

How forums and webinars can engage and support distance students in a dissertation module.

In 2012 David used discussion boards and a webinar system to engage sixty distance students in a dissertation module. The pedagogy was Peer Review - enabling students to review each other's work; to see their and others work from different perspectives; to have an audience in mind when creating their own drafts; to comment on other students drafts; and enabled students to share resources. Socially the technology reduced isolation for distance learners, and created a safe community to ask and answer questions within. The Community of Practice (Wenger, 1999) / Inquiry (Garrison & Anderson, 2003) generated an active learning approach (Revens, 1993) and echoed with the work of Nicol (2010) who stresses that the act of constructing feedback for peers (Peer Review) is the most powerful learning experience. The impact for the tutor is significant as the technology affords amplification; webinar sessions were recorded to be available for review or for non-attendees; discussion board questions addressed the whole cohort. Headline outcome: 57% of the students got a First for their dissertation (<http://tinyurl.com/57firsts>) In 2016 Toni found she has 18 students that required dissertation supervision - double previous cohorts - so Toni was looking for ways of engaging distance learners to receive an equitable experience - to make them feel part of a cohort. Other drivers included the desire to facilitate students learning at times that could accommodate the many students who are in employment. Toni heard of David's approach, had some initial meetings, and was keen to implement the ideas from 2012 in FoE to see if they could transfer to her current cohort. This presentation explores the similarities and differences between David and Toni's experience. Colleagues may be interested to see if the approaches could transfer to their areas and discuss how these may be effected with Toni, David and delegates. References on: <http://dbcallaghan.blogspot.co.uk/2010/02/current-reference-list.html>

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