

Online Teaching via Video-conferencing

Distance teaching and online lessons are a brilliant opportunity to get world class teaching in spite of geographical distances. Teachers and students do not need to take long journeys to get good teaching, saving time and money. The Oulu University of Applied Sciences has co-operated with other schools in the international EU supported project "Vi r Music" through years 2009 -2010. Both teachers and students have gained unique experience through this project.

Distance teaching requires absolutely high quality equipment, which is now available. The compatibility of the equipment at both ends is very important and the presence of an expert technician is also crucial at all times. It is also important that the teacher learns how to communicate in relation to the camera. It is very helpful to be able to use spectrogram-programs during online lessons. For example in this Helsinki session they worked very well.

It is also possible to have multipoint connections between different parties, making it possible to attend and listen to virtual classes actively from several different places at the same time. We have organized several point-to- point and multipoint Lied classes from Oulu, Finland to Sweden and Norway. It is very interesting to be able to follow the teaching of a professor in three different countries. We have had international Lied-classes by Prof. Hartmut Höll and Prof. Monica Groop in which distance teaching, learning and communication have worked very well.

The delay in the connection, caused by the load on the broadband and the compatibility of the equipment can be a problem, but one can get used to it.

How can a teacher deliver pedagogical ideas effectively? More planning is required. Teacher must observe himself how to teach pedagogically beneficially. The teacher should think in advance about how do I teach? How do I react? What things are essential in teaching? What things are most important issues to talk about?

Because physical contact is impossible, it requires good imagination on how to show things, guide the student and come up with new methods. The teacher must create new electronic material which develops skills.

In my opinion online lessons are not suitable for a beginning student, because the very important personal contact is missing. Online lessons would rather be more suitable for advanced students, who need more or less guidance for example in pronunciation, musical- and interpretational issues and in other consultative questions. During this session it is also very useful for the regular teacher to meet face to face and exchange thoughts with a colleague.

All in all, distance teaching and online lessons will not replace personal contact for regular teaching and basic technical training. Therefore we need absolutely teachers' ears and the direct relationship.

I would like to thank Professor Norma Enns and EVTA for the possibility of this online lesson for our students. I believe that this was useful also for all participants of the Helsinki Session of the EVTA project.

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