How to… Create Pre-Sessional Material

Below is just an example of how I personally will be delivering my material online. Thought it might provide some use to my fellow colleagues, but it's by no way an instruction, feel free to ignore it!

With the move towards Blended Learning, it's a good idea to promote both **Asynchronous** learning opportunities (i.e. material that student can do in their own time / at their own pace) as well those which are **Synchronous** (i.e. live).

Canvas makes the addition of Asynchronous tasks fairly easy, and so the way I've decided to deliver my material is for students to complete **Pre-Sessional Material** prior to a Live (i.e. Synchronous) Session.

To encourage students to complete the Pre-Sessional Material, and to set their expectations, I included a brief **Talking Head** video of me introducing the format I'll be delivering my material in a given section of a module, and what I want students to do before, and during the live session.

These **Live Sessions** (delivered via MS Teams) will follow the format of:

- A live series of individually-answered questions (via MS Forms) to assess the proportion of students who have completed the Pre-Sessional Material
- Problem-based question(s) which students will attempt in small groups relating to the material (achieved via Breakout rooms in MS Teams, *BigBlueButton* only facilitates ≤8 groups)
- Session where I address Questions submitted by students anonymously prior to the Live Session. This is achieved by posting the link to an *Open Text* quiz on Mentimeter (free online software)
- Live Q&A session for students to address any particular questions that arise in-session

NOTE: It's important **NOT** to just go over the pre-sessional material quickly in the lecture, otherwise students will <u>QUICKLY</u> learn they never have to bother doing the work, if you just cover it anyway

ALSO NOTE: Most students don't like asking questions live in a session as they can't do so anonymously. That's why I use an anonymous Open Text Mentimeter quiz prior to the live session

So prior to these Live Sessions, I ask the students to go through a variety of material to teach them essentially what I'd cover in the lecture.

I try to include **different kinds of information** including (just as examples):

- Sections of Online Textbooks, including the *McGaw & Hill* interactive Textbooks the School's subscribed to
- Relevant (& simple-enough) protocols, or sections of Published papers (Jove would be good, but we don't have a subscription…)
- Videos on Youtube
- Mini recorded lectures covering the most complex concepts of the material, with Quizzes built in (via MS Stream + MS Forms)
- 360º interactive experiences developed through ThingLink (thanks Gillian / Lorraine for this!)

- Online tools which students can use / explore

NOTE: Videos shouldn't be more than 10-15 minutes long (preferably 10), students lose interest unless there's interactive elements embedded after 6-10 minutes.

ALSO NOTE: It's important for videos to have Captions or Transcripts to make videos accessible. [MS Stream](#) processing adds this when you upload a video (as does MediaSite)

I try to make this as **<u>interactive</u>** as possible by using Quizzes in my videos, using '[Click-Reveal](#)' Buttons (i.e. it poses a question, and students click a button to reveal the answer), and getting the students to play-around with online tools you can use in the area (e.g. online primer design etc.).

I also include a Canvas **Discussion Board** for students to post questions relating to my section of the module. Although I don't always get to address every question the students post, they often reply to each other, and creates a greater sense of an online learning community. This is in addition to the Discussion Forum in the MS Teams, as this can be a little difficult to manage resources / follow threads in.

NOTE: Be wary that you don't overload the students with information. They should only be spending the time they would normally be spending prepping for, and attending, the lecture.

I hope this quick example is in some way useful.

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