



Critical Curation and Collaboration in Learning (Cur8)

Collaborative Tools for On-line Learning

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Online Collaboration in Learning

Collaboration in learning means we learn something together, by working in groups on tasks, projects, or concepts. When we collaborate, our ideas complement each other, so it helps to break down information silos and enhance the experience of every single learner.

Online collaboration is the process in which digital technologies help us work together when we are apart. For the delivery of Blended Learning programmes, remote learning and for supported self-directed learning, it is important to bring learners together and engage them in group activities. There is a wide variety of online learning collaboration tools to choose from to facilitate this.

The following online learning collaboration tools will support you in establishing a truly collaborative eLearning environment. They are divided into categories to match the purpose and tasks you wish to achieve.

Collaborative Content Curation Tools

1. Wakelet: Gather web content and bookmark it

[Wakelet](#) is a content curation tool. It is a digital bookmarking platform that allows you to collect multimedia resources in folders and manage them. With Wakelet, you can bookmark everything on the Internet, including Tweets. Then you can put your content into presentation templates, group projects, research, assignments, etc., and also embed them into a Learning Management System (LMS).

2. Padlet – Gather web content; share thoughts and ideas

[Padlet](#) is a digital bulletin board similar to Pinterest but designed especially for collaboration. It's like a wall or a notice board, where L&D Professionals and learners can place documents, links, video, and images online for sharing and further implementation i.e. a content management solution designed to help educators and businesses upload, store and manage files and collaborate with team members.

For example, you can create a Padlet board of potential solutions to a problem or use it as a shared repository of resources for research. A powerful feedback tool is included which will enable you to assess input and give feedback.



3. Diigo – Gather web content, annotate, and share it

[Diigo](#) is a free bookmarking tool available as a browser extension or a mobile app. With Diigo, you can organise your personal library of any online resources, highlight them, and put sticky notes on them. Set up a Diigo group and share the resources you've found with colleagues or learners, discuss them in attached comments, and start forum discussions.

4. Zotero – Gather sources for research and share them

[Zotero](#) is a free research software that helps you to collect research sources and papers from various sites, and store and share them all in one place. You can build a common research base or a collaborative bibliography list, collaborate on ongoing projects with colleagues in public or private Zotero groups, and discover people with similar interests with tagging and citations.

5. Symbaloo – Get your tiles in a row

[Symbaloo](#) is a homepage curation tool that organises online resources, games, videos, and other files into tiles. To create a fun and engaging learning path, you can embed articles, videos, or quiz questions into a customisable pathway of tiles and share it with learners. To search for content curated by other educators, look in Symbaloo's gallery. This will also help educators/trainers to collaborate on curriculum mapping.

Online Discussion Tools

Discussion tends to be a driver for learner-centred learning. Educators/L&D Professionals facilitate discussions to let learners generate ideas, organise, and summarise them. Actually, getting learners to talk and share ideas can be challenging, especially when it comes to remote learning. To make it easier, online tools with functions like visual brainstorming or short video responding are at your service. With their help, you can engage your shy learners or those who resist participating in class.

6. ConceptBoard – Think together and draw on a whiteboard

[ConceptBoard](#) is a collaborative online whiteboard for representing ideas in visual flowcharts. Edit content together on a digital canvas, use screen share and video chat, and draw sketches to brainstorm ideas graphically. You can also attach sticky notes, drag-and-drop images, videos, PDFs, and other files on this whiteboard.



7. Creatly – Design and plan together

[Creatly.com](https://www.creatly.com) is a discussion board for collaborating on visual content: diagrams, charts, storyboards, design projects, etc. With Creatly, you can share and edit lesson plans with colleagues or brainstorm a group project with learners on an online canvas. The platform has a huge library of premade canvases, subject-specific templates, and embedded video conferencing functions.

8. Miro – Think, draw, and design on a whiteboard together

[Miro](https://miro.com) is a free collaborative whiteboard platform that structures your team's ideas visually. It's like an infinite whiteboard with an easily understandable design where you can conduct brainstorming, mind mapping, and more, synchronously. For example, you can let learners plan actions on a complex project here, or teach them to work in a more structured manner. Invite people to collaborate on a board easily and keep in touch with the built-in video, chat, and comments section.

9. Flipgrid – Get video feedback from your learners

[Flipgrid](https://flipgrid.com) is a free video learning platform where you can create grids – special places to allocate topics for discussion among your colleagues or learners. They can respond and contribute to these topics with short videos. Employ it for debates, peer reviews, experiments, performances, and so on.

Cost: free

10. Nearpod – Make interesting training sessions with online discussions

[Nearpod](https://nearpod.com) is a free online platform for delivering interactive presentations and assessments. Find ready-made lessons and videos, create them in minutes, or upload materials from Google Slides, PowerPoint, or YouTube. To conduct an interactive discussion, you just click on any slide of your lesson, insert a topic on the slide, and when reaching it, learners can give textual, audio, or video responses instantly.

11. InsertLearning – Review texts together and complement them with multimedia

[InsertLearning](https://insertlearning.com) is a free Chrome extension for inserting learning everywhere you want it on the Internet. Add instructional content easily on any web page and enhance the learner reading experience. For example, you can select a certain idea in a text online, insert a question or a supporting video to the highlighted paragraph, and ask learners to discuss texts in an embedded chat.



Tools for Virtual Classroom Activities

What can you do if you strive to get online learners to interact with each other, but they only interact with their devices? You can take advantage of that! There are online collaboration tools that provide you with pre-made yet customisable templates for interactive assignments, games, and quizzes on any device. They will help you stimulate learner activity in classes and boost social engagement while learning online.

12. Microsoft OneNote – Do assignments, work on files, and create interactive training sessions

[Microsoft OneNote](#) is a cloud multimedia notebook for planning training sessions with other Educators/L&D Professionals, sharing assignments with learners, and conducting rich interactive courses and quizzes. You can do it all with sketches, handwriting, video, and audio recordings in well-arranged class notebooks and sync them all easily.

13. Kahoot! – Implement playful learning

[Kahoot](#) is a game-based learning platform with millions of funny multiple-choice quizzes or ‘kahoots’. It is possible to take kahoots via video conferencing with a shared screen, while learners answer kahoots on their devices. Kahoot provides easy integration with Microsoft Teams so you can work in groups with your learners or edit quizzes with colleagues.

14. Colltrain – Implement playful learning

[Colltrain](#) is an online collaborative tool that helps you move all in-class training activities online. Run your synchronous training course easily with premade activity types. Trainees will enjoy working in teams and playing live collaborative games like Play with letters, Play with Cards, Jigsaw, and Mix and Match.

15. Buncee – Collaborate on smart and funny presentations

[Buncee](#) is a multimedia presentation tool that allows learners, educators, and administrators to make smart and funny presentations. Use it with no effort to produce buncées – interactive presentations and courses for the virtual classroom. Engage learners of all ages to make buncées to demonstrate their knowledge in a fun way.

16. Pear Deck – Implement playful learning

[Pear Deck](#) is a web-based application to boost classroom collaboration with [interactive assessment](#) templates. Insert them in your training sessions from Keynotes, PowerPoint or Google slides. Write questions in the flexible templates provided, then see learners responding in real time or asynchronously and give them rapid feedback online. Conduct the Pear Deck lesson and the video classroom session at the same time.



Collaborative Authoring Tools

An authoring tool is a software for creating digital educational content (courses, video lectures, quizzes, etc.) and then sharing it with learners via a learning management system or on the Web. While working on courses in teams, instructional designers need to exchange 100s of emails a day. No wonder they often find collaboration time consuming and messy! It's much more convenient to have a common space for building, editing, and reviewing [courses](#) together. We've enlisted [some authoring tools](#) below that have strong collaborative potential.

17. iSpring Suite Max

[iSpring Suite Max](#) is a desktop software that allows you to develop online courses, quizzes, dialogue simulations, and screencasts in the familiar PowerPoint interface. It features iSpring Space where authors can store projects, collaborate on contents and design, and receive feedback and comments.

18. Articulate 360

[Articulate 360](#) is a suite of nine interconnected products, with Storyline 360 as the flagship authoring tool for creating online slides that include voice-overs, video, and animation. For premium plan users, it supports sharing slides with your team and editing them together. Articulate Review 360 will be helpful if you need to collect feedback from various stakeholders and track comment history.

19. H5P

[H5P](#) is a free open-source plug-in for collaborating on interactive courses and other educational projects in web browsers. Here, you can create rich HTML5 content such as interactive videos, games, and flashcards. You can share the content you made with other contributors on popular platforms like WordPress, Moodle, or Drupal, and LMSs that support LTI.

20. Uduu

[Uduu](#) is a free web-based tool for building interactive courses in your browser. With its help, you can create different kinds of activities, including assessments, interactive modules, and branching scenarios. An unlimited number of course designers and SMEs can collaborate on the content in the designated workspaces in real time.



21. Lectora

[Lectora Online](#) is an online authoring tool for building interactive slides with quizzes. It supports course development with multiple authors and has built-in email and chat. With Lectora's ReviewLink collaboration service, your team can review courses smoothly. It lets you assign users and permissions, check out other users' versions of the content, add notes and comments in 7 languages.

22. Elucidat

[Elucidat](#) is a cloud-based authoring tool for building eLearning content most suitable for large organizations. It allows several authors (or departments) to contribute to the same project at the same time. Big employers can produce online courses seamlessly thanks to team-level permissions, brand control, and a central asset library. You can designate a portion of content making to a particular department, so others can't see what is irrelevant to them.

23. dominKnow

[dominKnow](#) is a cloud-based authoring platform for creating eLearning courses, games, infographics, knowledge bases, and more. It centralises authoring processes for your team in one place while having role-based workspaces for different developer roles. Moreover, it has a central library for sharing and reusing content across projects.

24. Easygenerator

[Easygenerator](#) is an online drag-and-drop constructor for making online courses fast. It allows for unlimited co-authoring with ready-made templates and 10 types of questions. Easygenerator has a convenient feedback option, however, only Team or Enterprise plans allow for external review of the courses or assigning different roles within an organisation.

25. zipBoard

[zipBoard](#) is a cloud-based review tool for issue tracking and collaboration on web content. When building or testing online courses, you might face some bugs or issues in operation, so zipBoard will help your team simultaneously decide how to fix them. It looks like an online whiteboard on top of your website where you can discuss ideas with various stakeholders and even with end users.

Other Tools for Collaborative Content Development

Apart from online courses, you may want to collaborate on multimedia training materials like an interactive book, presentation or a podcast. These tools can be helpful in this case.



26. Book Creator – Collaborate on interactive books

[Book Creator](#) is a digital tool and a Chrome extension for collaborating on interactive book projects. There are plenty of pre-designed templates with images, videos, and audio for any subject or grade level. With these, you can create interactive instruction manuals, research journals, and digital portfolios together with your colleagues. Or engage learners to work on inspiring book projects in groups.

27. Soundtrap Edu – Record training sessions and podcasts together

[Soundtrap Edu](#) is an online cross-platform software that allows you to record audio for educational purposes. Here you can make a high-quality online course recording, readings to improve fluency or cold call templates, and more. In the Studio, you can invite learners or instructors to collaborate on a podcast by recording it on separate tracks, then transcribe it and upload it to Spotify from the cloud.

LMSs for Collaboration

When running online courses, collaboration, as well as the training process itself, will be more effective if conducted on a single platform – an LMS. Learning management systems are cloud-based software for storing and assigning online courses and training materials, managing learners, and giving grades. In terms of collaboration, LMSs can provide user-role management, discussion forums, embedded chats, liking and sharing, and more. Let's consider them one by one.

28. iSpring Learn

[iSpring Learn](#) is a fast and easy cloud-based LMS to kick start your training. There you can upload and manage any learning materials and SCORM courses, enrol learners in groups from any department, and assess their knowledge. With Zoom integration, you can host Zoom training sessions and chat simultaneously right in iSpring Learn. If a trainee has a question, they can communicate with a course author or an expert easily from the course menu itself.

29. 360Learning

[360Learning](#) is a cloud-based collaborative learning platform where any team member can create and improve courses. You can assign various roles to the project stakeholders and invite external users to review. The platform allows your learners to impact a training roadmap by sharing, upvoting, and commenting on their learning needs.

Cost: \$8 per user/month.



30. Docebo

[Docebo](#) is a cloud-based LMS that lets you leverage informal and user-generated content in eLearning. It aims to make eLearning as engaging as social networks and implements this vision in its Discover, Coach & Share module. Here, trainees can find relevant courses, ask questions to SMEs, and communicate in interactive discussion boards. In channels, they can contribute to group knowledge or study content in topics posted by peers and experts.

Conclusion

As you can see, there are versatile online learning collaboration tools that provide us with opportunities for team brainstorming, multiple co-authoring, learner interactions and their impact on the course, and much more. Some tools are more focused on the needs of Educators/L&D Professionals and administrators, while others are more about learning activities. Either way, when choosing a tool, consider your needs and current tasks for a start.

Of course, the effective use of a tool depends on the task you have. That's why we've listed the online learning collaboration tools separately. We hope they will help you motivate your learners and/or colleagues to do something wonderful together. What would you add to this list? Please leave your thoughts in the comment section below.