Learning from Lockdown

Aims of presentation:

1. to introduce the two IOE institutionally-supported studies conducted last year, one involving student representatives the other surveying UCL undergraduates;

2. to share the framework that guided the analysis of students' views of their experiences and priorities surrounding online learning, gathered via focus group discussions and an online survey;

3. to propose alternative conceptions for what could be a meaningful and rich online educative experience;

4. to discuss our findings and their implications for theory, research, policy and practice in a post-pandemic context;

5. to describe how staff and students collaborated on carrying out these projects, and later worked together to write an academic paper about to the two projects.

Learning from Lockdown:

Listening to students' voices about the challenges and benefits in the post-COVID-19 digital practices

Cosette Crisan together with *Kristyna Campbell, Lauren Clark, Lesley Gourlay, Evi Katsapi, Katherine Riding, Ian Warwick*

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Introducing the two institutionally-supported studies

IOE student voices exploratory focus groups

Context

- Carried out as part of the work of The 'Sustainable Futures for Taught Provision' (SFTP) IOE Task and Finish Group. One aim of which: "Prepare for long-term sustainability of high quality online and blended learning across all existing accredited provision."

Methods

- *Selection of participants:* Student Academic Representatives from a number of IOE departments, including Centre for Doctoral Education and ITE.

- *Data collection:* Participants asked about: teaching and learning as connected, questioning and inclusive (taken from SFTP). FGDs run June 2020. Twenty-seven students took part in six focus groups (three to seven participants per group), lasted 40-60 mins, via video-conferencing, recorded with consent.

- *Analysis*: thematically, to illustrate the three areas (connected, questioning inclusive)

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IoE (CPA) Postgraduate Survey

Context

- Exploring the experience of PGT students as they attempted to cope with the sudden move to online, mainly asynchronous learning as a result of the pandemic.

Methods

- Designed an online survey (n=28) to explore experiences of students with online learning focusing on technology, pedagogy, communication with peers and teachers, and advice for the next cohort

- Drawing on survey responses, a video for the next cohort was produced spotlighting student voices and experiences (n=6)

- Results from the survey were shared with staff to help inform course design for the next academic year

- Video was disseminated to incoming students to help them prepare for online learning

- 4 **Case study & Resources** https://www.ucl.ac.uk/changemakers/case-studies

Staff and student collaboration

- The Idea for the ChangeMakers study was influenced by my own personal situation at the start of the first lockdown (struggling to study alongside work and home-schooling responsibilities and finding support through virtual coffee mornings);

- *How were other PGTs coping during this hugely disruptive period, both practically and emotionally? Were other PGTs engaging in virtual activities 'outside' their MA studies?*

- I suggested surveying this cohort (the 'Covid Cohort') as a ChangeMakers project which Dr Crisan supported. Dr Crisan introduced Dr Clark as a second staff member, who in turn introduced Kristy Campbell (IoE MA student) as an additional member of the team.

- 'Reflections from the 'Covid Cohort'; A collaboration between staff and students to support online learning for CPA PGTs' was funded under the student-staff partnership scheme 'ChangeMakers'.

- Together, the student-staff team created an online survey to elicit CPA PGTs' views online learning experiences, identified key issues, then invited students to **contribute** to a short film titled 'Preparing for Online Learning - Tips and Advice from the COVID Cohort'.

**Alternative conceptions for
meaningful and rich online educative experience**

- 'Advisory' discourses surrounding the Covid crisis and the pivot to digital education emphasise interaction (e.g. Barratt 2020)

- May be performative (e.g. Macfarlane 2017), or even examples of *learnification* (Biesta 2012)

- 'Active learning' is often undertheorised, assumed to 'emerge'

- The complexities of student engagement need to be recognised

- *Connectedness*, *questioning* and *inclusion* are core values

- However, student perspectives are lacking on what generates and supports these

- Critical analysis of difference, affect, relationality, and operations of power in digital education is required

Kristyna Campbell, CPA
MA Education alumna

Findings and Implications for theory, research, policy and practice in a post-pandemic context

Connected

- Sense of isolation
- Sense of belonging / Sense of community
- Disconnection from peers / relationships
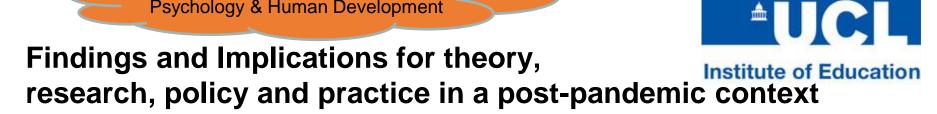- Connection to opportunities

Questioning

- Overlap between questioning and connectedness, comfort/connection facilitated engaging in questioning.
- Relationality and rapport very important: with *respect* and *autonomy* mentioned as important values to uphold
- **How to**: Identify evidence-based resources and approaches. Dialogue to deepen understanding. Reflective questions, criticality, diversity of material, disruptive thought.

Inclusive

- Digital resources needed - Moodle, Lecturecast, Collaborate, Teams, Zoom
- Promote equality and diversity in all areas: including assessment, material, attitudes, staff, students "*Diversity in leadership as well can be quite an inspiration*"
- Students acknowledged staff's efforts to decolonise and diversify the curriculum but noted that more action was needed.
- Students asked for more references from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic academics on educational policies, change and legislation.

Evi Katsapi
Psychology & Human Development

Findings and Implications for theory, research, policy and practice in a post-pandemic context

Synchronous Learning

✓ **Positives:** likeness to face-to-face teaching, live discussion, teacher presence encouraged engagement, interactions and friendships with other students and staff, peer-led activities, a sense of belonging, real-time dialogue;

X   Barriers: living conditions, language, issues with technology, mental and physical difficulties, work and family commitments.

Asynchronous Learning

• **Positives:** full-time work, time zones, watching recorded presentations, strong written material; asynchronous dialogue creates opportunities for questioning.

X   Barriers: disengagement / zoning-out.

'live is more engaging, but asynchronous is more inclusive'

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Staff-Student collaboration

➢ Writing and publishing a scientific research paper:

➢ Presentation at *UCL Education Conference* 2021

➢ Invitation to present at *RAISE Conference*, Sept 2021, 'Reflections from the Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment COVID Cohort'

➢ Presentation at *International Inclusive and Supportive Education Conference* 2021

References

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