

# Grass Roots Tactics for Effective Remote Learning

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The healthcare industry is experiencing a rapid acceleration, literally over a matter of weeks, to true digital health. It's a completely different way of viewing the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has renewed our focus on the most vulnerable populations and pushed care management to seize groundbreaking opportunities for taking advantage of virtual solutions. More than simply telemedicine, digital health will ultimately mean we consume all aspects of care more virtually than we ever have before.

The silver lining of these challenging times may prove to be that American consumers have more healthcare information and control at our fingertips, and payers and providers see the fragmented pieces of our healthcare system coalescing into a coherent and more convenient experience.

We're presented with a huge opportunity to bring all the Circles of Care together – the professionals, the patient/member, the family, friends, neighborhoods, and communities – all working together toward the united cause of the Quadruple Aim.

## And that's the direction Medecision is taking Aerial™.

These difficult past months have also given us a stark reminder of the need for human interaction. The COVID-19 quarantine has forced millions of school children to convene virtually at our dining room tables. Teachers everywhere are struggling to share lesson plans and motivate their students, and parents are observing firsthand that learning by its very nature needs a human presence, and flourishes best in group settings.

In other words, effective remote learning needs to seize a similar opportunity by bringing the Circle of Learners together.

Learning and development professionals have long recognized the stubborn gap that exists between corporate learning efforts and expected outcomes, particularly when it comes to remote training and elearning. The typical reasons learners report poor outcomes follow a common pattern:



Lack of instructor feedback



No opportunity for peer collaboration



Lack of interactivity/engagement

Granted, not all online learning suffers from these shortcomings. Simple informational content can survive the journey from printed material into binary bits. Textbooks have served such purpose for centuries. When it comes to digital content, words are still words.

That said, textbooks rarely are intended to stand alone.

## The Secret Sauce of Same-Time Learning

Information is only the foundation for new knowledge, and new knowledge is only a building block for new behaviors. We do our teams a disservice to ignore the obvious. Deploying new software – and gaining competency fast, as when onboarding a new enterprise solution – requires more than just a digital textbook to realize anticipated outcomes.

Without question eLearning offers numerous tangible benefits – standardization, maintainability, reduced travel and related costs, to name a few. But where it counts, where outcomes matter, canned content is simply not equivalent to classroom learning. And not because learners aren't in the same place, but because they're not learning at the same time.

Same-time settings – collaborative spaces that approximate synchronous learning – allow participants to ask the subject matter expert a quick question and get a fast answer, hear peers' questions, and most importantly, get timely feedback on the application of new knowledge. Lack of human interaction severely handicaps a non-synchronous learning program. It doesn't even come close to its classroom cousin.

### The Argument for Trial and Error

Consider, for example, the time and expense companies commit to provide leadership training. A few years back, Bersin by Deloitte estimated U.S. expenditures of over \$70 billion for corporate training and \$130 billion worldwide. Of these training expenditures, "managerial and supervisory skills" typically ranked number one.<sup>1</sup>

But in a study of thousands of new frontline managers, only 40 percent reported satisfaction with their organization's leadership development offerings. These same managers were asked to rank the most influential means to achieving their leadership skills. The top two responses? Trial and error, followed by support from their own manager. Formal on-the-job training (costing billions of dollars) ranked a distant third.<sup>2</sup>

In another study of new managers, 82 percent reported their most effective learning method when faced with an unfamiliar challenge was "informal chats with colleagues." And 55 percent of these same respondents reported using trial and error at least monthly as an effective way to perform.<sup>3</sup>

### Three Grass Roots Tactics for Effective Remote Learning

The key takeaway is that, while digital content (videos, documents, PowerPoint) may provide the necessary foundation for an online curriculum, informal learning channels should also play a central role in remote training deployment. These informal channels are human-driven and time-bound. To be truly effective, corporate remote learning programs must deploy these informal and often ignored tactics. These are also the tactics that remediate the most commonly cited reasons remote learning outcomes fail.



#### 1. Schedule "office hours" with an expert.

Nothing grounds a learner like praise for a newly performed skill. And nothing facilitates learning better than the opportunity to ask the Subject Matter Expert a question and get a timely answer. Medecision's Aerial Academy, for example, offers in-platform messaging which allows participants to reach out directly to our content experts and get answers to their questions. Aerial Academy also supports registration for Zoom-based live online "office hours." Thirty minutes with an SME can be as valuable as a day of videos – and can make all the difference in a critical deployment.



#### 2. Help learners collaborate.

Informal access to an online space will help your learners forge new and abiding channels of communication. And they'll be able to draw on their network long after training deadlines conclude. Slack, Teams, Google Drive, or any number of business communication platforms can approximate a virtual classroom space for informal sharing of ideas and questions. Online forums are perfect for such purposes but may require a degree of trainer facilitation to function smoothly. Aerial Academy provides course forums in certain implementations, where learners can ask each other questions and share war stories and best practices.



### 3. Encourage risk-free trial and error.

True engagement translates into valuable learning transfer. But “interactivity” doesn’t mean clicking things for the sake of clicking things. Beware the formal training that conducts multiple-choice tests on the steps of a process. Memorization is incidental when the learner’s true outcome is internalizing the muscle-memory of software workflows or behaviors. There’s no better way – in fact, there’s no other way – to learn skills and behaviors than by doing. Make it safe for learners to fail. Aerial Academy offers interactive “Try Me” exercises so learners can practice workflows without dependency on access to a sandbox environment or fear of corrupting real data.

### Putting the Human in Human-Centered Design

Remote learning has its place and offers substantial benefits to any organization seeking simple and efficient training deployment. The surge of social media over the last 10 years reminds us that the soul of experience is not only found in the content, but in the person who’s striving to grow and share that content. Whether it’s online or conference room, live or recorded, the most effective learning is infused with timely feedback, peer collaboration, and risk-free practice. Human-centered training moves beyond watching videos and PowerPoint presentations to engage learners in ways that allow them to reach fluency, meet performance objectives, and contribute to organizational outcomes. Human-centered training is comprised of human faces – the learners and the subject matter experts flourishing together in a wider Circle of Learners.

It’s an idea that’s not just for health care. And its time has come.

### About Aerial<sup>™</sup> by Medecision and Aerial Academy

Aerial<sup>™</sup> by Medecision allows every stakeholder to collaborate and work toward improving the health of consumers and their care interactions while supporting an equally healthy business – what we call the integrated health experience. Aerial connects the care ecosystem and enables consumers to be surrounded with personalized experiences focused on efficient and effective support across their care community. By providing a secure, reliable and scalable set of enterprise and health data across healthcare systems, Aerial is able to provide a 360-degree view of the consumer while delivering on the promises of interoperability, virtual care, and digital health. Ensuring consumers and their support teams are coordinated, communicating and connected, Aerial powers the integrated health experience – connecting care communities to pursue the next right action for all involved.

Aerial Academy provides the training and knowledge management support to healthcare teams to become expert in Aerial, onboard fast, and experience the outcomes they need and expect.

**Discover more at <http://liberate.health>**

1. <http://www.berstein.com/corporate-learning-factbook-2014>
2. [https://www.ddiworld.com/DDIWorld/media/trend-research/findingthefirststrung\\_mis\\_ddi.pdf](https://www.ddiworld.com/DDIWorld/media/trend-research/findingthefirststrung_mis_ddi.pdf)
3. <http://goodpractice.com/white-papers/The-Learning-and-Performance-Link--How-managers-learn--in-their-own-words.pdf>