**Sharing experiences of online teaching - School of Arts - Peer Supported Review of Teaching 2020 – 2021**

For the Peer Supported Review of Teaching in the School of Arts (2020 – 21) staff were encouraged to find a partner who teaches on another course and be prepared to share 30 minutes or more of their session. A very simple form was created to enable staff to experiment, try out teaching ideas and share good practice. The initiative was launched at the end of January 2021 and partnerships were in place by the end of February 2021 so observations were online and reflected the challenges of teaching during lockdown. The comments below are taken from the written reflections of staff and are anonymised.

**Good practice for online teaching**

* Tutorials work really well and take up by students increased
* Students like the recorded lectures and being able to refer back to sessions online
* The pre-recorded 'lectures' provided a structure to the session, so a tutor can answer any questions in the comments area on Blackboard
* Students seem reluctant to get involved in discussions online when in large groups but seem to open up more and get involved in smaller, break out room discussions
* Mentorship between year groups can be effectively embedded into modules online
* Variety of interaction helps to counteract screen fatigue
* Pre-recording much of the practical content in advance has meant that the students can work on those tasks across the week and the lectures can be more discursive
* A shared Q and A document means that outside of lectures any question that students have can be added knowing that they will get addressed at the start of the next lecture

**Challenges of online teaching**

* Basic wifi and hardware issues have proved difficult
* Collaborate could be glitchy, with poor video quality and students had issues finding videos afterwards
* Sometimes when a student who appears to be present is asked to respond there is silence so they have obviously left the session
* It is easier for students to disengage online than in person.
* Getting students to explore how to use a new piece of technology without fear themselves is an important skill highlighted by JISC but students were much more resistant to this online than in person
* The valuable ‘side’ conversations that are had in a classroom when face-to-face are missing, as being able to stand beside someone and discuss what they are working on is not possible online
* It is harder to spot problems and students who may be struggling as seeing students in the classroom enables potential issues to be addressed

**What was learnt**

* Less is most definitely more and seminars and workshop sessions need to be broken into bite-sized chunks
* Students need educating on good practice with regards to online learning
* Some students do have the confidence to use their cameras so there could be a way to build that confidence across SoA courses
* It was easier for students to continue work they had started in person online, rather than starting new work online
* Always get supporting material from guest speakers in advance of the session, if this is practical, and be prepared to deliver the content yourself in case technology doesn’t work on the day
* It’s possible to deliver successful creative sessions utilising more platforms such as Padlet, that the university could adopt as an extension to Blackboard, and potentially improve the student experience of online work
* Recorded lectures can be used as part of a 'live' session and not 'instead of' it
* Recording lectures beforehand was advantageous for the tutor as it resulted in a more relaxed experience during the session where they can monitor student engagement and respond to student needs

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