



Lecture Capture via Wimba Classroom at California State University, Chico

"We can't add more seats by expanding classrooms, but what we can do is offer the same class to more students if we offer the same class online synchronously and later on as an archive."

-Laura Sederberg, Technology and Learning Program Manager, CSU, Chico

For years, instructors at California State University, Chico have taught classes that meet face-to-face but simultaneously have students logged in remotely via Wimba Classroom. These remote students are able to hear and see the face-to-face teacher via audio and video while a student assistant monitors the online learners, record the live class, and even passes their questions along to the instructor, thereby creating a full classroom experience for both the in-person and the remote students – while also providing a unique way to capture lectures via Wimba Classroom.

But for Chico, innovation like this is nothing new.

Located in northern California with more than 1,000 faculty supporting 16,000 students, CSU, Chico is one the nation's most technically savvy institutions. Since it started offering distance education classes via satellite in 1975 – usually to reach its many graduate students who juggle school, work, and home life – universities within the CSU system and throughout the country have regarded Chico as an innovator. For

example, instructional designers and instructors at CSU, Chico created the first regularly used rubric which measures the effectiveness of online instruction.

When it comes to capturing the activities that occur in a face-to-face class, most schools typically rely on hardware-based lecture capture systems. These systems usually require a significant hardware investment and require an advanced in-class set-up in order to record the instructor's voice and movements while also capturing the visual materials the lecturer presents to the class. Most importantly, these lecture capture systems don't allow students to login remotely.

But now, schools like Chico which regularly utilize virtual classrooms can not only capture all in-class activities for later viewing, they can also stream these classes live in order to make them available to remote students – thus expanding the school's enrollment capabilities by increasing the number of students who can take (and review) any particular class.



Chico Distance & Online Education

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WIMBA PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- Wimba Classroom
- Wimba Voice

KEY BENEFITS

- Capture all in-class activities for remote students and later review
- Expand enrollment by enabling students to attend a live class in-person or online
- Create sense of campus community for remote students

Laura Sederberg

Technology and Learning Program Manager, CSU, Chico





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WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

"With Wimba Classroom, our remote students feel they're more connected to Chico because where we live in northern California the connectivity isn't great and it's very mountainous. They feel they're part of the campus."

-Ann Steckel, TLP Instructional Technology Consultant, CSU, Chico

"We can't add more seats by expanding classrooms, but what we can do is offer the same class to more students if we offer the same class to more students if we offer the same class online synchronously and later on as an archive," says Laura Sederberg, Technology and Learning Program Manager at CSU, Chico.

Sederberg, Scott Kodai, Manager of Distributed Learning, and Ann Steckel, TLP Instructional Technology Consultant, help lead the learning technology team at Chico and are instrumental for creating this way of capturing lectures.

How lecture capture via Wimba works:

While some students are seated in a physical classroom, other students are logged in remotely via Wimba Classroom and see the instructor via a television-quality video camera that is set up in the classroom. Interestingly, because Wimba Classroom supports a wide variety of video inputs, these classes could even be filmed by a simple webcam or digital video camera. During class, these online students hear and see the lecturer as well as all visual materials which get displayed through the Wimba's whiteboard.

In addition to the instructor, there's also a student assistant who sits at the head of the classroom and acts as the eyes and ears of the instructor. The assistant monitors Wimba Classroom and even relays online questions to the instructor.

"Our instructors are a little afraid that the in-class assistants will not be with them," says Steckel with a laugh when asked if her faculty mind having another person at the head of the class. "They love having them in there. We try to make the student assistant in the classroom as low-key as possible. We have them in there to facilitate, not to teach, and our professors really seem to like it."

This in-class assistant also archives the class so both the face-to-face and remote students can review the class when studying for exams. Archives are useful for Chico's adult students who travel frequently for their jobs and cannot attend the classes when they occur live.

CSU, Chico typically offers 16-26 of these hybrid courses each semester. The classes run the gamut of subject matters, covering classes such as:

- Principles of Language
- International Relations
- World Religions
- Social Research Methods
- Programming Languages
- U.S. in the Age of World Wars
- Survey of Computer Security

"What's nice is that Wimba Classroom serves all disciplines," says Sederberg.

Sederberg, Steckel, and Kodai believe that Wimba's integration with Blackboard Vista makes this very easy for all their faculty to use. Because Wimba Classroom (and Wimba Voice) can be accessed and configured from within the familiar Vista interface via Blackboard PowerLinks, faculty and students have a single point of access for all online materials. Faculty can even check all chat logs and attendance records of students who joined class via Wimba Classroom.

Since some of the university's classrooms have as few as 24 seats, the team at Chico is always trying to devise new ways to modernize to accommodate the students of the future. And they're also analyzing how they can better design their courses to accommodate students in and out of the classroom. In fact, many faculty today also regularly offer their office hours live online.



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"Students feel more connected to their classes because they can connect via multi-way audio and multi-way video," says Steckel. "They feel they're more connected to Chico because where we live in northern California the connectivity isn't great and it's very mountainous. They feel they're part of the campus."

As students continue to need to be engaged online, the education community can rest assured that Chico will continue to pave the way. After all, as the folks at Chico know, online learning has lost its novelty. It is becoming more mainstreamed. "Distance education is no longer only a niche, but is becoming a selected choice of one of three distributed models for delivering instruction," adds Sederberg.

About Wimba

Wimba develops web-based collaboration software designed for online education, language learning and live interactive communications. Our collaborative applications enable learning professionals to fully embrace the new wave of teaching and learning opportunities afforded by the Internet; regardless of geographic location, bandwidth or operating system. Our classroom collaboration solutions enable educators to conduct live, online classes, meetings, office hours and other collaborations, and our language learning tools add oral interaction directly into course content, webpages, study groups and assessments. With simplicity and power, Wimba adds new dimensions to online, accessible education, enhancing the learning experience for both students and instructors.

