





Comparing in place and online learning sessions



	Learning in place  	Learning online  
The learning experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be experienced by students as more responsive, (inter)personal and engaging• Can be experienced by students as less explicit, reflective, convenient	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can be experienced by students as more explicit, reflective, convenient• Can be experienced by students as less responsive, (inter)personal and engaging
Pace and presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presence can be established naturally and rapidly• Pace is likely to be faster, more natural and responsive• Some students may find the pace and social demands of the face-to-face classroom difficult• Other students may trust the classroom process due to familiarity and the presence of non-verbal cues• Teacher presence may depend on where students are sitting, particularly in a large room	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presence must be established intentionally• Cameras on/off may profoundly impact on the sense students have of each other's presence; however this must be negotiated sensitively• Pace is likely to be slower, with activities and transitions more carefully planned• Some students may participate more easily when they have time to respond, and bodily and social cues are not foregrounded• Other students may find it harder to trust the classroom process due to unfamiliarity, uncertainty about roles and the lack of non-verbal cues• All students have a similar experience of teacher presence.
Classroom culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expectation may be that a member of teaching staff will control the classroom space and what happens there• Expectations about classroom space and culture may be shaped by school experiences, popular representations of HE• Room design and configuration strongly shape classroom expectation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom rules, roles and norms need to be more explicitly negotiated• Expectations about classroom culture including role of teaching staff may be more flexible and open to change• Expectations about online classroom culture may be lacking, or may come from other online experiences (not necessarily in education eg social media)
Layout and facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wide variety of specialist spaces available eg labs, studios, lecture halls, tutorial and seminar rooms• May be less flexible in use due to fixed furniture and configurations• Physical layout of the class shapes learning and teaching including rules, roles, group dynamics• Positions of learners within classroom can influence how much attention they get and give• Students all occupy the same space equitably (they may occupy it differently eg with different cultural experiences and sensory/accessibility needs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Platforms tend to be similar though they may offer different functions and user experiences• More flexible in use, but less well adapted for specialist session types and activities• Explaining tools and functions, enabling learners to change screen layout, and sharing control of mic/screen all help to shape expectations• Equity and privacy concerns around the use of private spaces and devices to participate• All students occupy the same space (different qualities of device, bandwidth etc may influence their experience and other participants' experiences of them)
Active engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Polling, quizzing and other micro-tasks may be used to elicit and check engagement; body language and eye contact may help as well• Student contributions can be elicited naturally in the flow of the session; conversation may flow among students more easily• Room layout and acoustics may work against students contributing: students may need a mic to speak• Room layout may make it harder for students to lead activities• Some students may dislike contributing in public	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Verbal contributions can be elicited directly or indirectly; students may need permission to take control of the mic• Student engagement can be elicited and checked using chat contributions, emojis, poll responses. If cameras are on, facial cues and gestures may indicate engagement• Students can easily share their screens and lead class activities• Some evidence educators can ensure more equitable contributions, with careful monitoring• Some students may choose not to turn their cameras on; some students may be concerned about their words and/or image being recorded or captured
Group work	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to organise students into pairs/small groups on the fly, and to transition into plenary activities including feedback• Students are likely to self-organise, eg into existing friendship/nationality groups, which may not create the most dynamic learning• May be difficult to organise students into larger breakout groups depending on layout and acoustics	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to organise students into groups of different sizes and to have considerable control over group composition• However, group work takes planning and time may be lost transitioning into and out of breakout rooms
Notes and records	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sessions may be recorded, depending on facilities in the room, quality of audio etc• Students can relatively easily take their own notes using a laptop/tablet, audio recorder etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students have a variety of options for recording sessions eg audio/video recordings, chat window, whiteboard• It may be difficult for students with just one screen to take simultaneous notes while participating in a live class

