

BEST PRACTICE KARIN VENETIS

How to activate large student groups online, using Zoom Webinar?

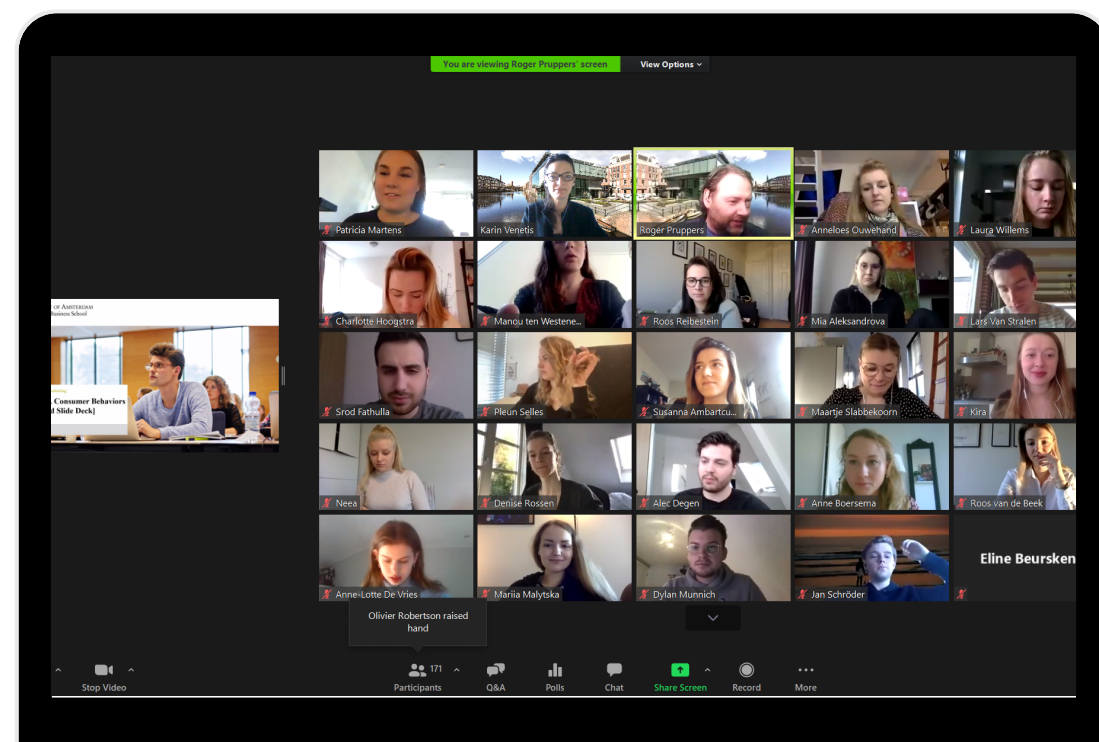


Your course is part of the theories of ... courses of the MScBA, which means that there are only big lectures and no workgroups, correct?

Yes, indeed. Even before covid stimulating and activating students provided a challenge as the groups were getting larger and larger. Therefore we already introduced some activation principles, which seem to be working even better in an online setting.

You are working with the Zoom webinar technology. How is that working out for you?

Webinar is for large groups from 300+. In the previous semester we had more than 300 students in our course and we had to switch overnight to this platform. The main downside is that it does not have the option of breakout rooms – which was originally part of our course design. The main upside is that it has several communication options with the students, which is great to manage a group of this size. It has the chat function, like the normal Zoom and it has a Q&A option, where students can pose questions and the answers are visible to all (if you want to). We use the chat for the content discussion during the lecture, and the Q&A box for everything else. Our TA answers most questions in the Q&A box, so we have no worries about all these little things like ‘I cannot see the grade of my Perusall assignment’, ‘do we need to study model x for the exam?’ etc.



What format do you use online if you do not have workgroups?

We have two ‘lecture’ sessions per week. We, Roger Pruppers and I, try to follow a similar structure as if we had workgroups: we have one Q&A session about all the materials, and the second meeting is used to discuss and activate that knowledge. We only discuss articles that student have to prepare beforehand by using the annotation tool Perusall and by watching the knowledge clips that we make.

How do you know what questions to discuss in your Q&A and discussion sessions?

We use several techniques to get an idea of where the students stand regarding the materials and what they consider to be difficult:

- The articles that are prepared through the **Perusall app** on Canvas (2 of the 4 articles), have been discussed thoroughly online by the students. We are very impressed by the depth of the discussions that are raised there and the quality of the questions that they pose and answer for each other. I usually put the most complex articles in the Perusall app to have them help each other to make sense of it. Perusall provides the lecturer with a good overview of the parts that raised the most questions or are not clear to the students.
- We use **simple quizzes** on canvas, of about 6 -10 MC questions that students have to answer each week. The quizzes are formative (so no grading) but mandatory. They give a lot of information on how well students understood/master the materials for that week and give us a good idea what parts to focus on.
- For the second session we ask students to do the same **quiz** again, but now in their (mid-term) **teams** of 5 students. There is always a huge improvement from the individual scores to the team outcomes of the same questions. We also ask in the team quiz to a) give examples of some of the phenomena discussed in that week and 2) to write down the topics that they had most discussion about or raised more questions than they could answer in the team. This gives ample input to use for the discussion session.
- We also use reading questions that tie the different articles together and address the main points of the week. These will be discussed in the discussion session and they can prepare them individually.

How do you make sure that the students ask questions and participate during the sessions?

We use several techniques online:

- In webinar you have the ‘**attendees**’, which is the biggest group, and ‘**panelists**’ who can open their camera and can be seen by all. We always push the students to be promoted to panelist (by the TA) so we have faces and names to talk to and ask questions directly to. You can see who is more involved and call their names. Usually the panelists are more active anyway.
- You can also use **polls** in webinar to see how most students are doing on a subject. To raise a discussion it is good to present examples of certain phenomena and then ask whether students think it is a good example of that phenomenon. You only need to define the answer categories of ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘I don’t know’ once and you can keep reusing this same poll question over and over. Examples always create good discussions, particularly if they are ‘borderline’ ones.
- We **discuss examples** that they gave in the (team)quizzes and we can call a team number if necessary. Usually they do respond to their own ideas.