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How to test the competences acquired in a virtual classroom

In a virtual classroom, competences can be tested not only through final tests, but also live. This is how.

Blended learning alternates between moments of asynchronous learning, where the learner learns how and where he/she wants to at his/her own pace, and moments of live meetings, usually in a company. With the spread of remote working, the moments of meeting with the trainer have to take place at a distance, in a virtual classroom. Thanks to **videoconferencing software** integrated in their LMS, learning management systems, colleagues and trainers can meet live, not only to learn new skills, but also to test the technical and soft skills they have learned.

Assessing technical skills in a virtual classroom

A virtual classroom is an **online learning environment** that allows learners and trainers to interact in real time. In order to test learners' competences it is essential to use the basic tools that each virtual classroom provides:

- Streaming video
- Screen sharing
- Whiteboard
- Presentation mode

If the training course concerns the use of a new software, for example, the trainer can ask the students to share the screen or use the **presentation mode** to perform some tasks. In this way he can assess their skills in real time. If other types of machines or functions are involved, **virtual reality** tools can be used to practise in a risk-free environment.

Assessing transversal competences by videoconferencing

The main purpose of the virtual classroom is to recreate the **social learning** conditions that help learners to be more motivated by comparison with their peers. At the same time, the presence of the learners in the virtual classroom also helps the trainer to exploit the moments of interaction to promote learning by doing and to assess the competences acquired, especially if they are soft skills, or transversal competences. These are some techniques that can be used in real time:

- **Discussions**: by dividing the class into **small groups** of maximum 5 people, brainstorming sessions can be organised, imagining presenting a new product, answering customers' questions, to give some examples. The trainer is free to enter the different rooms in which the students are divided and evaluate each one during the discussion, as well as with the evaluation of the final document.
- **Role-playing**: still working in small groups, it is possible to do **live simulations** without using too sophisticated tools. Participants can take on different roles - client, partner, funder.
- **Gamification**: if an element of challenge, a story, a prize is added to the simulations, the basis is laid for making the exercise a game. For the trainer this becomes an extraordinary evaluation tool.

Organisation and feedback in a virtual meeting

The prerequisite for a **smooth videoconference** is a stable internet connection. It would be impossible to confront each other in real time if communication breaks down. As part of the organisation of a course, it is important that the trainer and participants make sure they have a LAN or a stable connection. It is also useful to establish **rules on the use of the video and microphone** to give all learners the opportunity to participate.

Finally, taking advantage of the moment of confrontation and interaction made possible by the virtual classroom, the trainer can ask for an evaluation of his course, either by including specific questions among the tasks to be carried out in real time, or by distributing a **questionnaire at the end of the session**.

Similarly, he/she can bring the discussion and simulation groups back into the plenary session to give students **immediate feedback** on the exercise and to collect any questions about the course in general.

Quizzes are an excellent way to test students' knowledge of an online course in **blended** or asynchronous mode. However, taking advantage of virtual classrooms can create moments of practice and exchange through screen sharing, debates, simulations that become valuable in assessing both the students' skills and the effectiveness of the training course.

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