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Promoting student-teacher interaction during online workshops using real-time collaboration functions

For students in the field of media technology, it is necessary to learn certain software as well as design methods to be able to test their knowledge in their field. A common method of teaching software in combination with design methods is to use workshops where theory can meet practice by active learning. While the workshop format is nothing new the current COVID-19 pandemic has pushed teachers who usually teach in classrooms to bring their workshops to a distance format. While a lot of research focus to identify the problems with distance learning, this research focuses on exploring possible advantages of conducting software workshops online by combining screen sharing through Zoom and by using Adobe XD's built-in cloud-based real-time collaboration function. The aim is to strengthen the sense of social presence as well as to give teachers insight into how students take on assignments during online workshops by using a shared project. This allows the teacher and students to interact more multimodally with each other in contrast to only interacting through Zoom. We conducted a pilot study consisting of a workshop where some of the students participated by interacting by Zoom only and the rest of the students also joined a shared Adobe XD project. The preliminary results show advantages concerning the teacher's perspective and can also help to plan a more comprehensive empirical study for evaluating the effect of the proposed method on the learning experience for the students. Suggestions to resolve issues found with the method in relation to workshop planning, evaluation method, and technical aspects are made. Finally, the results from a complimentary survey also suggest that the method could affect the students learning experience.