

Moderation

What to Worry About, and What Not to Worry About!



Worry about making sure learners know who the moderators are.



What their role is, and how to get in touch—both in your pre-course communications and easily findable somewhere within the course experience.



Don't worry about being a constant 24/7 presence.

Be available, and check in, but—just as with micro-content for learners—moderators can do the work of moderating in 10-15 minute chunks too.

Worry about threading opportunities for discussion and interaction throughout the course.

You want interaction where it makes the most sense for people to deliberate on an issue together, in order to reflect upon and internalize a shared understanding of critical concepts. So really, the very first step in moderation is in the course design, long before a moderator might even be selected.



Don't worry about responding to every single discussion post.

Think of the moderator as a presence whose job is to keep interactions moving forward smoothly, but not someone who has to be super chatty all the time themselves. When they do seed or react to discussions, it should be to make sure the discussion is ruthlessly relevant to the course and the job.



Worry about making sure your moderator understands the course materials and content.

A good moderator can answer questions (or forward the question to a SME and post the response) and direct learners to key resources when needed. One way to do this after you've run the pilot is to recruit course alumni as moderators. They know the course material, and lend some 'oomph' to the urgency of the learning for the next round of learners.



Don't worry about engagement.

Don't worry about it, that is, if you've threaded thought-provoking questions through the course. You can also loop in senior people in the organization to participate as moderators. For example, you can have a VP or C-suite member of your organization's leadership be a "guest moderator" for a week—the opportunity to have comments seen and responded to by senior people increases engagement.



Worry about listening to your learners.

The moderator is in a great position to curate common themes, problems, and tacit knowledge, as well as to report on the "pulse" of the course to course stakeholders. Moderation is also the logical first step of curation, highlighting discussion remarks or assignments that are trending or exemplary to enrich the learning experience.