

Reflections on Learning and Teaching in the Autumn term 2021

Tuesday 14th December, online, 2-3.30pm

Pre-session responses

In the sign up form, participants were asked to share their views on the key questions for discussion in the session. You can see the collated responses below:

- [What have your experiences of learning and teaching been like this term?](#)
- [How have experiences gained during the remote teaching phases of the Pandemic informed approaches?](#)
- [What has worked well?](#)
- [What has been challenging?](#)
- [What next?](#)

What have your experiences of learning and teaching been like this term?

1. Very busy! Second year students have needed more support with academic skills than expected. Third year students have mostly been very keen for in person teaching.
2. Variable. Attendance at larger classes has been low, but engagement from those that do turn up (in large and small classes) has been excellent.
3. Blended learning (e.g. video based lectures followed by face to face Q/A sessions and group-based lab practicals)
4. Positive - the students seem to have enjoyed being back on campus
5. In the department of Biology, we adopted a hybrid approach to teaching, with lectures being mostly online, and workshops, tutorials and practicals occurring face to face. I think this went well but some students would prefer more face to face contact time. Workshops are a good use of in person contact, and generally, feedback was positive. However, I think we need to share good practice to use of format of workshops which engage students and link well to the online lecture content.
6. almost back to normal so I really enjoyed it! I personally did not like teaching online
7. Going back to f2f teaching with face covering was rather challenging, especially for teaching a language for beginner level students. I also have a online group which requires different preparations and organisation in class. I have enjoyed so far but overall, I have been working hard as ever.
8. Really enjoyed going back to face to face teaching
9. Lovely to have students back f2f. But the workload to repair damaged learning is huge
10. It was good to get in front of students again, but awkward with wearing a mask while presenting. I spoke to students who said they needed to attend physical lectures to feel motivated to learn and really appreciated that teaching was mostly face to face.
11. Student attendance (and overall engagement) was lower than usual. Late arrivals due to Covid disruption was also disruptive to learning and teaching, unfortunately. Masks inhibited communication during seminars. Otherwise, business as normal.
12. Quality is enormously variable across modules. Individual staff need supporting in different and varying ways.
13. Technical requirements for recording are still demanding, and many of my first year students have described difficulties navigating the online-in person blend of teaching content. The

return towards in-person delivery has in some parts increased the needs of many new students for guidance and support.

14. Broadly positive. We have been working almost as 'normal', with mask-wearing and distancing when possible.
15. I have experienced a lot of blended and hybrid online teaching
16. It's been lovely getting back to teaching in-person.
17. Very difficult to secure attendance in F2F classes from postgraduate taught students - possibly related to accommodation issues
18. Use of Google Workspace capabilities to enhance student engagement in in-person teaching
19. Mostly FfF, but with some online small group teaching

How have experiences gained during the remote teaching phases of the Pandemic informed approaches?

1. The VLE layout on the module I convene reflects learning from the pandemic. It is more appealing, easier to navigate, and places the VLE more centrally in student's learning. Asynchronous tools such as padlets have continued to be useful, and I've used new-to-me tools such as Jamboard this term, having gained a better understanding of what they could offer during the remote teaching phase.
2. There are more resources and direction available to students who (for whatever reason) cannot attend, which means they can make the most of their independent study time. A lot of students really appreciate recorded resources supported by active learning. We have retained the ability to ask questions anonymously. Mentimeter is awesome.
3. We feel that a blended approach that combine the strength of online and face-to-face would be the future of higher education.
4. Zoom is useful as an additional resource (as well as a replacement when needed)
5. I was on maternity leave for the first year of the pandemic so I have no experience in delivering online teaching so this has been a steep learning curve!
6. I was on maternity leave for the majority of the remote teaching phase so this has been a steep learning curve. As a department, I think we have learnt a lot and improved our online provision. Going forward, this is beneficial to many students and a good way to improve the accessibility of our teaching. It has also encouraged us to think better about improving the quality and interactivity of our face to face teaching time.
7. I found it really difficult to manage from a workload perspective and the teaching is completely different so it took a lot of time to adapt all the material for each class but we had the same teaching as before under the assumption that it is a very easy change.
8. More flipped learning
9. Ways of organisation of materials on VLE and the use of technology I learnt in the remote learning phase has changed my organisation and preparation for my f2f and current online teaching. I feel online teaching has a great potential and my online lessons are more effective than last year, incorporating more interaction among students as I felt a lack of interaction was an issue last year. This also made me realise the importance of interaction and pair/group work among students in f2f classes as well.
10. I feel more confident with online tools such as Zoom and Mentimeter
11. I was on maternity leave for the last academic year so this has been a steep learning curve for me. In general, staff are more comfortable with delivery teaching online and have listened to feedback on how best to deliver this (for example, generating short prerecorded videos rather than 50 minute lectures).
12. Lots of Covid keeps

13. I know many tutors who have adopted a flipped approach, using resources created over lockdown. And students are now taking to flipped learning better, too, coming prepared compared to before. Some tutors say they find they rush through material in lectures, but with the flipped approach, they can slow down, knowing they can refer students to review content available.
14. Online learning has introduced considerable flexibility for both staff and students. However it brought a loss of the sense of community - and the main takeaway from this has been that students and staff both prefer face to face teaching.
15. Use of pre-recorded lectures is not necessarily an inferior choice. Online practicals almost always are though.
16. Much of the material is higher quality and more accessible, especially for international students, but we still need to work on integration.
17. That's been the surprise because I was expecting learning experiences to be more blended this term, but I haven't seen that remote teaching experience informing approaches. During lockdown I found that small group work could be effective online via Zoom, but it wasn't really considered an option this term because students were able to attend sessions. I thought the option of recorded lectures made sense and I would have liked the option to use lecture slots for discussions and questions based on the students viewing of the recorded lecture.
18. (On-demand / asynchronous) remote teaching takes a *lot* more time to do, and still isn't as effective as being there in person. However, it's nice to be able to add asides, examples, and other things to videos which would otherwise be lost if lecture time was getting tight.
19. Accessibility improvements are to some extent embedded (subtitling etc).
20. Google Workspace tools allow me to work towards a seamlessly engaging learning experience for students because of the minimization of delays thanks to the integration offered
21. Yes, they encouraged me to provide more resources for online learning

What has worked well?

1. Having a broader range of pedagogical tools as a result of pandemic learning.
2. Student support, anonymous question answering, workshop teaching and learning.
3. "Recorded videos worked well for students as students can learn at their own pace and convenience.
4. 24 hours online exam also worked well."
5. Returning to a community environment on campus
6. Moving lectures online from an accessibility perspective
7. Getting students back together in small group sessions.
8. To continue to have classes instead of just asynchronous work
9. Use of technology such as Mentimeter, Xerte, Panopto recordings etc and having increased amount of student interaction in class.
10. A mixture of face to face and online teaching
11. Practical and workshops. Students have enjoyed getting back into the lab and working in groups to complete in-person activities.
12. Moving lab briefings online
13. Having online resources already available has led to flexibility in delivery.
14. Resources such as on demand videos that were created for online teaching were provided to students this term, as an add-on to face to face teaching, or the primary resource for online learners. This seems to have been appreciated.
15. In-person practicals and remote lectures seem to be a decent mix.

16. The seminars and practicals have worked well for the most part, with good attendance and engagement. Students have clearly enjoyed being back together in groups and it's important to acknowledge the positive impact of physical movement, even if it's just walking to a seminar room.
17. The support of the IT department of City college
18. Having the on-demand videos from last year has been brilliant to reuse this year for students not able to make it to lectures for any reason. They are far better resource in terms of quality than the automatic lecture capture.
19. Recorded lectures
20. Firstly, Google Slides enables the fluid transition from a slide to a video, and back. Secondly, there are some amazing add-ons, such as Slido. Lastly, and most importantly, Google Space allows students not only to collaborate real time on projects in class, but also to work efficiently and effectively on homework assignments to be presented in class.
21. FtF teaching

What has been challenging?

1. Over subscribed modules! Some students have also been very anxious about in person teaching, and approaches in seminars have had to reflect different attitudes to social distancing and mask wearing among students.
2. Helping students adjust to university learning styles and time management.
3. We also learned that group-based software project online was hard.
4. Consistency in delivery
5. Getting workshops to work well/ be engaging.
6. Getting Q&As to work. Sometimes, attendance was poor and students did not come armed with questions.
7. time management as it takes considerably longer to adapt the material. I personally had to work every single weekend during the whole last year.
8. Technology issues
9. Teaching with face covering and organisation/preparation time to carry out f2f and online teaching. Re-learning the pace of f2f teaching.
10. It can sometimes be hard to hear people when they have a mask on
11. Trying to manage student expectations and maintain student satisfaction despite not returning to full face-to-face teaching. Q&A sessions have also been challenging with students often arriving with no questions and reluctant to get involved in group discussions.
12. Huge variation in experience, eg impact of remote study etc for students having missed lots of lab work
13. presenting with a mask.
14. Engagement, particularly from students studying remotely. Low attendance due to Covid fears.
15. Assessment. Setting, sitting, supporting, all of it!
16. There were some attendance issues - possibly related to self-certification - and some students struggled to engage with the work, partly because they weren't attending lectures or accessing materials on the VLE, which had a knock on effect on their ability to complete tasks.
17. To create the proper educational material for my students for online training so as the classes to be interactive

18. Practically, lecturing in masks is difficult! More seriously, there is no *one* student voice, and trying to cater for all desires is tough and often impossible (many requests are utterly reasonable, but are the exact opposite of what others are requesting, also utterly reasonably!)
19. For me, understanding that students do not necessarily read anymore! Expectations on attention span!
20. Learning the capabilities and functionalities latest edtech offers
21. Zoom seminars (the students don't like to turn their cameras on)

What next?

1. More reflection and learning about learning, for staff and students, embedded into programmes.
2. Blended learning
3. Semesterisation...
4. Work on workshops. We need to get these right if these are potentially going to be the main form of face to face contact.
5. Improve workshops by sharing best practice.
6. Combining the good aspects of online and f2f to teach....keep exploring.
7. Hopefully more face to face teaching but still with some online teaching as well
8. Sharing best practice for teaching sessions that worked well. For example, the format of workshops. Format is currently highly variable and feedback is mixed. By sharing best practice, staff can adopt a style of workshop which encourages group discussion and more interactive learning.
9. A very long to do list...
10. Continue to develop the flipped approach, ensuring students develop the habit early on to maximise this mode of learning.
11. Whilst it is clear that the majority of staff and students favour face to face teaching, I think the blended learning approach offers too much to be discounted - and so it is here to stay.
12. Semesterisation and 20 credit modules ;)
13. It would be good to reach some agreement on how we create room for different approaches to learning that take into account the potential for online learning.
14. We continue to need to plan for multiple scenarios - either spending time on things that don't come to pass, or else doing the work as late as possible. I see no end to this, to the detriment of all.
15. Trying to understand the role of the teacher as curator
16. Keep on developing my edtech skills because they are critical towards enhancing student engagement .