

Higher Education: More than a Degree

Academic Communities

Case study 5: Using Miro as a Platform for Student Collaboration via Online Teaching

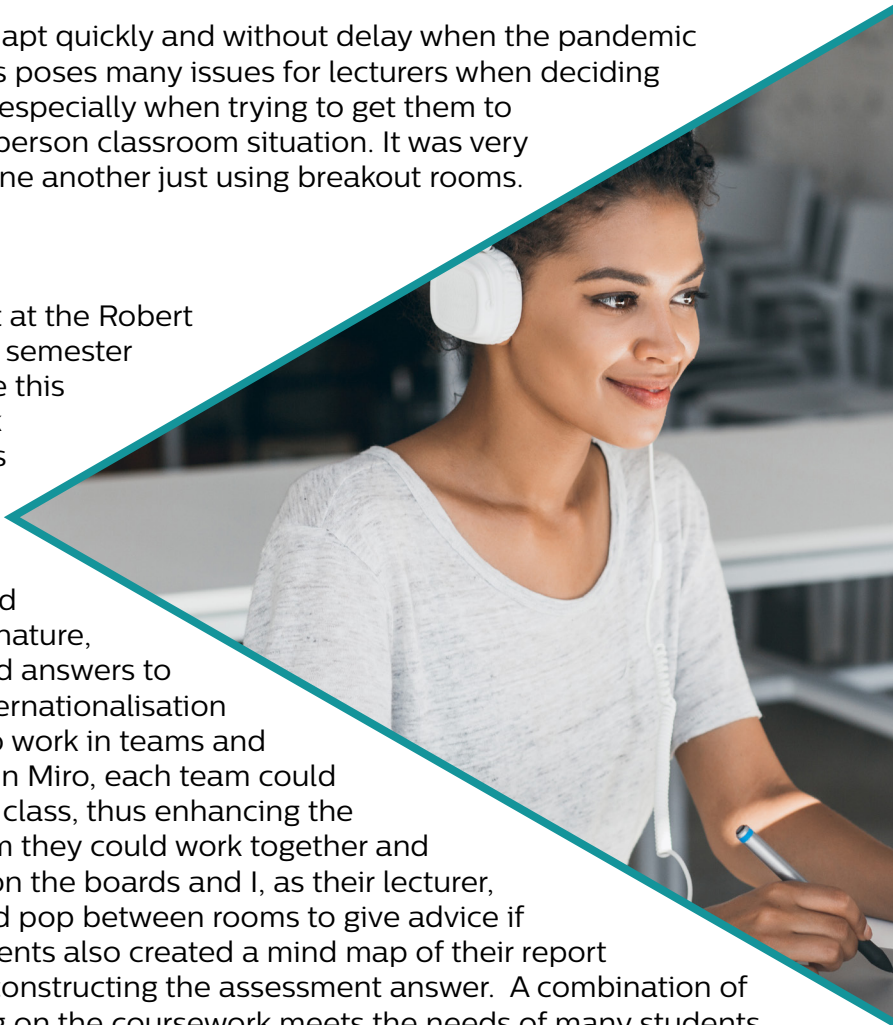
Pauline A M Bremner, Teaching Excellence Fellow, School of Creative and Cultural Business, Robert Gordon University

What was the issue?

Teaching in all universities was forced to adapt quickly and without delay when the pandemic struck in 2020 and continues into 2021. This poses many issues for lecturers when deciding what platform is best to use with students, especially when trying to get them to collaborate as they would do during an in-person classroom situation. It was very hard to motivate students to engage with one another just using breakout rooms.

How was it solved?

Students on the MSc Fashion Management at the Robert Gordon University were taught virtually this semester and the Miro platform was used to enhance this experience during tutorials and coursework development. The Miro online platform was deemed more intuitive, user-friendly and likens to a situation similar to that in the physical classroom, whereby flipcharts are often used to garner ideas and encourage debate. Being asynchronous in nature, it allowed for students to propose ideas and answers to tutorial questions posed on the topic of internationalisation in Fashion Management. It allowed them to work in teams and draw a fictitious supply chain which, when in Miro, each team could view each other's work as they would do in class, thus enhancing the experience. Additionally, in a breakout room they could work together and populate answers in prearranged 'spaces' on the boards and I, as their lecturer, could check how a team was getting on and pop between rooms to give advice if students were not understanding. The students also created a mind map of their report which gave them a guide to work to when constructing the assessment answer. A combination of visuals such as a mind map and a recording on the coursework meets the needs of many students.



Although students initially found Miro to be a challenge, they soon adapted to it, preferring to use it as it gave an online session value, clarity and more importantly something they could refer back to when they needed a reference point when completing coursework.

What comes next?

Moving into next academic year having adopted Miro, it will make the hybrid classes much more structured, collaborative and create a digital community, giving a deeper and more consistent learning experience. It is important though to develop some recorded tutorials for students whereby they need to engage with Miro in advance, getting into the platform and generally being curious in nature to see how it works. I plan to do some introductory sessions before teaching starts, engaging the cohort online first to get them onto the board; as teaching will be in-person and online at the same time, this will allow the online-only students to feel more integrated with the class and activities at the time.



Find out more

This case study is one of 13 published as part of the Student-led Project from the Resilient Learning Communities Enhancement Theme.

The project in year 1 explored issues and themes relevant to how higher education institutions and students' associations/unions have recreated student communities in an online environment during the COVID-19 pandemic, what enablers and barriers this has created, and provides the opportunity to showcase and share examples of practice.

You can find further case studies and resources on the [Enhancement Themes website](#).

