



# Wimba Live Classroom: Virtual Connections

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## Background

- Several programs on Virginia Commonwealth University's Medical Campus have distance education programs.
- As part of the orientation to these programs faculty from these departments make arrangements for library instruction which can last from as much as 2 hours to as little as 50 minutes.
- We usually never see these students in person again.

# Objective

- To create a learning environment that was both asynchronous as well synchronous for those students enrolled in distance education programs at Virginia Commonwealth University.
- To offer an alternative to live open workshops.

# Methods

- Librarians at Tompkins McCaw Library first began by developing a course within the university's Blackboard course management software system.
- This course was self-paced and walked students from beginning their research to evaluating health-related websites to providing correct citations to their references.

## Methods

- While the Blackboard course offered students asynchronous, self-paced learning, we decided to take this a step further and offer virtual classes using the Horizon Wimba Live Classroom that is part of Virginia Commonwealth University's Blackboard software.

### **What is the Wimba Live Classroom and What does it allow us to do?**

- Wimba is an online, interactive meeting tool
- Audio Lectures
- Push Content
- Synchronous Chat
- Archive Instruction Sessions

## Approach

- Classes chosen (i.e. PubMed, CINAHL, etc.)
- Registrants sent in-depth instructions on how to configure their computer for the class
- Two librarians conduct the class; one as instructor and one as a “virtual floater”
- In-depth advertising

## Assessment/Feedback

- SurveyMonkey.com survey developed
- iPod shuffle offered as incentive to complete survey
- 100% survey completion
- 81.8% respondents stated session “exceeded expectations/extremely relevant”
- 95.2% would choose to take another virtual class

## **Assessment/Feedback**

- 81.8% felt comfortable in configuring and using their computer for the classes
- 86.4% reported that this was a convenient method of taking classes
- 90.9% felt that the format/delivery of the class content was positive

## **Advantages of using Wimba Live Classroom for instruction**

- Convenience
- VCU Affiliates have free access to Blackboard
- All sessions are archived
- Saves distance education students time & money
- “Tag-Team” librarian approach
- Class size – No boundaries
- Allows multi-tasking by end user
- Scheduling time/place flexible (i.e. nights/weekends)

## Challenges of using Wimba Live Classroom for instruction

- End user computer skills
- End user Internet connection
- Types of microphones for best sound quality
- Proper advertisement
- Ensuring user questions/problems were addressed promptly
- Getting users to interact and ask questions
- Lack of actual face to face user expressions

## Demonstration

- <http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/watch/cjhjIDVTK>





# The Future

- Theme-based classes such as those on health disparities and evidence-based practices
- Virtual office hours that will allow librarians to set up online consultations with distance education students