

BigBlueButton Case Study

Introducing webinars to Health Staff on CPD programmes

Aim

Within Health and Life Sciences we are commissioned to deliver Continuing Professional Development opportunities to staff working in the Health & Social Care sector. With the time demands on these staff members, getting time away from the workplace to undertake a module is difficult. Consequently, we worked with one of the local NHS Trusts to develop an adapted blended version of the practice educators' programme that would incorporate technology, thereby reducing the time away from the workplace whilst still maintaining the quality of the learning experience.



Benefits

- External students can participate in sessions without needing to make the journey to the University.
- Supporting e-learning activities (such as discussion forums) enable extended discussion to develop themes.
- Sessions are recorded for students to refer back to when developing their assignment
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Approach

In exploring the options for delivering the module in a blended format, a variety of different ideas were considered. The commissioning partner was involved in the discussions and was very keen on the idea of the webinar format for some of the learning. They agreed that a series of themed webinars could replace the direct inputs that were usually delivered on day 2 of the module, thus halving the time that needed to be given to staff to attend the module.

The structure of the two-day taught version was reviewed and four areas that would be most suitable for delivery via webinar were identified. The PowerPoint slides were then revised and a trial-run undertaken with BigBlueButton to become familiar with the software. A little trial and error identified that the slides needed to be converted to pdf files in order for them to display correctly on the BBB screen.

Outcome

The webinar sessions were delivered over a three month period. This was longer than anticipated because of some miscommunication with the partner organisation. Student engagement was high, though full attendance wasn't achieved for any of the sessions. Sessions were timed for 45 minutes each, which were well received by the students attending the webinars. Moodle tracking indicates that the recordings were reviewed by attendees as well as those who had been unable to attend for various reasons. There is some evidence of the efficacy of the discussions coming out in the student assignments that have subsequently been submitted.

There were some issues with audio equipment, and the capacity of the broadband at some locations made it difficult for some students to keep up with the flow of the sessions. The teaching team also found it beneficial to have two members of staff at each session, as this enabled the second person to respond immediately to some of the questions being raised. Staff also logged into the first session 15 minutes early, which meant that the time set for the actual session ran out and the virtual teaching room closed for the staff, but not the students!

Future Developments

This mode of delivery for the practice educator module will continue to be offered to other external partners. It is anticipated that this could be expanded across other CPD offerings in Health, and staff will be supported to familiarise themselves with the software.

Recommendations

- Take the time to consider what topics will be delivered via BigBlueButton and ensure their appropriateness for this form of delivery.
- Be sure to have a practice run to familiarise yourself with the software.
- Allow some additional recording time you to login promptly and complete the session without it cutting off.
- Prepare your slides in advance and convert them to pdf format for uploading.

Profile

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If you would like to contribute a similar case study, please contact Technology Enhanced Learning at TEL@yorks.ac.uk.