



Six tips for collaborating through virtual drop-in sessions

Finding it hard to get everyone in the same meeting at the same time? Sometimes it doesn't matter if people are working simultaneously. Consider virtual drop-in sessions! They're asynchronous, workshop-style experiences hosted on digital collaboration platforms where participants independently complete a series of activities on their own time. Facilitators can engage in a low-touch way yet still capture data.

Here are six tips for successful virtual drop-in sessions:

1. Prepare your participants.

Prepare an overview of your session that includes workshop objectives, timing, digital platform basics, facilitator contacts, and any other expectations. Share it with your audience so that they'll have the information they need to enthusiastically commit to participating.

2. Block off time in participants' calendars.

Set realistic expectations for how much time participants should spend in the session. Enable participants to move their individual calendar holds to a better time. In the invitation, repeat (or provide a link to) the information from tip #1.

3. Embed instructions in the workshop materials.

Include clear, standalone instructions on what your participants should be doing within the workshop materials. These instructions should repeat the session overview and include navigation guidance and clearly articulated steps throughout the activities themselves.

4. Lock the prompts and activity materials.

Use your platform's tools to lock activity boards and prompts so that non-facilitators don't accidentally move or edit them—e.g., using [lock elements to the background](#) in MURAL or master slides in Google Slides.

5. Keep participants on track by having one facilitator online.

Have someone readily available to answer questions from inbound emails or on a chat channel. A facilitator can also keep an eye on anyone who may be off track. If possible, ask participants to log in with an account or leave their initials in their contributions.

6. Be persistent.

To ensure full participation, follow up with registrants and send invitations to your workshop more than once, even after the session has opened. To emphasize the value of participating, share information on how many people have already taken part or summarize their responses.

Virtual drop-in sessions give participants as much time as they need to build on information added by previous participants and to add notes to shared boards with follow-up questions. They also prevent any single voice from dominating the conversation. When we're all feeling call fatigue, virtual drop-in sessions still allow for meaningful contributions and collaboration.