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Webinar: The recent techno pedagogic development in the teacher education

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Abstract

Webinars demonstrate an awareness of 21st century education have the potential to reach more people in more places help you incorporate social media and technology into your advocacy work. The word webinar is being used today to refer to all kinds of online training and virtual presentations. More and more literacy organizations are adding a component of e-learning to their programs. It's the modern way to learn. Webinars are relatively easy to put on. Some of the language is a bit different from face-to-face environments, so it's helpful to know that instructors, facilitators and teachers are mostly referred to as "presenters" in the webinar environment. Learners and clients are generally called "participants". Both presenters and participants need some technology and computer literacy in order to take part in a webinar. Current teachers and facilitators may require some training before moving into an e-learning environment. Your participants may benefit from an orientation prior to the content to familiarize them with how webinars work. Assuming that both parties have the technology literacy to move forward, here are some ideas on how we can make the most of webinar technology in the institutions. A web-based seminar (webinar) is a conference that is hosted in near real-time over the Internet. Webinars allow groups in remote geographic locations to listen and participate in the same conference regardless of the geographic distance between them. Webinars also have interactive elements such as two-way audio (VoIP) and video that allows the presenters and participants to discuss the information as it is presented. Some common uses for webinars include meetings, remote training and workshops. Webinars can also be recorded for later viewing or distribution, but this removes the interactive elements for later viewers. In this sense, a recorded webinar becomes a webcast - a presentation that includes one-way audio and video without any interaction between speakers and listeners.

Keywords: webinar, e-learning and internet technologies.

1. Introduction

The word webinar is being used today to refer to all kinds of online training and virtual presentations. More and more literacy organizations are adding a component of e-learning to their programs. It's the modern way to learn. Webinars are relatively easy to put on. Some of the language is a bit different from face-to-face environments, so it's helpful to know that instructors, facilitators and teachers are mostly referred to as "presenters" in the webinar environment. Learners and clients are generally called "participants". Both presenters and participants need some technology and computer literacy in order to take part in a webinar. Current teachers and facilitators may require some training before moving into an e-learning environment. Your participants may benefit from an orientation prior to the content to familiarize them with how webinars work. Assuming that both parties have the technology literacy to move forward, here are some ideas on how we can make the most of webinar technology in the institutions.

1.1 Concept of Webinar or web-based seminar

A web-based seminar (webinar) is a conference that is hosted in near real-time over the Internet. Webinars allow groups in remote geographic locations to listen and participate in the same conference regardless of the geographic distance between them. Webinars also have interactive elements such as two-way audio (VoIP) and video that allows the presenters and participants to discuss the information as it is presented.

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1.2 Internet technologies of Webinar

Webinars use Internet technologies, particularly TCP/IP connections. Generally, some software must be downloaded by people who want to join a webinar.

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Before a webinar, participants are usually provided with a means of interfacing via email, common calendars or other collaboration mechanisms in preparation for the event. Some webinars also provide for anonymous participation, while others identify the current speaker by a user ID or code name. Both methods protect the identity of the audience participant.

1.3 Webinars may include extra features, such as:

- Screen sharing, where anything on the presenter's computer display is also displayed on all audience computer displays
- Shared control, where the participants can control the presenter's display screen
- Polling survey capability, which allows presenters to query the audience with multiple choice questions
- Vendors that host webinar services may charge by the minute, by a flat monthly fee, or by the number of audience participants. Significant vendors of Web-based seminars include BigBlueButton, Fuze Meeting, Microsoft Office Live Meeting, Openmeetings, Skype and WebTrain, among many others.
- Web-based seminars may be provided as hosting service, as web-based software or as an appliance, which requires hardware and may also be called in-house or on-premise Web conferencing.

1.4 Webinar Tools Used

There are a variety of different tools that can be used to host a webinar. The webinar host must have an Internet connection, telephone, and webinar software. Participants in a webinar will log on to a predetermined website and log into the webinar session. They may need to call in to the webinar by telephone as well, in order to hear the presenter. The webinar will then take place online with the presenter demonstrating his points on the web page, while the participants listen and watch. Some webinar programs will also allow the attendees to "raise their hands" by clicking a button that will notify the instructor, or they may be able to type their questions into a chat box. Some presenters also hold a verbal question-and-answer session via the conference call during or after the webinar.

1.5 Experience

While a webinar can clearly communicate many technical subjects, this form of communication may come up short when it comes to other matters. A collaboration on the best marketing technique for a new product may lose much of its enthusiasm when the participants cannot all sample the product. A chemistry experiment can be clearly explained in a webinar, but it cannot be performed hands-on by the participants. Pictures and graphics cannot always convey the same information that can be gained from tactile exploration of a subject. Webinars severely limit the ability to practice and refine new skills together or to reinforce the subject with hands-on experience.

Location

Though webinars can bring people together from across the globe, the participants in a webinar are often distracted by other activity in the office or home where they are located. The participants' end of the phone line is often muted so that the background noises from several locations don't disturb the class. The need for this practice, however, clearly demonstrates how common it is for a webinar participant to have to set down their phone and deal with a fellow colleague who has come to their desk with a question. In addition to face-to-face distractions, webinar participants are often writing

and responding to emails as they receive them, with the webinar taking place in the background of their desktop.

1.6 Webinars in Education

The use of webinars and live online sessions for teaching and learning process helps better than any other techno pedagogy. Web-based seminars, or 'webinars' as they are often called are lectures, seminars or meetings conducted online in real-time and recorded for distribution and re-use. A webinar is used to facilitate a gathering of participants in an online meeting room environment. Their use within education is growing due to a number of factors: increasing course sizes, limited teaching spaces and more distance learning provision. Learners are familiar with digital technologies in their everyday lives and are using them to support their studies. In recognition of this, institutions are engaging with digital tools to provide an essential part of learner support. The types of activity that are unique to digital, combined with specific webinar features make this technology a good fit for educational purposes.

1.7 Teaching and Learning

The online nature of webinars and their typical functionality offers a number of opportunities:

- Enhancement of limited teaching time by providing to a wider and more dispersed audience
- A flexible feature set that incorporates mixed media such as images, video, web and audio for use in presentation, discussion or support
- Supports remote teaching sessions
- Improves access to support for staff, students or your learning community via face-to-face settings (e.g. 'drop-in' or scheduled appointments)
- Facilitates individual or group activity.
- Communication with many participants at once - potentially constrained by network availability and bandwidth, but not limited by physical spaces
- Provide briefings where meeting face-to-face is costly in terms of time and travel
- Conferences and events: e.g. the annual JISC Conference - a week of live online sessions and discussion
- Interviewing: for employment or as part of a research project
- Meetings

1.8 Common features

Webinar applications vary in the features they offer, but most facilitate:

- Recording either the entire session including all interactions or just the audio/video, for later distribution and re-use
- Walkthrough tools such as screen-sharing or application sharing allowing the presenter to show-and-tell using any application they view to be shared with participants (this feature may be particularly useful for providing feedback on a task)
- Communication tools e.g. text-chat, audio, voting tools and drawing tools enabling the group to ask questions, get immediate feedback, share comments or send private messages to individual participants
- Video allowing the presenter(s) to be seen via a webcam for live delivery/broadcast
- Pre-recorded video to be shown
- Audio and multiple presenters can take turns using audio and open the audio to participants who wish to contribute.

1.9 Digital Media in Education

Digital Media we run regular classes to support to our widely dispersed audience on a range of digital media-related topics. Each session is run like a seminar with a question and answers session at the end and exploits the opportunities afforded by webinar tools.

The aim of our webinars is to provide interactive support that brings participants together regardless of location. The sessions complement our other service offerings (e.g. email, helpdesk support, and advice guides), because not everybody can attend these sessions, we record them and make them freely available for all.

The live approach provides for a more natural discourse and gives our audience the opportunity to have their questions answered immediately. Webinars normally run with between 30 - 100 participants from around the world - something that would be difficult to do face to face. Based on our experience in running these webinars, we have developed a workflow that enables us to produce high quality sessions.

1.10 Before the webinar usage

- Choose a topic, plan and run date
- Confirm any guest speaker(s) and invite them to a practice run through
- Make a summary to use for publicity and to set expectations;
- Ask people to pre-register for the event
- If referring to third-party material, prepare all URLs ahead of the webinar
- Choose a suitable broadcasting room and equipment. (We use two computers, one microphone and headphones)
- Run at least one practice of the webinar
- Test, practice, note timings and repeat as necessary
- Send all registered members a reminder ahead of each webinar
- Setup the online virtual 'room' in advance
- Create a post-webinar online survey to gather feedback

1.11 During the webinar usage

- Log-on 1 hour before session start (we nearly always get early birds - say "hello" to them)
- 30 minutes before session run brief audio sound checks for those already in the room, repeat every 5 minutes with a 1 minute warning
- At the start, explain house rules e.g. that the session is to be recorded
- Hit 'Record' once the house rules have been explained
- Check email every 5 minutes in case participants are still struggling to log-in
- Add URLs to chat tool as they are mentioned
- Check chat for questions - either answer them as you go or note them for the end question and answer session.
- Promote next upcoming session

1.12 Post webinar usage

1. Email attendees a 'thank you' note with a reminder of survey URL
2. Add links to the online resources used in the webinar to the webinar page
3. Promote your next webinar

1.13 Advantages and significance of Webinar

Despite the above disadvantages of webinars, this means of communication should not be discounted entirely. Webinars are very effective for demonstrating the use of software or other computer applications. When the subject does not require any hands-on experiences for a full understanding of the matter, a webinar can reach participants that may otherwise be unable to participate in a seminar. As technology becomes more advanced, webinars will also be able to more easily overcome some of their current boundaries. For example, a webinar with video conferencing can overcome the limitations of not being able to see your instructor or audience. Webinars can also be effectively used to communicate the core knowledge for a subject, with face-to-face meetings providing a follow-up that allows for more interaction once the group has been brought up to speed on the matter.

1.14 Disadvantages of webinar

One of the disadvantages of webinars is that the instructor is frequently little more than a voice on the other end of the phone line. The instructor cannot gauge the level of understanding among her participants because she cannot see their expressions, and the participants may lose some of the excitement about the subject when they cannot see the instructor's face. Communication in webinars is usually very structured, and though the instructor may answer questions, the participants are not able to talk to one another to brainstorm or share thoughts. There is a level of synergy that can be found within a group who is interacting and sharing in person that is lost over the phone or online.

2. Conclusion

Webinars demonstrate an awareness of 21st century education have the potential to reach more people in more places help you incorporate social media and technology into your advocacy work. Webinars are a great way to share information about in education or something you're passionate about. Similar to a face-to-face conference with a run full of people, a webinar is held over the Internet with a particular group of people to develop the skills in terms of learning experiences especially in the field of teacher educational system.

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