

Is there a place for Blackboard Collaborate in blended learning design?

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This workshop attempts to address the problem of limited adoption of webinar and synchronous collaborative learning technologies, such as Blackboard Collaborate, within blended learning. Whilst there are notable benefits for distance learning and professional development programmes, wider adoption of Collaborate on face-to-face taught courses has been limited by a lack of perceived value and technical hurdles (Michael, 2012). Apps such as Skype, FaceTime and Google Hangouts offer a simpler, more familiar interface for staff and students to use, meeting many of the original use cases for Collaborate which are now incorporated into everyday practice (Faulds, 2015). Questions exist as to what the unique, interactive functionality of platforms like Blackboard Collaborate and the blended learning designs they support can bring to campus-based courses, and what approaches we could take to convey these to academic staff to utilise them within their teaching.

Aimed at learning technologists, advisers and lecturers, the workshop will begin with a summary of the ways Blackboard Collaborate has been promoted, used and the challenges we have experienced at the University of York. We would very much welcome delegates with experience using Blackboard Collaborate or equivalent platforms to share a brief case study as part of this session, so that we can compare different approaches to rolling out the technology and identify examples of practice that have worked, or not. Please contact <mailto:matt.cornock@york.ac.uk> or [@mattcornock](#) to contribute.

A structured group discussion will follow exploring potential learning and teaching opportunities with Blackboard Collaborate (examples at <http://bit.ly/eldt-syncdesign>). We hope to answer whether Blackboard Collaborate and similar synchronous collaborative technology has a justifiable place contributing to blended learning and teaching or will forever remain in the distance learning domain. The outputs will be shared online for the wider community.

References

Faulds, D. (2015) Overcoming Geographical Obstacles: The use of Skype in a graduate-level social media and marketing course, *American Journal of Business Education*, vol.8, no.2, pp.79-94.

Michael, K. (2012) Virtual classroom: reflections of online learning, *Campus-Wide Information Systems*, vol.29, no.3, pp.156-165.