Flexible, accessible, sustainable and engaging higher education: Can we have it all?
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Provocation

How do we meet the diverse needs of students including those who are craving the in-person social experiences they signed up for whilst leveraging lessons learnt from the pivot to online teaching?
The future is not what it used to be – subtle shifts in framing

- Physical places → Physical and/or digital places
- Teaching → Learning
- Blended/Hybrid → Multi-modal
- Consultation → Co-creation
- Academic outcomes → Graduate outcomes
- Volunteering → Service learning
- Extra-curricular → Co-curricular
- Student Engagement → Belonging
- Student Journey → Learning Journey
- Team → Community
Student Success in HE

- Transforming Assessment
- Employability
- Access, retention, attainment & progression
- Flexible learning
- Student engagement as partners
- Internationalisation

Inclusive   sustainability   digital
Flexible Learning

• Empowers students by providing choice in how, what, when and how they learn:
  – pace, place and mode of learning

HEA Flexible Learning Framework (2016)
Flexible learning concerns institutions constructing and continually evaluating infrastructure, policies and practices that offer the **widest possible opportunity** for successful **student engagement and belonging** of all stakeholders in higher education.

Jones-Devitt, Arnold and Snowden (2017)
Emergent themes

Flexible Learning

- Institutional policies & practices
- Digital technologies, systems and tools
- Digital capabilities
- Learning spaces
- Credit transfer
- Learner agency
Pedagogic practices

- Active learning aligned with intended outcomes
- Develop staff and students digital capabilities
- Develop learner agency and self-awareness
- Embed choice and self-directed learning
- Personalised learning
- Support transitions in and out of programmes
• Online, Virtual or Digital?
• Re-defining modes of Learning
The reductive argument about online vs in person masks the real challenges of digital access and participation, and how new methods of mixed mode teaching and assessment might support groups of students who are often marginalised from the debate.

UPP Foundation, Student Futures Commission
Online, Virtual or Digital? Defining Modes of Learning

In person (f2f, on campus)

Hybrid

Distance (remote)

Blended

Multi-modal
Hybrid model

- Pre-thinking
- Preparation
- Synchronous
  - Interaction with lead & peers
- Asynchronous
  - Interaction with peers
  - Independent
- Synchronous
  - Feedback & sense-checking

Self-directed/Independent
Rich is NOT Teach
Rethinking the student experience

- Pedagogies
- Learning spaces
- Competencies
Provocation

What binds the university experience together outside of live sessions?
Digital Disruption?

- Disrupting the workplace
- Disrupting Higher Education
- Disrupting Learners

Or digital enabling?
What will the workplace look like in 2030?

• [Continued] economic growth driven by innovation
• Increased automation of ‘professional’ work
• High-tech industries based on novel technology and materials
• Productivity enhanced through ICT solutions
• Virtual or Flexible workforce
  – Freelances
  – Short-term contracts
  – Zero hours contracts

+ Value of HE questioned
+ Need for upskilling/ reskilling
  – Just-in-time
  – ‘Bite-size’ skill development and assessment
  – Life-long loan entitlement
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social Skills</td>
<td>• Virtual collaboration • Cross-cultural competency • Social intelligence • New media literacy</td>
<td>• Co-ordinating with others • People management • Negotiation • Emotional intelligence • Service orientation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Managing diverse stakeholders • Emotional intelligence • Communication • Self-awareness • Resilience</td>
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<td>Cognitive Ability</td>
<td>• Novel and adaptive thinking • Cognitive load management • Sense-making</td>
<td>• Cognitive flexibility • Critical thinking • Creativity</td>
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<td>• Cognitive flexibility • Adaptable to change • Creativity • Understanding ‘the big picture’ • Entrepreneurial and enterprising</td>
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<td>Complex Problem Solving</td>
<td>• Design mindset • Transdisciplinarity • Computational thinking</td>
<td>• Complex problem solving • Judgement and decision making</td>
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<td>• Apply knowledge in a complex environment • Use and interpret data</td>
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The challenges

+ Use technology to provide quality education ‘for all’
+ Ensure learners (& teachers) develop digital capabilities for living, learning & working with technology
+ Learners need to learn with and about technology
+ Sustainable citizenship and institutions
Use a design based approach?

+ Quality assurance
+ Align learning environment with core principles
  + strategy, vision and values
+ Consistency
  + Reduce cognitive load
+ Inclusivity and accessibility
+ Developing digital capabilities
What are your Learning Design Principles?

• Explore
• Collaborate
• Create
• Share
• Reflect
THANK YOU

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