

## **Breakout session on “How best to support diverse students online”**

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### **How to best support diverse students online**

What kind of online teaching/learning are we talking about? Discussions or Q&A will need different approaches to lecture delivery. We need to enabling discussions between students themselves and with the lecturer.

Live sessions have fewer accessibility requirements for the provision of e.g. subtitles, whereas recorded material needs to have them. Live tutorials are OK for example, but recordings of them would need additional support. YouTube can generate automatic subtitles, but they will need to hand corrected. Some people find subtitles distracting, it should be possible to turn them off if desired.

Tutorials can often be dominated by the “louder” students, this can be addressed by the tutor, but this is much easier in person than online. How can someone running an online tutorial handle this situation? Online tutorials seem to be giving different students the chance to contribute, but there are still some who are talkative and others who are quiet.

Students have shown good engagement with the offer of optional informal tutorials, but the most engaged are those who already have a well-established relationship with the tutor. There are lots of possibilities such as polls and breakout rooms to get students involved with sessions, but we’re not sure how well they will work at this stage. How can we encourage the students who don’t want to admit they’re struggling or want to check their understanding to engage?

Students seem to be happier to engage in online text chat rather than face-to-face. Can we use e.g. anonymised chat to enable them to talk without feeling on the spot? This does raise the risk of them saying something inappropriate under cover of anonymity. Students should also be encouraged to ask questions in the way they might before and after the lecture, possibly by having the meeting open for a bit before and afterwards.

Give students specific opportunities to engage without e.g. academics in the room. Include a “tea-break” where the academic leaves while a postgrad stays to let the students ask questions they might be embarrassed about.

Some institutions are having module leaders produce a short intro video to break the ice with the students so they know who will be teaching them before they start.

How to address the needs of different students who e.g. cannot come in for labs? How to prevent them becoming isolated/disconnected? This will require intervention by staff, but first they have to become aware of the issue. They can be grouped together as they have something in common, but this may exacerbate the problem. Regular check-ins by staff are needed to make sure that they are not falling out of touch.

Electronic delivery offers the chance to track attendance in more detail and with a bit less explicit intrusion, so possibly making it easier to identify those who are not turning up.