

68  
TIPS

# ELEARNING ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTIVITY



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# 68 Tips for eLearning Engagement and Interactivity

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# Introduction

Dear Colleagues,

Engagement is a critical element of learning. If we can get people to pay attention to what we've developed or what we're saying and engage with us, the content, and each other, learning follows.

Gaining and maintaining engagement in the physical classroom seems straightforward: If students look bored or inattentive, we adjust our training style on the fly or call on people to recapture their attention. But in eLearning, especially self-paced eLearning, driving engagement requires much more planning, monitoring, and, most of all, creativity.

So how do we drive engagement in eLearning and mLearning? Sure, interactivities can help, but only if we design those interactivities effectively. Clicking the "Next" button is not enough; students need interactions that convey and reinforce information, not ones that increase their expertise in clicking, dragging, tapping, or swiping. Students also need engaging content, an engaging (or at least not frustrating) interface, engaging media and visual design, and maybe a game here and there. (Yes, it's okay to have fun while learning. Really.)

In this eBook, 11 experts provide 68 tips for driving engagement in eLearning and mLearning. We've grouped the tips into five categories, each looking at a different element or approach for engagement: content, interface, interactivities, media and visual design, and games. We finish with a sixth category on measuring engagement and the resultant learning.

I hope you find some valuable nuggets of information in this eBook, and are able to use many of the tips to help you create more engaging eLearning and mLearning!

Sincerely,

Chris Benz

*Director of Online Events, The eLearning Guild*

## About Our Tipsters



**Cammy Bean**, *Vice President of Learning Design, Kineo*

An instructional designer with over 15 years of experience, Cammy Bean has created software simulations, new-hire orientations, product and technical training, and learning games for a wide variety of clients. Cammy writes a popular blog on instructional design.



**Sean Bengry**, *Manager, Learning Strategy and Design, Accenture Academy*

Sean Bengry manages the development of all eLearning aspects at Accenture Academy, including delivery models, visual and graphic design, instructional design, process design, compliance with accessibility, and needs assessment. Sean started his career as an instructional designer, gaining skills in both instructor-led training and eLearning delivery.



**Tom Bunzel**, *Author of Tools of Engagement: Presenting and Training in a World of Social Media*

Tom Bunzel specializes in knowing what presenters need and how to make technology work. He worked as a technology coach for corporations including Iomega, MTA Films, Nurses in Partnership, and the Neuroscience Education Institute, and has taught at Learning Tree International, West LA College Extension, and privately around Southern California doing presentation and video consulting. He is the author of several books, including *Tools of Engagement: Presenting and Training in a World of Social Media*.



**Paul Clothier**, *Chief Learning Guru, TapLearn*

Paul Clothier is a learning specialist, eLearning and mLearning designer, speaker, and writer who has been in the technology training and learning field for over 25 years. Paul's articles on training and learning have been featured in numerous learning and training magazines. He has a passion for mLearning design and user experience, and designs learning content and apps for touch-screen mobile devices.



**Sarah Gilbert**, *President, meLearning Solutions*

At meLearning Solutions, Sarah specializes in electronic and mobile learning design and development, creating unique learning experiences that improve retention, influence behavior, and impact productivity. She also serves as the vice president of communications for the Greater Atlanta Chapter of ASTD and is published in *The Book of Road-Tested Activities* for innovative technical training. Sarah holds a master's degree in business management and continues her education online via Twitter, YouTube, and blogs.



**Amy Jokinen**, *Training & Development Specialist, Eide Bailly*

Amy Jokinen holds a master of fine arts degree in screenwriting and an ASTD certificate in eLearning instructional design. In addition to her work at Eide Bailly, Amy is a standup comedian in Fargo, ND.



**Amy Leis**, *Program Manager, Janney Montgomery Scott*

Amy Leis has over 15 years' experience in training and development; her research interests include adult learning theory and the intersection of technology, training, and social learning. Among Amy's honors are an Award of Excellence from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare for instructional design and project management and the Janney Corporate Meritorious Service Award for her work as an instructional designer. Amy holds a PhD degree in educational psychology with a specialization in curriculum and design from Temple University.



**Susan O'Connell**, *Learning and Organizational Development Manager, Habitat for Humanity International*

Susan O'Connell has led and advised on strategic and cost-effective learning programs ranging from face-to-face to asynchronous eLearning for over 15 years. At Habitat for Humanity International, she introduced blended and virtual learning programs, increased online course completions, and replaced the organization's enterprise-wide learning management system. Susan holds a master of education degree from the University of Georgia.



**Kevin Siegel**, *Founder and President, IconLogic*

Kevin Siegel has written more than 100 books, including *Essentials of Adobe Captivate 5* and *Adobe Captivate 5: Beyond the Essentials*. Kevin spent five years in the US Coast Guard as a photojournalist and has more than two decades of experience as a print publisher, technical writer, instructional designer, and eLearning developer. He is a certified technical trainer, has been a classroom instructor for more than 20 years, and is a frequent speaker at trade shows and conventions.



**Erik Summa**, *Content Developer and Instructional Designer, Janney Montgomery Scott*

Erik Summa holds a BFA degree in graphic design from West Chester University and an MA degree in graphic design from the University of the Arts, London. In addition to his work at Janney Montgomery Scott, Erik teaches part-time at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.



**Deborah Thomas**, *President, SillyMonkey*

Deborah Thomas consults on game-based and traditional learning, mLearning, and eLearning. Among her many honors, Deborah received the 2011 Fun and Serious Games Award for Europe, the 2009 Dugan Laird Award, and the 2009 ASTD Atlanta E-Learning Excellence Award. She has contributed to several books and has served in leadership roles for a number of organizations. Deborah holds a BA degree in journalism and education from the University of South Florida and numerous training certificates.

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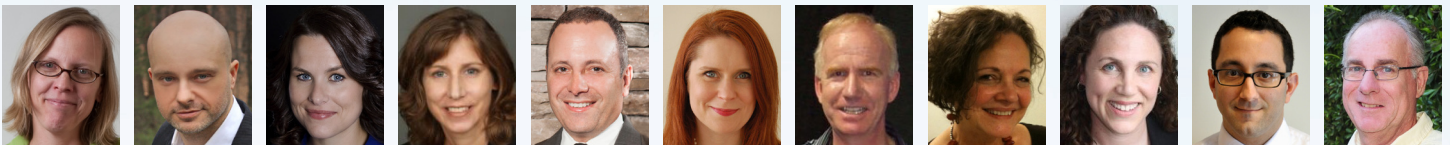
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## Eighteen Tips for Creating Engaging Content

Engaging content is the foundation of any effective course, eLearning or otherwise. Boring slides and overly long modules can lead to learner disconnect. How do you capture and keep learners' attention to content? Our experts have some suggestions.

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In eLearning, we often associate engagement with interactivity, quizzing, and games, but to be truly engaging, we must appeal to the learners' natural curiosity first. Give them something to be curious about. This is best achieved through an instructional narrative: a story that drives the learning. Without it, the interactivity, quizzing, and games become busywork.

*Amy Jokinen*

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If you do not have engaging content, there really is no need to have engaging media ... it's like putting a caramel coating on a rotten apple. No matter how enticing the outside is, or how it may attract, it's still not going to be a good experience. Looks good, tastes bad, and no one comes back.

*Sean Bengry*

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Find the flow. A common mistake—especially in slide-based eLearning programs—is to just plop in information point after information point, while neglecting to stitch the slides together with a narrative flow. This leads to disconnected information overload. Find the story in your content and let it follow a natural flow. This doesn't mean each slide needs to tell the thrilling story of Jack and his climb up the beanstalk while also sharing your content, but it does mean finding the connection between the different points of information. Help learners see why this information matters and how it is relevant to them. Find the thread that holds everything together and find a way to tell a story with the content.

*Cammy Bean*

Your brain processes new information by linking it to already existing information. Use easily digestible and recognizable words and images. Too much jargon or highly unusual images will disrupt the flow of learning because the user will focus more on the odd language and less on the meaning of the content.

*Amy Leis*

Design all four elements of the ARCS model (attention, relevance, confidence, satisfaction) into the communication, delivery, and follow up of your program. Most people know they should design these elements into the content and program. Take a little extra time to also design ARCS into your communications *about* the program to generate interest and motivation before the program and then after the program to maintain that interest and follow-through on confidence and satisfaction.

*Susan O'Connell*

Get your subject-matter experts (SMEs) to tell you a story. Often we're handed really dry PowerPoint decks from which to start building our eLearning programs. Your challenge, should you choose to accept it, is to turn that dry content into something interesting and engaging. For me, it's all about finding the story, so take the time to sit down with your SMEs and have them tell you the story of their content. Don't have them just read the words in the deck to you out loud; have them narrate it to you and tell you the story of each slide. Often it's the examples and anecdotes that the SME doesn't include in the slide deck that make the content come alive. If you can record this conversation or type really quickly, all the better. The language the SMEs use—in that conversational tone—can then be the basis for the writing you do and the storyboards you create.

*Cammy Bean*

Your learners should be able to recognize themselves in the hero of your instructional narrative and care about his/her outcome. But spend as much time thinking about the villain as you do about the hero. The villain in your story can be a very effective instructional tool.

*Amy Jokinen*

Engagement can exist outside of interaction. Just think of your favorite movie or book: When you were watching it or reading it, did you really need to click on something, talk to someone else, or receive feedback to be engaged?

*Sean Bengry*

An eighth grader should be able to navigate your module and understand the concepts. Your subject-matter experts (SMEs) are just that—experts—and have more knowledge than your audience. Your module is for the people who want to learn about the topic, not the SMEs. SMEs can give you information and advice, but ultimately it's up to you to determine the level of difficulty of your content.

*Amy Leis*

Insert widely known pop-culture references into your module when trying to teach the viewer something complex. People will make associations with your material and your reference, making it easier for them to remember later.

*Erik Summa*

Keep it lean. When someone hands you that 112-slide PowerPoint package and expects you to turn it into a short and engaging eLearning experience, what do you do? First, sit down with the subject-matter expert (SME) and get him or her to commit to the three to five learning objectives this course needs to cover. These objectives are the things the learner needs to be able to *do* at the end of the day; these are the real takeaways of the course. Now, map each and every one of those content slides back to one of those learning objectives. If the content doesn't map to an objective, cut it. Do this exercise with your SME so he or she can see where the content that supports the learning objectives really is. At the end, you should have a focused experience. Have SMEs participate in this cutting exercise so they can see what's truly valuable. If they still love all their content, put it in a PDF for people to read on their own time if they want to go deeper.

*Cammy Bean*

Adult learners will tune out if they feel information, ideas, or actions are being imposed on them. Even if you are designing compliance content, learn as much about how your topic relates to your audience as you can, then invite them to see the value of the content for their situation.

*Susan O'Connell*

To help you find a story around which to craft your instructional narrative, carefully consider the “big-picture why” of the training. In the grand scheme of things, what is the learning supposed to achieve? Why?

*Amy Jokinen*

Many people start with a focus on the information they want to share. Instead, focus on what you hope people will do with or because of the information. Present the information in that context to better engage with the learner.

*Susan O'Connell*

eLearning lessons are great ... but is there really such a thing as too much of good thing? Actually, yes. Overly long eLearning lessons can lead to learner distraction and fatigue. Consider keeping the maximum play time for each lesson to between three and five minutes.

*Kevin Siegel*

Always remember there is a human being who will be sitting at that computer, working his or her way through that content you have so lovingly crafted. Pretend you're having a conversation with that person in a coffee shop, and then write it that way! Forget the passive, intellectual academic speak of learning objectives and corporate communications. Instead, make your learning experience a personal one and talk directly to the learner. When we feel like an online experience is a conversation, we tend to pay more attention. So instead of saying "This lesson covers three tips for writing better emails," say "Let's look at three tips you can use to write better emails."

*Cammy Bean*

People tend to remember information and experiences that trigger an emotional response. To make your learning modules memorable, use humor to engage the audience. Select audio and visual examples that play to a range of emotions.

*Amy Leis*

Before starting a project, it's really important to know your target audience (technical skills, age, the resolution of the audience's computer monitors, and so on) and design the learning module with them in mind.

*Erik Summa*

## Ten Tips for Creating an Engaging Interface

The importance of a good interface really can't be overemphasized. If learners can't easily find their way around your eLearning, they'll become frustrated and give up. And if they can't adjust the font size to one they can easily read, they may be unable to progress. So how can you create engaging interfaces?

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When designing user experiences for mobile learning, make sure the navigation and user interactions are intuitive and obvious. Navigating the application or content should take very little thought. All the thinking should be focused on the learning interaction or content. An iPhone user expects to find a "back" button at the top left. Touchscreen users expect to move to the next page of information with a left swipe. Stay consistent with the navigation the user expects. Creating custom navigation behavior that causes the user to stop and think will get in the way of the mLearning experience. Navigation should be as intuitive and invisible as possible.

*Paul Clothier*

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Don't forget about accessibility! You might decide to use the PDF format to easily lock in a certain look and feel. However, keep in mind that users cannot as easily adjust text size in PDFs as they can with an eBook. Readers might need to zoom in for readability, and this can result in a loss of the design you'd originally planned. An eBook format allows your learners to set up font size and style within their own eReaders to best suit their needs.

*Sarah Gilbert*

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Consider how people hold a mobile device when designing the user experience and navigation. Whenever possible, for smartphones, make the navigation one-handed, which means portrait orientation. This will provide the fastest and easiest way for users to navigate when mobile. Creating mLearning interactions or content that require landscape orientation means users must use two hands, which means to use it they must be less mobile or stationary. For larger smartphones or "phablets," one-handed operation is problematic. Always consider the device size and usage context before designing the navigation or user interactions.

*Paul Clothier*

Every learning module should start with these four slides: A slide asking viewers to turn on their computer speakers (if the module uses audio), a title slide, an agenda (the topics you'll be covering in your module), and a slide on how to use the navigation system.

*Erik Summa*

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Smartphone users have very little tolerance for scrolling content. Avoid content scrolling if at all possible. If you must have it, then require no more than one screen of scrolling. When content does not fit on one screen, place it on another page, so the user can swipe for more. Swiping the screen or tapping navigation buttons is much easier, and more intuitive, than scrolling.

*Paul Clothier*

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We know how important it is to focus on small chunks of just-in-time content for mobile learning. When it comes to eBooks, the table of contents is critical. Make sure you've tagged the headers and clearly labeled your sections. Although eBooks are potentially lengthy as a whole, a good navigation system can help learners quickly find specific information.

*Sarah Gilbert*

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Good usability and simple navigation invariably means you must sacrifice some content or feature. It's better to have fewer buttons and push advanced features into the background than to overwhelm the screen. Avoid the tendency to give the user all available options on the first screen. It's better to have only a few buttons, with an "Options" or "More" button that leads to other functions, than to crowd the screen with buttons for all possible options. mLearning design necessitates being frugal with screen real estate.

*Paul Clothier*

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When designing interactions for mobile learning on a touchscreen device, make gestures and navigation as close to real life as possible. Invoke swipe to move to the next or previous screen; pinch or un-pinch to zoom out or in; twist two fingers to rotate an image. The closer the gesture is to physical reality, the easier it will be for the user to navigate, interact, and enjoy.

*Paul Clothier*

Whenever possible, try to make learning modules personal. You can achieve this by simply asking people to enter their names and then using these names to give them motivational support later in the module, when their attention spans are waning.

*Erik Summa*

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When delivering content, don't constrict a user to a specific font size. Whenever possible, let the user choose font size for onscreen text, particularly when there is a large amount of content. The font size that works well for you might not be the optimum for your users. Provide choice whenever possible.

*Paul Clothier*

## Three Tips for Using Interactivities to Drive Engagement

Interactivities can create a richer experience in eLearning, but only if those interactivities are meaningful to the learners. These three tips discuss designing and implementing effective interactivities.

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Forget clicking! Interaction doesn't just happen with your hands and by clicking a mouse or touching a screen. Find a way to build true interactivity into your courses—the kind of interactivity that happens in the brain. We call it “thinking”! (Or call it “cognitive interaction” if you want to sound really smart to your clients.) A simple strategy for doing this is to add moments of thoughtful reflection to your programs. Ask the learners how this content relates to their own work, whether they've done something like this before, or how it makes them feel. Ask them how they're doing on this skill right now, and perhaps give them a self-rating scale to complete. By getting learners to stop and think, you help them internalize the content and make it their own.

*Cammy Bean*

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Activities should support the same cognitive level as the learning objective. For example, if your objective is for people to apply a concept to a variety of diverse situations, an activity recalling the definition of the concept may not be very effective unless you follow it with an activity where learners then apply that concept to a variety of diverse situations.

*Susan O'Connell*

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iBooks Author is my favorite tool to easily incorporate engaging interactivities in your eBook. Widgets such as Gallery, Media, Review (questions), Interactive Image, and 3D make it easy to add tremendous value to existing text-only content. Take a look at the book *Life on Earth* by E. O. Wilson (available in the iBookstore) for a fantastic example of the possibilities of using these elements in eBooks.

*Sarah Gilbert*



## Twenty-five Tips for Using Media and Visual Design Effectively

Does it matter where you put the graphics on your pages? What about the pictures themselves—does it matter where the image's eyes are looking? Could it affect learning if you use a serif font? The answer to all of those questions is yes. Let our tipsters guide you through this surprisingly complex area.

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Keep your visual design as simple as possible. Imagine you are trying to convey the same message to your friend with a pencil and napkin. Start there.

*Sean Bengry*

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I picked up a tip somewhere to lay out graphics to the left of the text. Graphics will gain attention better than text, but you don't generally want people to skip the text. In western cultures where people read left to right, the eye will automatically be drawn to the right and so they will look at the graphic on the left and then their eyes will automatically be drawn over to the right where the text is.

*Susan O'Connell*

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When it comes to adding audio to an eLearning lesson, voiceover audio has been shown to improve the learner experience. However, consider *not* using background music throughout the presentation, because music is often considered a distraction.

*Kevin Siegel*

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Add a QR code to handouts to make them more smartphone-friendly.

*Tom Bunzel*

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Borrow techniques used in comic books and graphic novels to tell your story visually. If you can show it, you won't need to tell it, and it's always better to show it.

*Amy Jokinen*

Think about your audience and design your characters accordingly. For example, if your learning module is intended for a conservative corporate workforce, don't use images of people in jeans and sneakers. Dress your characters to fit the part.

*Amy Leis*

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Think of the person, place, or thing that is the main focus, and represent that visually. For example, if I say the word "truck" to you, do you think of the letters t-r-u-c-k? No, an image of what you would call a truck comes to your mind. This is the part of the brain we are tapping into.

*Sean Bengry*

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To share video, embed HTML code into blogs and Meetup.

*Tom Bunzel*

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Your eLearning presentation should include text captions (callouts) and voiceover narration. However, the voiceover narration should never match the text shown on the screen. Having the two match can lead to learner distraction because learners try to figure out if they should be reading the text on the screen or listening to the voiceover.

*Kevin Siegel*

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With eBooks, you have so much more opportunity to create engaging content than in print. Incorporate media (video and audio), images, 3-D models, and HTML elements to truly immerse your learner in the content. Tools such as iBooks Author (Apple), Sigil (Google), and Calibre help you create rich information and convert it into formats (for example, MOBI and EPUB) for multiple devices.

*Sarah Gilbert*

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Most clip-art characters are scalable. Don't be afraid to go for the close up to convey emotion visually.

*Amy Jokinen*

In Susan Weinschenk's great little book, *100 Things Every Designer Needs to Know About People*, she shares a research tidbit about how we pay more attention to onscreen pictures of people when they are looking right into our eyes. It's that emotional, human connection that pulls us in and keeps us there. So find pictures that pull people in by looking right into their eyes.

*Cammy Bean*

When selecting text colors for eLearning, note that red is considered an irritant. Avoid it.

*Kevin Siegel*

People learn through a mixture of auditory, visual, and kinesthetic approaches (which means through hearing, seeing, and hands-on physical activities). Plan your modules so they include a blend of audio, visuals, and interactivity to address each user's learning preferences. If design limitations require you to focus on one approach over another, incorporate more interactivity. Stimulating visuals should be your second priority, followed last by audio.

*Amy Leis*

To reach more followers, create "mirror blogs" for engaging content on multiple sites.

*Tom Bunzel*

Like any good thing in life, we usually don't notice it until something is wrong. I call this the "eLearning ninja" effect. Like a ninja, whom you will never notice unless he chooses to reveal himself or has made a mistake and you discover him, we need to embody this with our eLearning content and media. The learner should never know we were there; however, they will absolutely notice if we make a mistake in verbal or visual communication.

*Sean Bengry*

Create interactive elements that are short, targeted bits of information supporting a specific concept in your eBook. Some of the most useful interactive elements in an eBook are short embedded videos, images, and audio clips. Place these strategically to support and add value to the surrounding content. Remember that when it comes to interacting with the content in your eBook, the learner will expect to see consistent functionality throughout.

*Sarah Gilbert*

As humans, we base our expectations on appearance, whether we deny it or not. To put it bluntly, we're superficial people. Think about it: How quickly do we form expectations on someone by how they dress or present themselves? Similarly, if learners notice that something is off with the visual presentation, you've already got them thinking about something other than the content you want them engaged with.

*Sean Bengry*

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Use PowerPoint or AuthorStream to create narrated video for YouTube.

*Tom Bunzel*

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When designing a more visual learning module that requires custom animations or that uses digital characters to convey content, first create storyboards. This will help streamline your content and help you iron out any potential problems you might run into before going to the computer.

*Erik Summa*

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When selecting fonts, consider using a sans-serif font (such as **Verdana**) over a serif font (such as **Times New Roman**). Most sans-serif fonts are considered easier to read on a computer screen than most serif fonts.

*Kevin Siegel*

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When writing and formatting the text of your eBook, especially for multiple devices, simpler is better. Plan and tag your header styles in advance. Also, when using anchors and links, thoroughly test to be sure they are all working properly. Mark Coker's *Smashwords Style Guide* provides some good information on common formatting mistakes (available for free in various reading formats at <http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/52>).

*Sarah Gilbert*

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When creating modules containing dry material, get creative with the delivery of the content. Use custom video, animation, music, or create a game to hold the viewers' attention. Keeping viewers guessing will ensure they don't miss a single slide of your module.

*Erik Summa*

Output your narrated PowerPoint to a video file (WMV) to post it on YouTube.

*Tom Bunzel*

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“Interactivity is in the mind, not the mouse.” Although we will substitute mouse for finger when it comes to mobile learning, there is an excellent point here when it comes to engagement. A lot of touching the screen and swiping around doesn’t necessarily mean you’re engaging a learner. When someone is engaged, it is a state of mind. Asking a well-phrased question with a supporting image that allows a learner to think deeply can be just as effective as using video or an interactive graphic.

*Sarah Gilbert*

## Eight Tips for Using Games for Learning

How do you develop a solid basis for game-based learning ... and how do you make the games addictive? These eight tips provide a look at the effective use of games in learning.

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Design a game from an existing instructor-led-training class one step at a time. The next time you teach that class, use the participants to build your question/action cards. During the review sessions, simply break the class into teams and ask them to write questions to stump the other teams. If you do this enough times, you will have great questions to use for your action cards in a game-board format.

*Deborah Thomas*

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Try turning an existing course into a game. First, review the course content. Next, select a board game with which you are familiar and deconstruct it. Look at the board and the actions. What moves the players forward or backward? What rewards are built into the game? How do players gain or lose points? How do players win? What is the goal of the game? Then look at the learning components of your course. What is the goal of the learning? What happens when learners do things correctly when applying this knowledge? What happens when they don't?

*Deborah Thomas*

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Not every course is perfectly suited for game-based learning. Qualify your game-based learning project by aligning objectives to performance-based goals and sync the game to the delivery mechanism. Usually, it isn't wise to create a game if the content changes often (unless you build a game that allows you to easily upload or update assets). And while budget can restrict the type of game you create, money doesn't need to be a showstopper. A game can be designed for any budget.

*Deborah Thomas*

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Content is king. Game-based learning events should always begin with strong learning objectives and solid content. You should start the project with analysis and design, and then think about the type of game you want to build.

*Deborah Thomas*

The basic concept that makes games fun to play are the built-in core compulsions. You can use core compulsions to drive your game design. Add the compulsions to the course in the form of game mechanics: Will the players take turns? What are the action points? Will your game use action cards? Will players try to capture or eliminate pieces? Does your game use dice to move the players forward and backward? Is there a good learning component that allows you to build in a risk and reward system? Is there a reason to build in resource management? Build in a reason to win by using victory-condition mechanics such as game goals, loss avoidance, piece elimination, puzzle guessing, races, structure building, territory control, or victory points.

*Deborah Thomas*

Alternate reality games (ARGs) are games that use the real world as a platform for a narrative and often involve multiple forms of media and gameplay elements. ARGs are most commonly noted for the high level of player involvement, which drives the game story and can affect the pacing and events of the narrative. Also, rather than being driven by an artificial intelligence, some game designers interact directly with the players.

*Deborah Thomas*

Alternate reality games (ARGs) are usually very complex, but you can design them as very simple games by using your company intranet, email, chat, and interoffice mail. Build a backstory and send the group a message via email that leads the users to find the question or the answer. Then keep track of the points when they return the answer.

*Deborah Thomas*

Alternate reality games (ARGs) have their own terminology. Here are the major terms:

- *Puppetmaster (PM)*: The puppetmaster is usually involved in designing or running an ARG. Puppetmasters remain “behind the curtain” while a game is running to observe and react to player actions. One or more individuals might comprise the puppetmaster.
- *The Curtain*: A metaphor for the separation between puppetmasters and players. The curtain refers to the various forms of media that keeps players from directly interacting with puppetmasters. For example, voicemail boxes, characters’ email addresses, blogs, and social media.

- **Rabbithole:** The rabbithole marks the first website, contact, or puzzle that launches the ARG. A rabbithole could be something as simple and brief as a URL or QR code on a poster, or a set of numbers displayed on a website. Examples include The Beast, which had posters with unknown telephone numbers on them, or a mysterious game update notification for the Potato Sack game.
- **This Is Not a Game (TINAG):** TINAG sets the ARG form apart from other games, dictating that the game does not behave like a game. Phone numbers found in the ARG, for example, should actually work, and the game should not provide an overtly designated play space or rule set for the players.

Deborah Thomas



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## Four Tips for Measuring Engagement and Learning

You've got strong content. But how do you make sure it's effectively engaging and teaching the students? Our experts share some tips for measuring engagement and learning.

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During your live virtual sessions, build in a variety of interactivities every two to three minutes and be sure to monitor how many people are participating. If you are not seeing the full participation you want, throw some ad-hoc questions into the chat area. If you have audio interactivity, ask someone to unmute and share verbally. You need to constantly monitor whether your audience is engaged because once you lose their attention, you might not get it back.

*Susan O'Connell*

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When creating quizzes in your eLearning courses, consider having no more than five-to-ten questions per quiz. Any more and you run the risk of making the eLearning course more about the quiz than the lesson.

*Kevin Siegel*

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Use the Klout plug-in in the Chrome browser to monitor influencers on the back-channel.

*Tom Bunzel*

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When adding questions to an eLearning quiz, consider keeping the question types either true/false or multiple choice. These two question types have been proven better when it comes to Section 508 compliance for learners with disabilities.

*Kevin Siegel*