

Using 2 computers to deliver group activities and provide individual feedback



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Abstract

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1. Background

Reasons (including context) for doing what you have done. Previous experience and knowledge of students, if relevant. Preparation required for staff, students and the environment.

During S1 of 2020, I taught life drawing remotely online instead of live 'in-person'. This was due to social distancing restrictions, restricting close contact and lockdowns. Usually, feedback on life drawing work is given 'over the shoulder.' In the case study I recorded the life drawing model on 15th September in advance of the term. The lists of poses were organised in advance of the session so that the model could be direct and timed for each of these poses. Tasks needed to be given to the whole student body and individual feedback needed to be delivered. I used two Apple Mac computers to teach the students and deliver the session in order to complete my objectives. Some students have completely directly from A Levels and have not been taught how to draw the figure. It is important for students to be able to render the human form as often they will need to depict the human figure within illustration or animation projects or to be able to depict the figure within roughs or thumbnails. It is essential to give personal tailored feedback to students, imminently, to aid their individual learning within these sessions. Students have two, two hour sessions within Semester 1. I also recorded myself doing demos on 15th September. Additional supporting videos were made that had activities, which students were asked to do in between the two sessions to supporting their learning. There is a lot of concepts to teach them with regards to life drawing so extra support sheets and videos were made. Videos were also uploaded onto Panopto before the session but were not shared with the students and were on strict privacy settings.

2. Methodology

Give a description of what you have done and what the results were.

During the online drawing sessions students were asked to use screens as large, as they had access to, to draw from. Students were directed to the life MS Teams channel that the life drawing would be on prior to the session in advance of the session, which would also coincide with their personal timetable. Students were also given a list of equipment that they would need to bring so that they were fully prepared. Students were given warm up activities at the start of the session, which encouraged them to be less precious with their drawings and embrace new ways of depicting the figure. (Often students come from studying a 'Fine Art' A Level where they have hours to depict the figure). The life drawing sessions encourage students to draw within a tighter time frame (poses range from 1 minute studies to 30 minute studies) whilst they learn concepts in proportion and other methods of depicting the figure that they can apply to their studies. I used my larger desktop iMac to deliver the instructions whilst screensharing the mp4/QuickTime 'window' of the recorded video or 'screensharing'. Once students have completed a few studies and they progress onto longer studies of 5 + minutes, they are 'called' individually on Teams (on my smaller laptop: MacBook) so that they could show me their work (by holding their work up to the screen or posting into the chat) so that I could deliver precise feedback to them into how they could improve and also say what they were doing well. If I had taken them out of the session during a video, I made a note of this, and sent them the video link from Panopto after the session for them to complete. During the session, I was also able to show them the demonstrations to verbally explain concepts but having pre-recorded them I was able to 'speed up' the videos and fast-forwarded areas (which would have been slower to show them live). This made the delivery succinct, and I was able to complete the delivery of tasks within the allocated delivery.

3. Issues

How to deliver an essential aspect of drawing with the students during Covid restrictions and lockdowns. Planning for the 'worst case' scenario and gaining approval from by Programme Director and Operations Manager to do this. Being organised. Organising the borrowing of appropriate video recording media, contacting our life drawing model to establish an appropriate recording date (whilst getting BiT approval for him) and learning and trialling my proposed delivery method with Matt Hope and members of my teaching team before the delivery of the sessions took place.

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4. Benefits

What specific strategies or approaches were particularly successful?

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- Having pre-recorded the sessions and using two Macs within the delivery.
- The videos in between the two sessions helped delivery concepts that were needed for students to progress onto the second life drawing stage as we would be applying some of these within the session. It allowed the students to learn more aspects and I was able to impart more knowledge, which was valuable.

5. Evidence of Success (if available)

Impact on the student learning experience? Student perspective

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Students were successfully taught concepts and received individual meaningful feedback. From a teaching perspective I was also able to see them without facemasks, which felt more personal. Students enjoyed getting individual feedback. Despite the size of the cohort (150 students) this method of personal feedback remains an essential part of the course as it is essential that they are recognised as individuals.

6. How Can Other Academics Reproduce This?

How can other staff/trainers/instructors reproduce this technique/method? What is its applicability to other disciplines and contexts? What are the limiting factors?

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Where needed pre-recording videos would be useful to either add to their PowerPoints or within a Teams delivery they could explain concepts, have the videos running (share their 'window' with students) and fast-forward elements.

Having videos in-between sessions to aid and structure the flow of learning was beneficial. Having short tasks within these videos as well was good for the student learning experience.

Life drawing teaching could be delivered like this *if future restrictions continue (no way of knowing). **

Life drawing 'in-between sessions' videos could be reused. The demo videos could be re-used as this is a faster way of delivering the demos than watching me draw in 'real' time.

**However, as the situation improves it would be good to go back to in-person teaching of life drawing. The main advantage of online delivery during times of social distancing/Covid is that it makes it 'safer' for all and individual feedback can be successfully delivered.

Life drawing is potentially a taught aspect, when delivered 'in-person', that acts as a memorable experience for the students. Online delivery prohibits this experience slightly making it a limiting factor (i.e. it is a taught session which may be more enjoyable to do 'in-person').

7. Reflections

Contributed to the success:

- patient and clear approach, which was well structured
- the maximum use of appropriate learning technologies (Learn, QuickTime, QuickTime screen recordings, videoing the footage)
- seeking support prior to term to ensure that the delivery was successful from the start (and there were no technology 'hiccups').
- ensuring that all students had the opportunity to receive individual feedback

If you had to do it all again would you do anything differently?

What recommendations are there for improved practice?

- encourage students to turn up 5 minutes before the session started. This is because during the online sessions students arrived late. Due to them arriving late I needed to send them the links to the video settings they had missed and change the privacy settings for them to view the videos each time. Changing the Panopto settings straight away (via the smaller MacBook) and sending the links directly to them via email would have allowed me to save time after the sessions also.

8. References (if available)

References: Jackie Hatfield (a member of the teaching time). Jackie observed me deliver a life drawing session remotely to students using the method described above. Please ask one of the student representatives for Part A: Graphic Communication and Illustration as they would have received this delivery method. One of their comments is in the supporting material.

Where needed pre-recording videos would be useful to either add to their PowerPoints or within a Teams delivery they could explain concepts, have the videos running (share their 'window' with students) and fast-forward elements. Additionally, it would be recommended to have these shorter videos on Learn (that appear in between taught teaching sessions) not being longer than 15 minutes in length. 6 – 12 minutes in length for these shorter videos that include tasks would be beneficial...as longer videos may appear more intimidating in length for the students to actually watch and complete.