How we break them into breakout rooms? How they share output, what do they know? What do they think? What are their preferences? How do they do that? And we call that output choice. We talked a little bit about what I started this recording with, in terms of that I'm walking on my treadmill. Can people write in a desk hammock? Which I still think is fabulous, and I need to get one. Can you work laying on a mat? Standing at a desk? Sitting crisscross applesauce? Something on your lap?

Really be thinking about where and how learners will learn, and then movement as a choice. Always be thinking about where and when can you value movement? Can you build it into the activity? Can you build it into a list of choices of what we do on a break? Even if you go into a breakout room, can you start with some movement as if you actually went to a different room? So in physical space, people have to get up, move to another table, probably in a way that they may not want to. They're like, I want to just stay here all day, but we're like, come on, get up and move. So how do you build that same mentality into breakout rooms that might be virtual?

And then we moved on to this idea of knowing the brain and this understanding from Dan Siegel's work, and of course, others, around what part of the brain is functioning when we're in homeostasis? When do we need help from others to co-regulate? And when do we slip down into that brainstem and really

do things that are fight, flight, freeze, or faint? We can only teach what my friend Barb Abola will say, before the peak. So how do we help humans stay in the zone of optimal learning? Particularly if they're learning during a global pandemic, if they have a lot going on that's competing for their demands in their learning space, they're exhausted from one reason or another, or whatever you've thoughtfully created actually triggers some response in them that starts to flip their lid?

So we really want to recognize and think about, and get feedback from our learners. What we're doing, is it keeping you in your zone of optimal learning, your window of tolerance? What can I do to widen it? We've talked a little bit about the positive emotional attractor, and when we trigger the PEA and we soothe the system, it helps folks stay in the zone of optimal learning and/or return to the zone of optimal learning. And then we have to realize when it's not happening. They flipped their lid, they're in the red or the blue, meaning they're hyper or hypo aroused. And how do we shift and pivot when some are ready to learn and others aren't? So that sort of that whole group mentality, just as we say to children sometimes when we talk about teachers teaching young children, that whole grip is sort of the kiss of death.

Same thing when you try to keep a bunch of adults all doing the same thing, at the same time, in the same way. Somebody is going to flip their lid, somebody is going to be in the zone of optimal learning, and somebody's going to be feeling really withdrawn. So we talked a little bit about how stressors and this comes from the work of Stuart Shanker. And we talked about one domain of stress, which is called prosocial, which is a big domain of stressors when you have adults interacting with each other, because there's this interaction with other humans that's causing them to have stress. There's also the social domain, which also does. And then when you get into it, you're like, oh, wait from the cognitive domain and the emotional domain and the biological domain, there are all these stressors bombarding these humans that are competing with you to get them to be able to learn. So we'll dig deeper into what it means to help folks have a secure attachment, to see your professional development as a safe harbor, as well as a place, as a launching pad for going forward.

And then you want to close it up. This is where it's almost like the opening and closing can be a book ends to each other. You can even use the same strategy. So if you open with a that's me, you could close with a that's me. If you open with a poem, you could close with a poem or you could mix and match them based upon how you want the flow to go with folks. So that's what we covered in time two, openings, how to get your learners ready, how to be clear, the three DS, leveraging fun, because neurons that fire together, wire together offer choices everywhere you can, even if they don't feel good to you, and then know what's going on in the brain, understand what's happening in the brain across development, as well as what happens in the social interactions to the brain for mirror neurons, to needing co-regulation, to having stressors that are impacting our ability to learn.

And then we'll give you more strategies about how to create safety for your learner so they feel seen and soothed and that there is a secure attachment, and then we close it up. And I just like to think of that as bookends. So there you go, at a glance, that is what we covered in our second session, all about having to create these wildly inclusive virtual events.