Running a Webinar / Online Classroom

What is a Webinar?

Students can communicate with the expert/industry professional, with minimal cost to either party or time of travel

A Webinar is a live, online video conferencing event, which is attended exclusively by an online audience. A Webinar is defining as a web-based seminar, in which participants and facilitators communicate live over the Internet across distant geographical locations using shared virtual platforms and interact ubiquitously and synchronously in real-time via voice over IP technology and web camera equipment (Gegenfurtner & Ebner, 2019). Webinars can be a two-way collaboration between the presenter/webinar organiser and attendees through online messaging, video and audio communication or it can be one-way presenter-led, where attendees are just viewers and are not contributing live.

The use of webinars in higher education has gained growing attention over recent years (Häkkinen & Järvelä, 2006), this is due the emergent of new technology that allows the student to access a Webinar from anywhere with any device (Ebner & Gegenfurtner, 2019) This allows the lecturer to be more adaptable in their approach to teaching by allowing flexibility. This could foster an autonomy to how the student wants to learn and enable better engagement in their learning.

A Webinar could also give the academic the ability to bring in external interactions into the classroom environment, by inviting experts in from the specific field to talk and interact with the students virtually via a webinar. Students can communicate with the expert/industry professional, with minimal cost to either party or time of travel (Melorose et al., 2015).

A Webinar is also an inexpensive way of bringing like-minded individuals together to share their research and ideas. Webinars can run like a conference where different topics discussed by a collection of speakers in an online platform.

Considerations when running a webinar/Online Classroom

Webinars are a great way of creating interaction and collaboration online, but there are ethical and practical elements that need to be considered.

- Make sure the web tool used is accessible to all who want to attend. Some web tools have certain restrictions that could prohibit users' access to Webinars. These restrictions could be registering, login in, cost, etc. [Blackboard Collaborate Ultra](#) and [Microsoft Teams](#) are recommended tools at the University of Derby.

- Most web conferencing tools have the ability for the participants to communicate through multiple different ways, e.g. instant message, audio and video, allowing the participant to choose their desired way to communicate, depending on their location, confidence and access to hardware.

- When bringing new external presenters to a class, make sure before the session that testing is carried out with both the presenter's connection and the classroom connection to the web access tool to allow a smoother user experience.

- To create a better interaction in a Webinar, the embedding of interactive tools like quiz's, surveys, icebreaker questions, etc. They are a great way of fostering better interacting with participants. Also allowing participants to share files and their computer screens in a webinar could encourage participation even further. Be aware when allowing screen and file sharing you maybe have little or no control over what is being shared. Some web conferencing tool have moderation for this reason.

- Before the webinar session, run a test with the presenters to make sure everything is working.

- If you have a large attendance to the webinar, it might be beneficial not to allow participants to use their microphones and webcams as this maybe distraction to the presenter(s). Alternatively, allow participants to use the chat function in the web conferencing tools to ask questions.

[Tips and techniques on how to run a webinar using Collaborate Ultra](#)

[Instructions on how to Setup a Collaborate session and use Collaborate](#)

Ebner, C., & Gegenfurtner, A. (2019). Learning and Satisfaction in Webinar, Online, and Face-to-Face Instruction: A Meta-Analysis. *Frontiers in Education*, *4*(September), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2019.00092

Gegenfurtner, A., & Ebner, C. (2019). Webinars in higher education and professional training: A meta-analysis and systematic review of randomized controlled trials. *Educational Research Review*, *28*(November 2018), 100293. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2019.100293

Häkkinen, P., & Järvelä, S. (2006). Sharing and constructing perspectives in web-based conferencing. *Computers and Education*, *47*(4), 433–447. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2004.10.015

Melorose, J., Perroy, R., & Careas, S. (2015). Bringing the world to your classroom: Using Webex conferencing to bring experts to your course. *NACTA Journal*, *1*(June). https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004