

”Nobody dares to be silent...”

Student and Teacher Perceptions on Learning Languages through Web Conferencing

**Focus on Adobe Connect Breakout
Rooms**

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Overview

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Research question

How does the AC breakout room function support or challenge language learning from the teacher's and students' perspectives?

Method

Teacher description of her experiences as a user of the AC group function between 2008-2014: its pros and cons.

29 students replied to an e-questionnaire in the virtual learning environment Optima.



Source: Infonative Solutions

Adobe Connect

A web-conferencing tool that enables synchronous communication by

- audio
- video
- text chat
- breakout rooms
- white board collaboration
- polling
- desktop or application sharing

4. Adobe Connect breakout room in teaching



Teacher perceptions – advantages of the AC breakouts



- offers a tool for versatile language activities
- fast division into groups
- varying group compositions
- easier to ask for assistance
- personal instruction
- no background noise

Student perceptions – advantages advantages of the AC breakouts



- working in breakouts enhances language learning
- students are involved and committed to participating
- peer assistance
- learning together is fun
- learners of different levels support each other

Student perceptions – advantages advantages of the AC breakouts



- changing speaking partners
- more relaxed to communicate online
- no background noise, easier to concentrate

How does the AC breakout function serve the purpose of language learning? What are its pros and cons?

“It serves the language learning purpose well since in breakouts we get to talk a lot. Also listening practices (those played by the teacher) promote learning. Before this experience, I wouldn’t have thought that this method can be applied to language learning in such an effective and versatile way.” [translated from Finnish]

”Pluses: It’s possible to work in a small group, so everyone gets to talk. You’re obliged to learn 😊. The minuses are the situations when someone’s microphone is not working (often the fault is not in the microphone but the system is somehow out of order).”

Challenges of the breakout room function

Teacher perceptions



- audio and equipment-related
- disconnections
- absence of non-verbal feedback
- time lags in transitions between the main room and breakouts
- time-consuming: requires careful planning beforehand

Challenges of the breakout room function

Student perceptions

- audio problems
- disconnections
- inadequate user know-how
- challenging because you cannot see the speaking partner
- hectic pace, requires concentration



Source:http://i.istockimg.com/file_thumbview_approve/4921290/5/stock-photo-4921290-frustration.jpg

Summary

How does the AC breakout room function support language learning?

- engages everyone in taking part in activities
- enhances group work skills: varying group composition, peer support



Source: <http://www.istockphoto.com/stock-photos>

Summary

How does the AC breakout room function challenge language learning?

- technical problems distract
- lack of face-to-face communication

Conclusion

E-learning service providers should adopt a systematic approach to managing challenges:

- guidance on the selection and use of appropriate ICT tools
- real-time technical support