

Virtual Classroom technologies

THE CHANGING TECH AND TOOLS LANDSCAPE

From chat tools to learning suites

Comparing tools can be tricky as they're designed with different focuses in mind. However, virtual facilitated learning can be delivered through many tools if you learn the features and take the right approach. At one end of the spectrum, tools designed for video chat and collaboration offer enough features to present and manage discussion, and at the other end dedicated learning tools offer classroom-specific features.

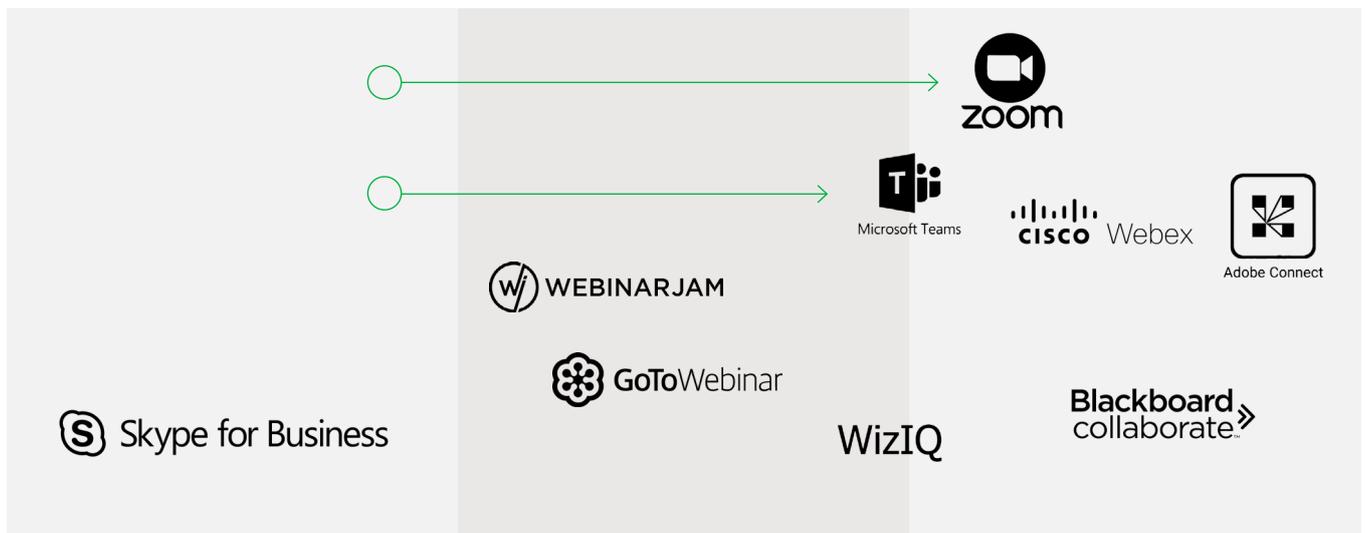
Learning-specific platforms such as Cisco's Webex Training and Adobe Connect for Learning have a full suite of features including advanced interaction and breakout rooms, which allow you to split learners into small groups for activities and discussions. Microsoft Teams traditionally sat in the 'chat and collaboration' space but have recently released a number of functional upgrades which place it ever closer to the more specialised learning tools. We see Teams as a core challenger to the dedicated learning suites.

Dedicated webinar software like WebinarJam offer more learner interaction and a smoother experience but most don't offer breakout rooms, with Zoom being an exception.

Video chat and collaboration

Full webinar features

Dedicated learning tools



Often feature:

- Video and text chat
- Screen-sharing
- Recording
- Whiteboards

Often feature:

- Polls and surveys
- Annotations
- Raise hands and reactions

Often feature:

- Advanced interactions
- Breakout rooms
- LMS/VLE integration
- Quizzes

Basic built-in features

While dedicated learning tools feature integration with learning management systems (LMS) and learning-focused admin features, other tools still deliver features useful for learning. The table below shows a comparison of built-in features in some common tools. Consider that tools can often be used in conjunction with other software to extend the experience. For example, a quiz could be delivered via a link supplied in the chat and used as an activity. Some such as Adobe Connect can be extended with plugins for activities such as quizzes, and Microsoft Teams has an Apps function, allowing for integration with other tools. Different tools implement features in different ways and add new features over time, so take care to familiarise yourself with the products before choosing a tool.

	Video	Text chat	Breakout rooms	Raise hand/reactions	Whiteboard	Annotations	Polls/surveys	Quizzes	Recording
Microsoft Teams	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓
Skype for Business	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
GoToWebinar	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
WebinarJam	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	Via YouTube
Zoom	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Blackboard Collaborate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cisco Webex Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Adobe Connect for Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
NewRow	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
WizIQ	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Vedamo VC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓