

THE Good Practice Sessions

Session 2: Thursday 28th May 2020, 1pm

Plan: Fortnightly meetings held on Thursdays 1-2pm (1hr sessions)

On a fortnightly basis so that people can become familiar with when the sessions are and can drop in and out of these as much as they want to (or can do). A forum is taking place through slack to keep topics being discussed on-the-go

Key Topics that were discussed in this session:

1. Slack Forum Engagement.
2. Bolton University Ready for September!
3. Webinar From the Experts.
4. Expectations of the end of lockdown.
5. Blended and Hybrid Learning.
6. Live vs Pre-recorded.
7. Sterilising Equipment.
8. Positive News Stories and Experiences.
9. Students Who are Requiring Support Now.
10. Involving the student body experience.
11. How do You Motivate Staff who are Not Deemed as 'Essential'?
12. Large Scale Event for our Staff over the Summer?

Topics That should be considered next:

1. Update on Peroxide Fogging.
2. Student Ambassador Programmes.
3. Online Inductions.
4. How do we make the most of Good Practice?
5. On-site - how to manage radio/sound studios?

1) Slack Forum Engagement.

Slack functions to keep lots of different conversations going at the same time, where not everyone is interested in every given conversation that is going on. You can drop in and out of various conversations, you can read some, contribute on others, ignore ones that don't apply to you. Everyone gets to choose their own level of engagement.

2) Bolton University Ready for September!

Bolton University has made a video to capture how they are covid-secure and ready for starting back with staff and students in September 2020:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=01GbPnFIKlg&feature=youtu.be>

3) Webinar From the Experts.

Planning to return to work - Factors to be considered from Health and Safety Lawyers:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9mvDw3CJ3M&feature=youtu.be>

4) Expectations of the end of lockdown.

What can we expect our departments to be doing over the coming weeks and months, what will the end of lockdown look-like, when do activities have to happen? Some universities have decided to do no on-site activities as the majority of practicals can be done virtually.

The Creative Community are very fortunate as it is possible to make the most of online delivery of student support and online practicals. The student experience will be different, but the community are more fortunate than the STEM sector; where many of their on-site teaching practicals have had to be cancelled and may well be pushed back until next year.

Phased building re-occupation plans are being put in place along with building maintenance and social measure plans. Much of this involves, taking out corridors and indicating occupancy levels for both staff and students. Early occupancy for essential maintenance and especially building maintenance before anyone re-enters. Amongst most Universities, the belief is that September is the most likely time when technical staff will be back in the workplace at the earliest.

This will have its own challenges as usually the summer periods tend to be the preparatory stages for the new terms in September.

What is evident, more and more, is that technicians can often take on a dual role, where they can be supporting students for part of their time and then the other part of their role involves being responsible for buildings, facilities and management on a much higher level. Technicians are sometimes leading and directing the conversations.

Technical staff will be imperative in organisations as they will be key to the maintenance of equipment, to ensure safety before students and other staff are allowed back on campus or if loaning equipment out to students.

5) Blended and Hybrid Learning.

There are discussions around having '**Blended Learning**' as there is a need to be more creative. Blended learning is an approach to education that combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction online with traditional place-based classroom methods. It requires the physical presence of both teacher and student, with some elements of student control over time, place, path, or pace.

Key Information on Blended Learning:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef5NY0ni50U>

<https://edtechnology.co.uk/latest-news/ultimate-guide-to-blended-learning/>

Staff at the University of Hertfordshire are carrying out blended learning and mentioned that it would be "tricky in the creative arts but doable in other ways, but this will be a great opportunity for the new ways we haven't been using before."

Northumbria University are also planning on carry out blended learning in September and are awaiting full guidance, but they are looking at distancing in practical spaces. One of the key initiatives that Northumbria are trying to do is to get access for technical staff to complete online materials, equipment returns and maintenance.

Other organisations are carrying out '**Hybrid Learning**' delivery. Technicians are being directly involved in the resources and delivering of the protocols. Hybrid learning is a way of combining traditional classroom experiences, experiential learning objectives, and digital course delivery that emphasizes using the best option for each learning objective.

The difference between blended and hybrid:

<https://www.anewspring.com/blended-and-hybrid-learning/>

Hybrid Learning:

<https://sites.psu.edu/hybridlearning/what-is-hybrid/>

The Plymouth College of Arts and Glasgow School of Art are using Hybrid learning to offer online practical and online. At Glasgow, they are changing around the way the departments work from face-to-face to a mix of fabrication by technical staff and online support to students from September.

Some organisations are carrying out a mixture of virtual and practical learning. Many Universities are hoping that we will be able to lower restrictions, but we have to make plans as if that is not the case.

The University of Middlesex are planning “a mix of virtual and face-to-face teaching at least for the Autumn term, but very possibly for the whole academic year and so we need to be using this assumption in the planning for the year.” With face-to-face it is likely the capacity will be down by 90% in some areas to cater for 2 meter distancing.

6) Live vs Pre-recorded.

What are the best approaches for these different measures, are there certain things that should be delivered live and are there things that should be pre-recorded. What are the benefits and what are the disadvantages to these?

Live will have implicit challenges for some students: internet stability, access to computer that might be shared, or maybe living in different time zones. Asynchronous delivery is probably quite important so that individuals can plan and control when these activities take place where possible, followed by live tutorials, Q&A or trouble shooting.

It was highlighted that technical support staff may end up doing more work training academics in making resources than carrying out face-to-face support with students.

It is going to be really important to try and manage expectations of staff and students. Organisations and teams may have to expect that some activities that require inductions may not happen.

At Staffordshire University, they are filming an initial woodwork induction, where students will watch online then come in for practical competency assessment in smaller numbers. At the University of Lincoln, some programmes are changing the modules around to delay technical activities until the second semester.

7) Sterilising Equipment.

Loaning kits was talked about in meeting 1, this goes into more detail with regards to sterilisation. The Bolton University video shows some ways in which the University are planning to prepare for keeping equipment like keyboards with special covers so that they can be sterilised effectively. Some universities are giving each of their students a keyboard and mouse.

Sterilisation techniques are useful but problems are caused if you have to wait a few days to make sure that the virus is no longer on the surface. UV lights don't work for expensive camera kits. One organisation is wiping down equipment initially with 70% ethanol and quarantining for 72 hours.

The University of Lincoln are working with industry to investigate the use of Hydrogen Peroxide fogging, as this process is used to sterilise entire rooms in hospitals. The size of the molecules gets everywhere and doesn't tend to affect the intricate electricals. They will potentially be using a cabinet, where equipment goes in and then fogging takes place overnight so that it can go back out again the next day. There is concerns however, over whether the Hydrogen Peroxide fogging affects electricals or not and that it is too bigger risk to put expensive equipment (such as £20,000 cameras) in fogging cabinets as there is not enough data to suggest it won't be affected.

After control methods (quarantine, cleaning etc.) students must treat the kits as if it is contaminated. They should wash their hands after use. This should be included in a risk assessment. We can't make it certain and some risk will always remain.

Loaning equipment in the creative community is a huge benefit for students to make the most out of their student experience. There are concerns from students who have mentioned that after paying £9000.000 they are not receiving the very kit and equipment that brought them to choose that University. This was highlighted to be something that indeed should be talked about at a much higher institution level or even a Global level.

It was mentioned that lots of artists use fabricators post-graduation, and so the first semester could be used to prepare them for how to do that, consulting with technicians, making drawings and learning about the materials involved.

Many organisations are looking at extending the practicals over the year. The initial thoughts were around delaying practicals until after the first semester, however some places are now starting to think this is the new normal and we need a longer term approach.

One Scottish organisation mentioned that they are putting procedures in place to align to the Scottish government guidance documents but were definitely in agreement that this is not a short-term switch but an evolving situation.

Another organisation is thinking of workshops having live-feeds to continue the drop in nature of workshops. This then limits movement and demand. Additional small tool kits are also going to be placed in studios with work benches to promote community working at safe distances.

8) Positive News Stories and Experiences.

Tales of technicians flourishing under adversity.

At the University of Reading, technicians have learnt new digital skills (especially those who may have at first not wanted to go online) and once embracing these technologies have continued to learn more and more. One of the team members has made a video on how to make an ink pen out of household items, such as a coke can.

At Nottingham Trent University, there have been some really good success stories from our technical teams, enabling students to access on-site computers remotely for licences/rendering, running filmmaking challenges and virtual degree shows.

Newcastle University have had some great positives; there have been film making students recording the pandemic and creating really interesting results under condition. Some are applying what they've learnt in class with equipment to hand. A film festival is being organised to run after Christmas. Another positive is finally updating our submissions process within the School to cloud based, remote upload rather than physical copies.

HOME Manchester have a programme featuring local artists talking about live experiences from their homes. Manchester Metropolitan University are encouraging their staff and students to watch theatre at home to support wellbeing.

At the University of Plymouth, technical teams have really stepped up and taken on new technologies. They are actually finding that they are running to keep up with the workload as technicians have been making fantastic progress and exercising tremendous creativity.

The University of Middlesex have had really positive feedback with student drop in sessions. These are looking at being sustainable in future also. There is plenty of momentum from people reluctant to become digital.

The University of Hertfordshire have made their end of year show as a website this year. This is going to be great for recruitment in the future and is also something for final year students to enjoy. They are trying to plan access for students to finish their work as they seem to have been hardest hit and now need to find work in very difficult times. In these circumstances, we have prioritised them first, and then post-graduates, then all levels for September onwards who actually do come back or start the next term.

At the Belfast School of Art, degree shows have gone online which has been really successful with all students building online portfolios.

9) Students Who are Requiring Support Now.

Several organisations have mentioned that they have postgraduate students who are still requiring support until September.

Staffordshire University have a Master of Arts ceramics course that runs over 12 months and students are keen to get back on campus. At the moment students are having support from technicians over Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp. At Nottingham Trent University, they may be potentially supporting post-graduate students on Campus in July, similar for the University for the Creative Arts.

With some students requiring access to facilities, it is essential that prior to workshops, to ensure risk assessment training is valid and completed.

10) Involving the Student Body Experience.

Nottingham Trent University have carried out a very successful student ambassadors training for the last 5 years and these ambassadors are working in rooms alongside Technicians. These ambassadors are employed and trained to a technical level. This gives them an insight into a career as technical staff and they get to work as peer mentors. They are going to work with their ambassadors to see what their expectations are, and to assist in lecture capture activities, demonstrations and live screen pre-recording.

11) How Do You Motivate Staff Who Are Not Deemed As 'Essential'?

Organisations have in some places been asking for 'Essential' technicians to return to work earlier than others and to be involved in the preparatory work to ensure the organisations can re-open again. There is however, a degree of insecurity for those who have not been asked to go in, with many technical staff being nervous about their positions.

It is imperative to communicate with technical staff and make it clear to technicians and support staff that just because some technical staff are essential right now, this doesn't mean your work is not essential.

12) Large Scale Event for our Staff over the Summer?

Amongst this group, it is made up of team leaders, specialists and managers who represent 100's of technicians. Is there a benefit to putting on a larger event open to creative arts technicians across all our areas, and having a few people put together some small scale events with presentations to showcase their work over the crisis.

This was given the thumbs up by quite a few organisations.

Northumbria University mentioned that they had an internal faculty technical show last summer to showcase their technical team, therefore something larger would certainly be of interest

IST are happy to facilitate this (and to develop based on experience organising events), so that technicians can make the most of celebrating their successes.

Some people will want to absorb the information from such events (large or small) and some people will want to give back.

Keith Hill mentioned that the key words for our community are:

Collaboration – Inspiration – Creativity

Anything more to add or comment on? - Contact j.p.ashton@istonline.org.uk