Follow-up FAQs: Teaching Highly Participatory Courses Using Adobe Connect
TLSS Webinar: Welcome to my Online Classroom, August 10, 2020
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1. Fayyaz Baqir: Is there any manual available on use of adobe connect for classroom teaching?
   * Nancy Vezina – Host: We have some resources on the TLSS website... And Contact North also have resources... here is the link... https://uottawa.saea-tlss.ca/en/support/adobe-connect

2. Jennifer St.John: Will the University have a license for Zoom for the fall?
   * Paul Saurette - Host: Yes - Apparently in the works and almost done

3. Robert Rival: How can a student show their video feed or ask a question orally?
   * Jocelyn Kane - Host: Robert, the host can enable video and mic access for each student. The host can also enable videos/mics all the time and then rely on the students to open/close them when needed. But we found that the former, disabling all until a student was called upon for a presentation/question, worked much better.

4. Willow Scobie: Are there still concerns about Adobe Connect and our students in China? Can they access this platform from within China?
   * Paul Saurette - Host: Nancy will respond. Thx!

5. Hilda Joyce Portilla: Est-ce que je peux montrer un video (youtube ou autre) sur adobe connect?
   * Nancy Vezina – Host: Techniquement, on ne peut pas diffuser une vidéo du Web (c'est une question de droit d'auteur... et surtout le son de sera pas diffusé)... mais on peut partager le lien de la vidéo (dans un module de partage de liens Web). Les étudiants vont pouvoir cliquer sur le lien au même moment et regarder la vidéo de leur ordinateur. Si tu as une vidéo qui t'appartient (attention à la longueur)... Tu peux la présenter en la téléversant dans un module de partage.
   * Paul Saurette – Host:
     - That said, under fair use, I believe we have the right as professors to use content from youtube etc as illustrative teaching material. In which case you can ‘share your screen’ from adobe connect and have it broadcast to all students in real time.
     - When it came to documentaries, I ended up assigning them to students to watch

6. Joelle Morgan: Is there a visual option for seeing participants?
   * Jocelyn Kane - Host: Yes, video access can be enabled by the host.

7. Kristina Laperle: Which platform(s) will be available for use for Fall2020 courses? I heard we may not have Contact North/Adobe Connect access for everybody. I am currently using Teams for a small language class (20 students) and it's not as user friendly as Adobe Connect or Zoom.
   * Nancy Vezina - Host: Kristina, you will be able to choose between Adobe, MS Teams and Zoom.

8. Hilda Joyce Portilla: Est-ce que je peux mettre les étudiants comme hosts afin qu'ils fassent des présentations orales?
   * Robert Marinov - Host: Oui, mais c'est plus simple de leurs donner accès au microphone et vidéo - sinon ils peuvent voir tes notes, polls, etc. dans la section 'hosts'
   * Nancy Vézina - Host: On peut également utiliser le rôle « présentateur ».
9. Calla Barnett: How many students were in your course(s)?
* Jocelyn Kane - Host: POL 4142 = 50, POL 3102 = 90

10. Jean Pouchelon: 1) How do you add the name of the TAs? 2) How does the app work on Brightspace? thx
* Paul Saurette - Host: To add them as hosts for a course on Adobe Connect, you must ask Contact North to add the names of your TAs through the TLSS/Contact North submission form (on the TLSS website). Then they’ll be sent an email informing them of how to sign in …at which point they’ll automatically join as hosts and have full access.

And can you please clarify - do you mean Adobe working with Brightspace?
* Paul Saurette – Host: I meant that we used both platforms (separately). Adobe for classes. Brightspace for all the logistics (posting readings, assignment submissions, evaluation, quizzes, etc.)

11. Carla Geurts: Did you have to edit the recording a lot or did you post it as is?
* Jocelyn Kane - Host: We edited the recording to mostly minimise gaps at the beginning and end of lecture, as well as during the breakout groups.
* Paul Saurette - Host – however, you can avoid simply by being much more systematic of your recording than we were. We sometimes forgot to turn it off during breaks/after class ended, and so recorded some prof-TA debriefing after. If you make it a practice to start recording just before you start class, pause it during breakouts and any other breaks, and then turn it off once you dismiss the students, you shouldn’t have to do any editing at all...

12. Calla Barnett: Did you have TAs for both classes? and is there any role they played that I will have to take on myself?
* Jocelyn Kane - Host: POL 4142 = one TA, POL 3102 = two TAs
* Paul Saurette – Host: The main issue to consider if you don’t have TAs, is how to monitor the chat while you are lecturing. Q+A pod is fine since it is private until you respond, but a lot of stuff goes on in chat that is hard to monitor while you’re lecturing. So if it was me, and I didn’t have a TA to monitor/engage in the chat, I’d probably be much more structured with when I had it opened (e.g. when I asked a direct question to the class and asked them to respond on chat, when I paused for 5 mins and asked the class to discuss it amongst themselves, during logistics question 10 mins before class – in other words, only when I could pay attention to it and actively monitor it).

13. Calla Barnett: Is there a way to provide me with some detailed information about extra time required? I am not particularly willing to work for free as a PTP.
* Robert Marinov - Host: Paul may have more detailed thoughts on this, although some of the most time consuming tasks were dealing with participation/attendance marking and student communications (which were notably high during these times). Trying to account for these and streamline the processes for both would save you lots of time (communications can be streamlined especially by outlining your preferences in detail within the syllabus, as well as accounting for Q&A sessions where students can ask logistics questions during classes, where possible).
* Paul Saurette – Host:
  • Major time input for me before class was because I was doing all of this from scratch with 0 guidance. So if you leverage some of our learnings and scale back, it should be much more doable. Things to do:
    • (a) scale back assignments and make evaluation as systematic and rubric oriented as possible;
• (b) do not do the detailed participation marking we did – find another proxy (you could simply do multiple random attendance polls during class, leave them open for 30 seconds, and then use that as a measure of ‘engagement’ beyond simply signing in to the platform and then walking away; another idea = have a simple 5 or 10 question multiple choice quiz on Brightspace, available for 30 mins after each class, that tested how well they integrated key content for that class and use that as a proxy…Brightspace would then automatically mark it and upload the grade to the gradebook – meaning you wouldn’t have to do anything except create the quizzes for each class and then let them run automatically);

• (c) leverage TLSS support to help you build the Brightspace environment

• (d) consider also employing other methods: e.g. recording some of your lectures and then using class hours to do more of a ‘clarification and discussion’ Q+A type meetings (as suggested by Franco during webinar), etc.

14. Chris Bruckert: what is the best way to do office hours? i saw a reference to Zoom
   * Jocelyn Kane - Host: We had a signup sheet in Brightspace, and the platform we used was Zoom. It worked great. Most students used their cameras, though some did not.
   * Paul Saurette – Host: Note: students attended prof office hours regularly, but almost never TA office hours. Therefore, we folded TA office hours into DGDs instead – which was a much better use of TA hours...much higher impact on students I think.

15. Majid Sartaj: HERE ARE A FEW QUESTIONS. Dose the system generate a list of attendees by the end of each session? How do you pause and allow students to ask questions by talking through their mics not through chat? And do you have to start recording or it is done automatically?
   * Robert Marinov - Host: We tracked attendance by taking periodic attendance polls (2-4 times per class), which can be reviewed after class. If you’d like to give students a chance to ask questions orally, you can have them raise their hand (using the raise hand function) during your question periods, and then give them microphone access one at a time (or in groups for a more engaged discussion, if you prefer - but giving mic access to too many people at once will slow the system). And recordings must be started/stopped automatically, with just a click of a button on the top of Adobe under the 'Meeting' tab.
   * Paul Saurette – Host: Re reporting – yes, the backend of the system does generate a list of attendees for each session. Nancy can discuss in more detail, but basically you generate a ‘report’ and it has sign in data (not sure about sign out). Challenge is that this doesn’t let you see if people are actually paying attention, or if they just sign in and then walk away. Hence why we used 4 attendance polls each class.

16. Carla Geurts: Is the chat included in the recording
   * Jocelyn Kane - Host: Yes, the chats are included in the recording. You can also email yourself a copy of the entire chat - which was great for evaluating participation.

17. Joelle Morgan: How do you choose what pods to have shown to the students?
   * Robert Marinov - Host: Yes! When you are a host, the right-hand side of the screen shows all of the pods/info that you've prepared. (which only the hosts will see). You can then create and drag any pods over onto the left-hand side where students will see them. You can change the layout and size of all pods as you wish.

18. Joelle Morgan: Is your/host view different than students?
   * Jocelyn Kane - Host: Yes, host view is different than what the students see. As a host you can move pods around, search through chats, Q&As, etc. Hosts also have a separate pod with our own chat, note pod.
* Paul Saurette – Host: Just to clarify:
  
  • obviously we have more control of the view/pods than participants as J described above;
  
  • (b) our view of the main screen, however, is the same as students...so you have a pretty good idea of what they are looking at;
  
  • (c) in addition to main screen, however, there is also a separate ‘presenters area’ where you can prepare pods to share with students (polls, notes, etc), a separate chat where only hosts can chat with each other, etc...
  
  • (d) plus we have more menu options (to control pods, to give AV rights to students, etc, etc)

19. Lise Laforge: How do you give audio to students
* Robert Marinov - Host: When you drag the mouse over their name in the attendees pod, a list of options will appear, including to give them mic.video access, making them a host or presenter, etc. This works especially well when they raise their hand first, so their username jumps to the top of the list.
* Paul Saurette – Host: if you ask students to raise hands, a ‘raised hands’ list will also pop up from top of screen and there you can simply hit the ‘check’ button and it will automatically give them audio rights. So, easiest way if you want to do it individually, is ask presenters to raise hands, and then just click the ‘check’ icon.

20. Robert Rival: How do breakout groups use and share whiteboards? Can breakout groups be given problem templates to work on? Music, math, science problems....
* Robert Marinov - Host: If you include a whiteboard pod in the breakout groups, it will be shared automatically between all participants in the group (although in large classes it can slow the system and glitch from time to time). Normally you can choose whichever pods you like to include in breakout groups in advance, so you can prepare problems/exercises (e.g. on a notes pod) and they’ll be available once you break the students out into the groups.
* Paul Saurette – Host:
  
  • Yes, you can give breakout groups whiteboards they can work on collaboratively as a group; yes you can give them problem templates (you can place them in the ‘notes’ or ‘whiteboard’ pod of each breakout before class, or you can post them all on your own ‘notes/whiteboard’ pod with an indication of which group should do which problem, make sure they are visible in the breakouts view, and then they should be able to scroll down and see them from their groups...
  
  • (b) That said, we found (and students underlined) that whiteboards were very ‘laggy’ during the first couple of weeks. Not sure if this was issue of bandwidth problem with uO limited Adobe licenses, or intrinsic issues. I’d definitely spend some time playing with this to figure out if it works for your purposes...

21. Paul McGuire: How do you close the chat? Good to discuss visible and invisible pods
* Robert Marinov - Host: When you’re a host, the options tab on the top right of each pod (e.g. Chat, Q&A, etc.) gives you the option to hide or minimize the pod, along with other options. You can also drag them from the left-hand side (where they’re visible to students) to the right-hand side (visible only to hosts), and back, as necessary.

22. Pauline Aucoin: did you have to record and post lecture afterwards every week?
* Jocelyn Kane - Host: You can choose whether to record and/or post. If you choose to record note that the recording of the video uploads to Adobe automatically - students can access the recording immediately after class. This can present a challenge if you would like to edit it in any way. Note that you can edit it,
however, by taking the recording down, editing it, and then reposting. It's very easy. The takeaway is that there is no default 'hidden' view through Adobe.

23. Paul McGuire: @Jocelyn can you share an example of your sign-up sheet for office hours?
* Jocelyn Kane - Host(privately): Yes, Paul. We'll share a template.
* Paul Saurette – Host: Literally it was a super-simple googlesheet spreadsheet (used googlesheet because then students can edit it themselves in real time). Then we simply listed all our available office hours chronologically (broken into 10 minute time slots) by date and person, and then shared with the entire class. Students were then able to sign up for whatever slot they wanted, as much as 6 weeks in advance...Note: apparently Brightspace has a function to do this, but uO hasn't bothered to pay for it. I would definitely send in feedback urging them to make it available for us...it would be MUCH easier that way...

24. Pascal Missie 2: Avez-vous des TA dans vos cours ? Comment interviennent-ils dans le cours ? Si vous-avez des TA est ce que vous préparez la rencontre ensemble pour savoir ce qu'ils doivent faire et à quel moment ils doivent intervenir ?
* Robert Marinov - Host: Oui, normalement on a discuté en avance qui va faire chaque tache. Pour nous, les TAs ont répondu aux questions Q&A, des chats ou questions privée, faire les polls d'attendance, et communiquer avec le prof dans le 'host chat' s'il y avait des problèmes. On a aussi participé dans le chat primaire quand possible/nécessaire
* Paul Saurette – Host: Exactement comme Robert a dit...après quelques rencontres, vous trouvez un rythme assez facilement...Ceci dit, dans le cours POL3102 avec 2 TAs, nous avons eu des rôles beaucoup plus précis (un qui était responsable pour répondre aux chat/Q+As, l'autre qui était responsable pour la correction de la présence, participation, etc.) et les deux AE’s échangeaient les rôles chaque semaine...Nous avons aussi annoncé quel AE jouait quel rôle chaque classe pour que les étudiant.e.s puissent envoyer leur communications au AE relevant...

25. Kathleen Biard: Can the presenter see the private chats too, or are they actually private?
* Jocelyn Kane - Host: No, private chats are actually private!
* Paul Saurette – Host: Exactly. And this is unlike zoom. It was something that we made clear in the first week, and that students really appreciated. Allowed them to connect with one another in ways that went beyond the classroom, apparently.

26. Najib Khan: Please walk us through one more time how to enable Breakouts.
* Robert Marinov - Host: When you are a host, the Attendees pod has multiple options (in small boxes near the top) which allow you to see the overall attendees view, the breakout rooms view, and the 'status' of participants. When you click on the Breakout Rooms view, a number of options show up which allow you to randomly or manually assign students to groups, and then to launch/end the breakout groups, as well as to filter in and out of groups to supervise or participate yourself. (This can also be done on the far right side of the screen, which for hosts shows a panel with the different layouts available to them - all of which can be prepared as you wish in advance)
* Paul Saurette – Host: Also, FYI, in general there are tons of great, very clear Youtube and other training videos from Contact North and Adobe Connect that quickly get you up to speed on all these 'logistical/functional' type of issues. Contact North also offer lots of (customizable) webinars on Adobe as well – many of which essentially can be focused on covering your specific issues. So have a look at what they are offering, sign up and use those resources. I probably spent a dozen hours working live with TLSS
staff to learn new parts of Brightspace and Adobe, and another 4 or 5 hrs with Contact North trainers. All very worth it. But hopefully our presentation will help you cut down a lot on what you need!

27. Paul McGuire: Will you be sharing the syllabus? 30 pages, that is really long!!
   * Jocelyn Kane – Host (privately): Yes!
   * Paul Saurette – Host: Yes – I think it rang in finally at 35 pages or so. Very very long. And we had to really get on the students to read it fully. However, you would not believe how much extra information/education on norms you need to include. And even with all of that, we still spent 2 weeks fielding logistical questions...would have been a nightmare if the syllabus had been much shorter, I think (but, to be fair, I always err on the side of over-communication and over-transparency – and good chunks of that syllabus were examples of assignments and marking rubrics so that they had a very clear idea of expectations...)

28. Gerald Lynch: When will Contact North be assigning our course sites for the Fall? They said early August.
   * Nancy Vézina – Host: I believe it is scheduled for mid-August.

29. Agnes Grudniewicz: What do you believe is "sustainable" in terms of time for online lectures? Can students and profs really do a 3 hour synchronous lecture? Or is it better to reduce lecture time and use other tools to make up for that time?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: We did full 3 hours for every class and students seemed to stay with us for the entire time.

   • I taught two classes on same day, so literally I started on Adobe connect at 8h30 to connect with TAs/make sure my first class was organized, taught from 09h00-11h50, debriefed from 12h00-12h30, grabbed lunch, connected with TA for next class at 12h45, taught 13h00-15h50, debriefed 15h50-16h30 and then collapsed...for 15 minutes until I took over child care for our 3 year old ;).
   • Vast majority of our students were with us the entire time. Often we would have to shut down student discussion at end of class with the students being keen to keep going.
   • Overall takeaway = it is exhausting doing a 3 hr course, for everyone involved. But if it’s engaging, students are willing and able to be with you right through (I also had about 10 or so students who did both courses with me and they did great. Plus most students were doing 2-3 courses in spring session, meaning they were definitely doubling up on various days. So, seems like students can do it too).
   • That said, if I were to do it again, I would probably record and post some of the lectures ahead of time, ensure that they had viewed them by class time, and then use at least one class a week as full on Q+A/participation rather than real time lecture + participation at same time...

30. Christopher Cooper: Hi Paul, was the microphone on your laptop sufficient, if not any recommendations? Thoughts/experience on using more than one device while teaching (computer and ipod?)
31. Catherine D Armstrong: (Sorry if I sent this twice) Are you using an extra external microphone or the be that came with your computer?
32. Reza: What are your audio & video systems?
33. Carolyn Gordon: Hi! Are you using your computer's camera and mic or you bought a separate one?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: Re mic: I went back and forth between simply the video and mic of my computer (I was using an older 2014/2015 iMac) and using it with Airpod pros. Both seemed to work fine. On the TLSS presentation I was simply using the stock mic and video of the iMac desktop. I definitely wouldn’t have done it with my 2015 MacBook Air, though. Both mic and video not really good enough for that. My sense is
that it really depends on the very specific hardware you have – so test it out. But either way, I’d invest in both tech and ergonomics to make it work. You’ll spend lots of time on it ...

33. Robert Rival: Can streaming audio like Spotify etc. be played/broadcast through Adobe Connect? Essential for music courses.
   * Paul Saurette – Host: I believe there are several ways to do this. Nancy will respond more since she uses the music player embedded into Adobe (which I assume you need to upload an MP3 for). But you can certainly share your player from Adobe and play for students... So assume this would cover Spotify, apple music etc. – either as an app or through browser...
   * Nancy Vézina – Host: I have put together a MP3 file with Creative Common music, and make it play simply by adding this file in a share pod. So, if you have your MP3 file on your computer... You can do the same thing; simply add them to a share pod.

34. Najib Khan: Given that it will be the first time for many of us to use Adobe Connect for the distance learning, I will really appreciate if TLSS could arrange for some mock classes prior to the semester start. This will not only reduce the nervousness, but also expose some of the problems we may run into, and subsequently will give us experience to deal with these technical issues ahead of time. Thanks
   * Nancy Vézina – Host: Najib, I believe that when you get your course space from Contact North (our collaborator for the support of the courses that will use Adobe Connect) you can use your space to practice. In addition, I think there is even a sandbox space available (to do the same practice).

35. Paul McGuire: Is there information you suggest giving to your students before the course begins? For example communication policy etc.?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: I just sent them an email and Brightspace announcement 3 or 4 days before class with a copy of the syllabus, which had basically everything in it (including all the usual course info, plus Adobe/Zoom access links, Contact north help materials, comms policy, info about how we would planned running the classes (e.g. which Adobe tools we’d use, for what), rubrics, assignment descriptions, etc.). In the email (and Brightspace announcement), I also urged them to read the syllabus carefully, browse Brightspace, and visit the adobe/contact north tech links/intro videos, and boot up the link (and download adobe flash, etc.) BEFORE class to make sure they weren’t scrambling at 8:59 Monday morning...

36. Calla Barnett: What about people plagiarizing and/or stealing your intellectual property through these tools?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: Yes – it is a possibility, depending on what you mean. I believe APUO and APPTPUO have made it very clear that all the material is our intellectual property, and the uO has acknowledged this, meaning that there is not an issue of the institution claiming ownership (which would be a major issue if it hadn’t been negotiated clearly). Vis a vis students – yes, they can use screen recording technology...and there is very little we can do about that. Vis a vis what they or others then do with it – there are risks of course. But for me, anyway, the important thing is that the rights rest with us. So if there are issues, we can strongly assert our rights. I would definitely contact the APPTPUO/APUO for more guidance if you have specific concerns.

38. Robert Rival: Who will train students to use tools like Adobe Connect? Is it profs' responsibility?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: I did it myself. It is not complicated for students to use it...and they took to it pretty easily given that very few of them had used it before. That said, it definitely took the better part of a week or two to clarify (especially as we had new students tuning in for the first two weeks...). By winter term, I
imagine it shouldn’t be an issue as most will have had experience with it. But plan on devoting clarifying the tools and how you are using them for the first week to two weeks ...

39. Louise Stephens: Could you give an example or examples of things that did not work in practice?
   * Paul Saurette – Host:
     - The Whiteboard. (Lagged, not super useful friendly)
     - Using full AV for breakouts. (Bandwidth issues, crashed)
     - Using AV extensively for Q+A during full class lectures (logistics took way too long)
     - Using Chat without a monitor (became distracting to students at times, could go on tangents)
     - Using chats/breakouts without developing and explicitly clarifying norms, expectations, etiquette with students (they need guidance and clarity to ensure inclusivity, reflexivity>reactivity, etc.)
     - Assuming that things would take about as much time as in a normal classroom (they don’t, they take much longer)
     - Assuming everyone would have reasonable access to wifi/technology (they don’t)
     - Marking participation using detailed systematic analysis of chat/breakouts (far too time consuming)
     - Using Adobe rather than Zoom for smaller seminar class (would only use Adobe for lecture-based formats – it’s great for broadcast model (with significant participation) but if you are doing true seminar model with smaller numbers and constant interventions/presentations by students, Zoom or other video-conference platform is much better tool)

40. Basam Al-Hasoo: Are there Polls template on Brightspace to use?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: Not sure. There are on Adobe. And lots of other ‘stand-alone’ poll tools. On Brightspace I basically used a ‘quiz’ for these types of things.

41. Sawsan Abdul-Majid: @ Paul: Could you share your experience in regards to Adobe connect north limitations in case of Big class... I am expecting more than 200 Students in the fall. What are the better alternatives to use. Thank you
   * Paul Saurette – Host: I wouldn’t hesitate to use Adobe for a big class. In fact, on my experience, the larger the numbers, the better suited Adobe is. There were almost 200 participants on our TLSS webinar, and it worked very smoothly. Plus, at 200, since there are 20 breakout rooms (max) in Adobe, you can still put them into breakouts groups of 10 or so – a number we found entirely ‘doable’ as a group.

42. Jean Pouchelon: 3) How do you read audio or video?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: Not sure what you mean...If you meant ‘record’, answer is above...

44. Alexandra Pepin: Quick question: When sharing your PowerPoint, can you use your mouse as a pointer? Will students be able to see if you are pointing something to look at on your slide?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: Yes – as Nancy demonstrated in the webinar, there is an option to show your mouse as a pointer, either only to your fellow hosts, or to all participants. Very good.

45. Paul McGuire: It would be really great to get links to instructional videos by Contact North that people could access to start learning the program.
   * Paul Saurette – Host:
     - Nancy – I think this was perhaps answered above? https://uottawa.saea-tlss.ca/en/support/adobe-connect
     - I also have some links to them on my syllabus.
• There are also tons of videos by adobe connect online (youtube, etc) that you can easily find by googling adobe connect and the relevant tool/practice you want to learn. I was surprised at how useful they were.

• That said, there were also some questions I simply couldn’t find answered. So I watched a bunch of instructional videos and then compiled a set of questions they didn’t answer, which I systematically went through with TLSS/Contact North.

47. Carla Geurts: Can you share your etiquette guide?
* Paul Saurette – Host: No problem – it is included in my syllabus that we will also share.

50. Jean Pouchelon: Can the professor and/or students post performance or presentations videos and audios?
* Paul Saurette – Host:
• Adobe is only for streaming in real time. So, if it is part of a live class (e.g. class presentation, etc.) you can share documents/videos/anything on your screen.
• So if you are talking about posting video/audio that students can access at anytime, you can post those on the Brightspace course page and students can have access whenever they want.

51. Kathleen Biard: If you hide the chatbox can users still have private chats with each other while it’s hidden?
* Paul Saurette – Host: I believe that when it is hidden, they don’t have access to it at all. Nancy?
* Nancy Vézina – Host: Paul is right. If the pod is not visible… Students cannot chat on the platform (with you or their colleagues)... I guess students can still chat by other means (phone, other app on the web, etc.), but not via the Adobe Connect platform.

53. AJOY BASAK: Which platform is recommended for a seminar course where mostly students will be presenting in pairs or single?
* Paul Saurette – Host: Personally, in the future I would use Zoom or another video-conferencing platform for a seminar format. I used Adobe for a seminar format in spring (largely because I wasn’t sure if a seminar format would work via distance and so wanted to keep Adobe functionality in case it had to become more lecture format) – and my conclusion is (a) seminar format is perfectly functional in online format and (b) using a video-conf platform where AV constantly available for everyone is much both manageable and much more efficient/personable/pedagogically productive...especially if you use additional tools (stand alone poll tool, chat tool, wordcloud tools, mindmapping tools, etc). My colleague Jacqueline Best from Political Studies has quite a bit of experience with doing this and did a webinar for our school this summer...reach out to her if you want to get access to her presentation/webinar on this...

56. Kathleen Biard: If we want to practice hosting on Adobe Connect before the semester begins, is there a way to do it without logging into Contact North’s practice space? Or do we need to use their server?
* Paul Saurette – Host: I was able to practice on my own classroom as soon as I got the links (and you can sign up immediately – in fact Contact North suggests signing up as soon as possible). So I started learning and building my classrooms essentially a month before classes started. But they also then asked us to minimize time we spent on the platform outside of class hours due to licencing issues. So, am not sure...Nancy?
* Nancy Vézina – Host: You have to be reasonable when classes start in September. Each access in the Adobe Connect interface managed by Contact North is counted (we have a specific number of licenses for each hour of the day... 100 professors practicing at the same time could affect access for some students, if
we exceed our number of licenses – note that at times we are very close to our limit). In short, during class hours (between 8:30 a.m. and 10 p.m.) we have to be careful.

60. Alejandra Dubois: I notice that as a participant, I cannot easily export or cut and paste the Q & A box content. I would need to wait until the Instructor shares it later. Is there an alternative?
* Nancy Vézina – Host: By design, the Q&A pod is for the professor... and not for students to see. The professor can export the questions and answers and share them with students (this step will be done after the synchronous meeting).

62. Majid Sartaj: Thanks. Will you provide some basic info steps how to start a session and send the link to students?
* Nancy Vézina – Host: All this information will be sent to you by Contact North when your space is created.

66. Reza: Does Adobe connect have annotation tools?
* Paul Saurette – Host: Yes – you can both draw and add text to ppt/pdf docs you are sharing, whiteboard (if you are using it), etc. But I found it fairly clunky...That said, it works better if you have, say, an ipad with pen also booted up (I would sign in as a second account, make it a host as well, and use that to draw/etc from time to time...).

69. Alejandra Dubois: What is the rule of thumb about class size to decide on ZOOM Vs Adobe
* Paul Saurette – Host: Not sure in general, but based on my experience, the key issue is format.
  • If you are doing a primarily lecture-based course with text-based participation, I would use Adobe, regardless of numbers. That’s just because it works well for broadcast type engagement and is much less distracting that watching zoom panels.
  • If you are doing a seminar format where you need participants to engage constantly with audio and visual, I’d go for a video conferencing platform like Zoom.
  • That said, given everything (esp limits re distractability and AV connectivity issues), I don’t think I’d offer a online course in seminar format with more than 40 students or so. If it was larger than that, I’d probably go to a modified lecture format with lots of breakouts using Adobe.
  • But again, my colleague Jacqueline Best offered a 3rd year modified seminar format with 50 students using zoom and other tools (for polls, chat, wordclouds, mindmaps, etc) and it worked very well. So you might want to reach out to her to get a recording of the webinar she did on it for Political Studies colleagues...

72. Louise Stephens: How did you structure your classes? How long were the lecture segments? Did you alternate with the other activities and did you schedule breaks?
* Paul Saurette – Host: I didn’t have a hard and fast rule – each class was a bit different based on content, overall energy and focus level of students (given how far in the semester, COVID events, weather, etc.).
  • I normally break my in-person classes down into different stylistic sections (usually with no longer than 25 mins of lecturing at any one time without some sort of change of pace and reset exercise). So this class wasn’t any different in that. But I definitely broke it down into shorter sections than for a normal in person class. That said,
  • (a) students were definitely able to stay with me for good chunks of lecturing – especially because they could engage pretty much constantly using chat and Q+A;
  • (b) those and other tools also let me change pace frequently – so I would often break mid lecture (ie in the middle of a planned 20 min lecture block) and throw in a poll, or pose a question to the class,
let them respond by chat and then do a quick debrief on the fly. This meant that even lecture blocks were pretty broken up

- (c) I tried to make sure that we had one breakout session almost every class. I sometimes put them at the beginning and then used the debrief to kick off the lecture; sometimes in the middle of class to break it up; sometimes at the end – which would set us up to revisit those questions and kick off the next class with a full class debrief right off the bat. All of them worked quite effectively.

- Re breaks – I tend to make a deal with students that we go pretty much straight through without a break (in general I find that a mid-class break too often deflates the energy and momentum, esp of a 3 hr class) with the understanding that students can get up and take a bio-break whenever they individually feel the need. I used the same approach online...with the proviso that usually I gave everyone a 5 min break at some point in the middle of the class (sometimes tacked on to beginning/end of a breakout session. I’m not sure this is the best way – but it worked pretty well for us. But, like I said, I’m a fan of the ‘go full steam and preserve the momentum’ approach – so it is likely mostly reflective of that, rather than anything intrinsic to the medium/course...

73. Carolyn Gordon: Can I use Zoom for a larger class of 110?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: You certainly can. But see my comments above regarding pros/cons depending on lecture vs seminar format, especially at that size.

75. Pauline Aucoin: for very small advanced seminars (about ten) would you also use break out groups?
   * Paul Saurette – Host: As mentioned in my live comments, I would definitely use breakouts even for smaller advanced courses. Simply because, for both pedagogical reasons (to give space for different learnings styles/paces) and to create different rhythms throughout a given class meeting, I find it very useful to give students time to reflect and discuss as individuals, in pairs, in groups of 3 or 4, and as full groups even in small seminars.