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INSPIRING ACHIEVEMENT

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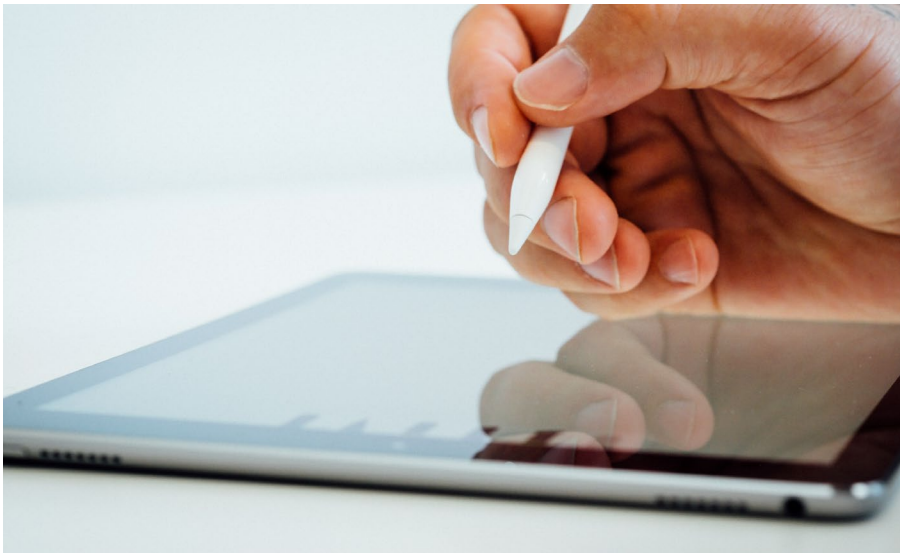
Digital Education in the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences: Discipline Discussions



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Executive Summary

The research reported here was undertaken by the Digital Education Working Group (DEWG) to achieve the following four objectives, in line with the CHASS Digital Education Action Plan:

1. To better understand the perspectives on, experiences with and plans for digital education across the College to inform further strategy or changes in the College's approach to digital education.
2. To scope the professional learning and resourcing needs in a systematic and robust way to ensure adequate support is being provided.
3. To gather insights on current discipline-based models of learning and teaching to inform recommendations on the scholarship of teaching, particularly online teaching models.
4. To synthesise current good practice examples.

The DEWG research team worked with eight discipline groups across CHASS in 2021: Archaeology, English, Geography, History, Indigenous Studies, Languages, Philosophy, and Screen and Media. This report serves as a high-level synthetic overview of the results of in-depth focus group interviews conducted with staff and makes recommendations about ways forward for digital education, with relevant stakeholders identified at College and University levels. Here, DEWG and the College's executive leadership team hold responsibility for understanding, driving, improving and supporting the digital education strategies in the College. The report summarises key findings across several key areas.

How disciplines understand and define 'digital education'

Overarchingly, no resounding definition bound the disciplines to one perspective on digital education; however, attitudes and approaches broadly were open to experimentation, learning and development, permitting resourcing and workload. Broadly, digital education was interpreted as 'technology enhanced teaching and learning' or 'pedagogy + technology'. Many staff members associated it with strategies and resources much more advanced than the tools they currently actively and successfully use. This association of digital education with less accessible (but not always essential) technologies can present a barrier to innovation in the digital education space. Furthermore, the findings highlight that while staff strongly associate digital education with teaching mode, in practice it involves other critical components: use of specific technologies, content creation and maintenance, teaching digital methods, and developing students' digital literacy.

> To facilitate productive conversations about digital education and its ongoing implementation, any definition of digital education should reflect its complexity.

Several disciplines considered distinctions between practical and theoretical teaching when considering the role of their digital education. For disciplines with an applied or practical aspect (including field trips and placements) and for teaching embodied Indigenous knowledge, the use of online and hybrid delivery was considered a challenge to fulsome engagement. However, theoretical teaching was also subject to some limitations when delivered through a fully online mode.

Disciplines were broadly interested in a diversity of modes for teaching, including self-paced online and hybrid delivery, but considerable resource challenges were associated with each. Resoundingly, enhanced

technology, teaching spaces and more seamless fusion of technologies and pedagogies have been found to be central to the ongoing uptake of discipline digital education strategies.

Relationship between discipline pedagogical strategies and the use of digital education

Synthetically, there was an acknowledgement that varied 'digitally enhanced' configurations of teaching had merit but were not necessarily 'better' than face-to-face teaching. Staff spoke highly of the diversity of digital tools available within the extant LMS, with few caveats, and saw the relative flexibility of using digital tools and technologies as a space of potential. A necessity was expressed to maintain the collaborative, engaged and social spaces of the university in any mode and model of delivery. Staff cautioned against a fully online replacement of face-to-face patterns of delivery and emphasised that flexibility must include a face-to-face component in addition to any hybrid or online delivery.

> A plurality of modes emerged as possibilities and mainstays of flexible delivery, so long as they augmented the learning and teaching processes and existing face-to-face teaching.

> Staff and students have struggled to build emotional connections while resolving technological disconnections.

Some barriers remained to fulsome and meaningful hybrid and online delivery, particularly including nonverbal cues, technical limitations (primarily with Collaborate, the University's virtual classroom software), and other engagement challenges which particularly related to emergency remote teaching (ERT). The hybrid mode of delivery was seen by some as a possible 'happy medium' between fully online and fully face to face, but staff raised concerns that facilities, training and tools needed to be augmented to make good use of this mode of teaching. Broadly, disciplines saw their digital education strategies as spaces for increased diversity, though not explicitly egalitarian or equitable for *all* students, particularly those of non-English speaking backgrounds or without stable access to technology.

Limitations and opportunities of digital education in the disciplines

In reference to specific disciplines, it was raised that 'soft' and university skills were at the heart of the face-to-face experience; that interaction in the fluid spaces of the classroom environment created real value and community for students, particularly when teaching the Indigenous Studies; and that without access to high-level resourcing, high-quality content creation may suffer. Importantly, it was stressed that teaching online may present a challenge to decolonising knowledge, creating a false impression that the indigenous people can be understood exclusively by accessing recorded content, without their physical presence and due acknowledgement of its ownership by them. Many staff spoke about the challenges that emerged when dealing with ambiguity, multiple interpretations, confronting and controversial themes and with facilitating collegiality, group work and trust-building. Online teaching can also present challenges to practice-based learning. Broadly, implications and limitations in this space include problems with virtual classrooms as a poorer quality pedagogical space; face-to-face teaching as foundational for student success, which has not yet been paralleled in exclusively online teaching; and implications for workload in terms of curricular redevelopment and translation and the 'energy drain' of teaching online.

> '*Students appreciate teaching when it is done well*'. High quality (professional and impactful) content that amplifies the value of university education is essential to the successful future of digital education at Flinders.

Amongst the challenges of workload, technology limitations, and knowledge were the unseen elements of teaching online: time to access relevant and up-to-date training on new tools and technologies at the point of need; virtual classroom software limiting access to 'faces on screen'; and time to set expectations amongst students and to provide training and specialised support to help them (and staff) engage meaningfully in online learning and teaching. Amongst resource requirements were a need to access higher-quality rooms, set up for hybrid and online teaching, consistently equipped with cameras and microphones which enabled such modes. Overarchingly, staff saw workload as a major limiting factor to engagement with further online learning and teaching. While technological barriers were surpassable through training, support and endeavour, the limitations of workload on curricular redevelopment, access to training and sharing of skills, and an inflexibility in collaboration, timetabling and access were primary problems to engaging with these modes.

> Teaching innovation requires time for learning and experimentation, and the workload model has been detrimental to it, including for teaching specialists, as time investments into better teaching are not acknowledged.

Success stories, aspirations and ways forward for expanding digital education in the College

Amidst commentary on problems and limitations were a range of success stories and cases where technology augmentation enabled higher-quality learning experiences for students. Staff highlighted the benefits of experimenting with the mainstream tools such as the ones currently available to teachers, including Microsoft suite, Moodle, Kaltura, and Collaborate. Many colleagues have improved their ability to use them effectively. Importantly, there is a need to move past conceptions of online learning and teaching as merely emergency remote teaching. Through setting expectations, receiving training, and using tools and resources, staff will have better access, engagement and possibility when teaching face to face, hybrid and in online modes. Extant digital education encompasses many 'technology enhanced' pedagogical strategies which can be grown and built upon through collegial support, training, and resourcing. These strategies must be expanded, stretched, and nurtured, both through collegial connection in the form of networks and workload modelling, and through empowering staff to undertake leadership and engage with action research in classroom contexts to develop 'what works at Flinders' for models and opportunities to be fully realised.

> An uptake of hybrid teaching with positive experiences is another noteworthy development.

Finally, this report makes a range of recommendations to expand on current staff capacity, interest, and possibility. Amongst other key considerations the report suggests: the development of a foundational module to support students' technological and study skills when engaging with online learning and teaching; individualised support for staff (by staff) tailored to the point of need in developing curricular materials and resources; communities of practice to empower staff as leaders in technology enhanced learning and enabling shared practices across the diverse disciplines; models for teaching online which support and foster collaboration, research-informed teaching strategies, and context-based disciplinary expertise to make the most of new modes and models of delivery; and workload modelling which enables fulsome staff engagement with enhancing and augmenting their teaching practice through digital education.

Methodology

The DEWG set out to understand the perspectives and approaches of staff across the College to make recommendations to enhance staff capability, capacity and wellbeing. The College's Digital Education Plan set forth guiding principles and targets for the College to reach to meet university moves to embed flexibility, consistency and sustainable practices in each college. Staff in the College indicated that a robust, research-informed, and reflective process was necessary to understand the perspectives and approaches of staff. Here, focus groups were employed as a tool to listen to each discipline in the College, with each discrete discipline group offered the opportunity to participate.

The DEWG's purpose in undertaking this research was to ascertain the views, practices and aspirations of each discipline across the College, as it was hypothesised that there would be marked differences between conceptualisations, approaches, needs and aspiration among disciplines. Ultimately the analysis of this data formed the basis of this report and informed the recommendations made in the report. In this sense, drawing from the views, practices and aspirations of academic staff, the report has built a robust series of recommendations across several key categories and stakeholders, in alignment with the aspirations and perspectives of staff participants in the focus groups.

Please see Appendix A for additional information.

Findings

What does 'digital education' mean to you?

While the CHASS disciplines are yet to settle on definitions of education within their respective groups, the answers revealed broad engagement in digital education as technology-enhanced teaching (not fully online delivery) in a variety of ways, in some disciplines less than in others. The most clearly articulated and nuanced discipline-level perspectives were communicated by Archaeology and Geography: digital education as encompassing teaching digital methods, creation of digital information, and online delivery (Archaeology), and as using technology to enhance learning and teaching (Geography).

Overall, the findings highlight that while staff strongly associate digital education, first and foremost, with the choice of delivery mode, in practice it involves other considerations that require equal attention. Therefore, to facilitate productive conversations about digital education and its ongoing implementation, any definition should reflect its complexity (Figure 1).

The different components of digital education as defined by Archaeology have a broad application. For example, creation of digital information or digital content applies to all disciplines (e.g. pre-recorded lectures), albeit at different levels. So does online delivery. Teaching digital methods is particularly prominent in Screen and Media. The reasoning for the differentiation between these components was linked to the **unique resourcing, support and workload considerations** pertaining to each. This approach also helps to highlight that **digital education is not the same as online delivery**, with the latter implying 'anything non-classroom' (not face-to-face). It was noted that few topics now genuinely qualify as fully on campus, with technology-enhanced learning and teaching used in most topics (including FLO, utilisation of YouTube, and Collaborate).

At the same time, few staff believed they were engaged in fully online pedagogy. Discussions indicate that many staff members **associated digital education with strategies and resources much more advanced than the tools they currently use**. Using these tools did not constitute digital education. Fully online courses were identified as short courses and self-paced learning by Screen and Media and History. Another component of digital education was preparing students for employment. Several discussions highlighted the importance of providing students with opportunities to acquire digital literacy (particularly Geography, English, Archaeology, and Screen and Media). Student outcomes, as they engage with online and HyFlex[1] learning, need to be monitored to ensure equity, rigour, and engagement. Importantly, some ambiguity remains about the quality of HyFlex learning, though these attitudes likely relate to the quality of EROT rather than bona fide HyFlex or purely online learning and teaching.

[1] HyFlex is an increasingly popular term which refers to flexible modes of delivery in higher education. HyFlex is a compound word: '"hybrid"- which involves blending or combining online and face-to-face teaching and learning activities and "flexible"' (Kyei-Blankson & Godwyll, 2010, p. 532). Kyei-Blankson, L., & Godwyll, F. (2010). *An Examination of Learning Outcomes in Hyflex Learning Environments*, 532–535. https://www.learntechlib.org/primary/p/35598/.

Strategies here may be developed by teaching staff in collaboration with support services to ensure *quality equity* across multiple modes of delivery.

These perspectives have three implications. First, they suggest a level of **comfort around seemingly 'low' but highly effective EdTech** such as FLO (discussion forums and online assessment in particular), use of open-access resources (YouTube, podcasts), and a range of applications (e.g. Padlet). Second, it demonstrates the importance of **carefully framed definitions of DE** and modes of teaching and learning. For example, whilst formal definitions of delivery modes were not requested during the focus groups, it appears that blended learning is understood as a combination of face-to-face (FTF) and online learning (not necessarily hybrid, e.g. asynchronous discussion forums on FLO), while hybrid was predominantly applied to conversations about tutorials. Third, they draw attention to the fact that in some contexts (e.g. digital content production and hybrid delivery), **access to more advanced technologies and support resources is essential**.

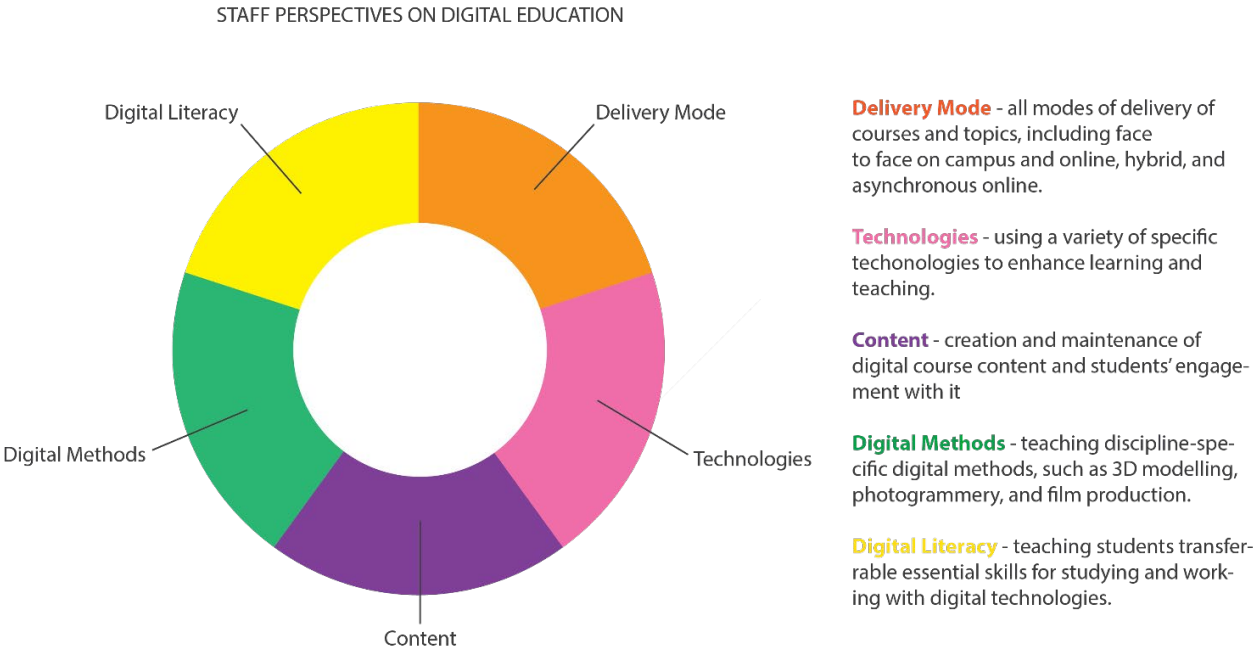

Figure 1: Staff perspectives on digital education.

How does digital education fit with your pedagogical views and approach?

Across a broad spectrum, there was a clear **acknowledgement of the necessity to consider (fully or partially) online learning and teaching as an alternative to face-to-face teaching in some contexts**. Overall, staff had a positive attitude towards technology as a strategy to enhance student learning experiences. Flipped classroom was a popular approach, mentioned as an example of multi-modal (blended) teaching (but was not always explicitly acknowledged as one). Staff also spoke highly of the use of digital tools, including the current learning management system and supported tools, to augment face-to-face teaching.

Good teaching was described as adopting a diversity of approaches for a range of learning and teaching contexts. Depending on teaching context and learning objectives, it was noted that online delivery can both enable and impede the implementation of these pedagogical principles. Five key points emerged from the discussions:

Technology-enhanced learning encouraged **experimentation** and **reinvention**.

Staff saw technology as a tool for improved engagement through interactivity - adding variety and interest; gamification; bringing context to life; and mixing up modes of delivery. Teaching online provided good experiences with international students. Fostering global communities and reducing the physical borders by bringing the world into classrooms were some of the benefits. Others included examples of sustaining learning activity beyond the classroom and informing scholarship and research publications.

Using technological tools created positive and augmented teaching experiences which enhanced student learning. Non-supported technologies such as IdeaBoardz, Lucidspark and Padlet were leveraged by staff to create learning experiences in these modes. In some disciplines, the technologies enable better online facilitation that is sometimes missed in face-to-face classrooms. Teaching staff mentioned Google Docs where they can monitor who is editing a document as a way of checking 'who is on task'.

Social and **collaborative learning** was found to be important across disciplines. Opportunities for students to share their learnings and responses to activities on FLO and in synchronous tutorials are among the positives. Many staff, however, across disciplines, spoke about the challenges that emerged when dealing with **ambiguity, multiple interpretations, confronting and controversial themes, critical reasoning**, AND/OR requiring **collegiality, group work**, and **trust-building**.

A shared concern was expressed around pedagogy and '*moving into the online space without any understanding of what it takes away from traditional teaching practices*'. Collaboration and discussion were identified as a challenge in the context of online learning, and the lack of non-verbal cues made teaching sensitive topics raised ethical and health and safety issues. For staff, the online context makes it more difficult to respond flexibly in the teaching situation, particularly in the absence of cameras. These findings are consistent with the recent research on the importance of emotional messaging in online

education and how nonverbal cues help create immediacy, heighten social presence, and ultimately reduce psychological distance[2].

For Indigenous Studies, digital education adds another layer of distance and presents a challenge to decolonising knowledge. Teaching Indigenous Studies is about knowledge production and sharing through reinforcing indigenous voices in the space: 'It's an embodied learning process. We bring country with us; we bring who we are into a space'. Making available online the content that is based on personal stories and artwork for multiple royalty-free downloads reinforces the issue of ownership and creates a false impression that the indigenous people can be understood exclusively by accessing recorded content, without their physical presence. This argument about teaching embodied knowledge also helps shed light on why teaching online has presented considerable challenges to Drama, a discipline that was not able to participate in this research. A quote from an interview with a music teacher in Johnson (2015, p. 448) illustrates this issue vividly: 'I like to see them on a podium waving their arms and not writing research papers'[3].

Staff were concerned that online teaching currently broadly impedes the facilitation of critical discussions and developing students' critical reasoning as well as practical skills. Students were reported to do less reading preparation for online classes, and basic academic conventions were seen as more difficult to convey and learn in the online classroom. These findings highlight the diversity within and across disciplines and point to the difficulty of scaling HASS education in general and online in particular, compared to areas where navigating multiplicity of perspectives and ambiguity as one of the core learning activities and outcomes is of lesser significance.

Online teaching can present **challenges to practice-based learning** but can also **enable some experiential learning** by encouraging students to create their own content.

Practice-based learning takes many forms in CHASS: learning practical field methods that involve handling material objects in Archaeology, including under water; hands-on, collaborative film making in Screen Production; live performance in Drama; and study trips and placements in Tourism that can require hands-on experiences and outdoor social engagements, and field trips also in Geography. Tourism and Events have been reported to now mainly be interested in certain face-to-face teaching modes.

These learning experiences cannot be fully replicated online and require considerable modifications to content and delivery. In Archaeology, students were asked to follow practical videos, carefully designed and recorded by staff, and to set up shipwrecks in their own backyards. In Screen Production, successful online approaches to teaching on-set film making have not been found, but an option was discussed for independent film production and teaching students online how to produce travel videos. In Tourism, online placements were reported to have highly positive reviews, yielding useful reports for industry endorsed projects, but the issue of 'time lost in the virtual space', similarly to staff experiences of teaching online, was noted.

[2] Dixson, M. D., Greenwell, M. R., Rogers-Stacy, C., Weister, T., & Lauer, S. (2017). Nonverbal immediacy behaviors and online student engagement: bringing past instructional research into the present virtual classroom. *Communication Education, 66*(1), 37-53.

[3] Johnson, C. (2017). Teaching music online: Changing pedagogical approach when moving to the online environment. *London Review of Education, 15*(3).

More attention should be given to **blended (including hybrid) teaching practices**, where the learning process benefits from having the best of both worlds.

Blended teaching was posited as a promising way to achieve a diversity of learning outcomes, as it combined the best of online and on-campus teaching. However, **hybrid teaching evoked a mixed sentiment**, with some disciplines and individual staff more interested in it than others. Major concerns were inadequately equipped rooms, limited number of rooms, not being able to work from the same familiar room, timetabling concerns, and students' preparedness.

Some staff raised issues with hybrid and fully online delivery (e.g. via Collaborate) which pertained to students' **disclosure of sensitive or personal information**. These issues were reportedly easy to deal with in a class environment, providing personal and emotional support to students. However, where students were joining in an online mode, where discussions around traumatic events emerged, there was difficulty in communicating and supporting students due to a lack of non-verbal emotional cues. Any personal and reflective spaces can sometimes become challenging for online learning and teaching due to a student's emotional state and questions were raised around preparation and supporting students with emotional/psychological needs. Support for staff to engage in this kind of teaching was also called for in terms of **mental health first aid**.

Student preparedness for online and hybrid classes was amongst key concerns for staff engaged in teaching in these modes.

Many staff found students were consistently ill-prepared to undertake their classes. This persisted even when specialised instructions and multiple forms of communication were used with students. In some instances, students did not have adequate technology or internet bandwidth to engage properly with online learning and teaching. Moreover, students' digital literacies, including issues around accidental plagiarism, were raised as detriments to student's online engagement. Staff reported that some students were resistant to technology and were concerned about monitoring/tracking through online systems, including expectations of engagement with weekly tasks. This was also found among the students in asynchronous topics who were not expected to have regular online contact through Collaborate.

How else does digital education impact on your discipline?

In addition to several pedagogical considerations, the discussions highlighted four other groups impacts:

Staff Wellbeing and Workload

There was an implicit acknowledgement of a need to grow and learn more through the scholarship of learning and teaching. However, staff universally felt that there was inadequate time, workload and significance allocated to professional communities, sharing of learning, and professional education to improve teaching practice. The **'economy of care' model** when staff are counted on to continuously 'experiment fearlessly' without appropriate human resource, infrastructure, support, training, and remuneration strategies in place **is not sustainable**.

Their comments are summarised below:

- Teaching online requires a reconfiguration of lesson plans and curriculum. Face-to-face plans do not work online, and this creates a workload issue for blended delivery.
- Online teaching is more energy-intensive due to the absence of non-verbal cues. It is easier to generate energy in the classroom than online.
- Some staff noted that hybrid classes were not worth the stress.
- Lack of time among teaching specialists to even attend training sessions during most of the teaching period is highly problematic. Teaching innovation requires time for research, experimentation and trialling of new approaches and technologies.
- Overuse and profusion of platforms and communication channels can add to confusion and stress. Guidance in choice and continuity in use is required.

Student Experience and Performance

- **Online teaching can both create and limit opportunities** for students and the discipline. Staff noted that technology enhanced teaching and learning could improve **accessibility** and **flexibility** - bringing students in through an online mode who were otherwise unable to attend physically, residing not only interstate, overseas or regionally, but also outside of Adelaide CBD and those working and with family commitments. However, it was also pointed out that **students had differential access** to internet, technologies and study spaces at home, putting some students at a disadvantage.
- Some staff observed a mismatch between students' enthusiasm for the flexibility and interactivity of online learning and their grades.
- Virtual classrooms (e.g. Collaborate) can unintentionally privilege the opinions of those students who speak first.
- Many students do not possess the necessary skills and attitudes for studying online, including dealing with diminished non-verbal cues. Staff noted a need to repeatedly communicate about requirements in classes. Even classes which had been deliberately scheduled as online saw students who were not prepared with a webcam and microphone and as such had significantly lower engagement.

Resourcing and Other Supports

- **Library restrictions in accessing digital resources** impose limitations and force to find workarounds that create additional workload, or to work without permissions. Examples of such resources include e-books; historical clips from the archives; and movies that may not have rights holders for digital distribution in Australia.
- **Equipping rooms with appropriate technology for hybrid teaching** is essential.
- **Timetabling** to provide clear options and advice for staff around rooms, **capable of working for hybrid/online teaching** was raised as a key concern.

Staff were broadly aware that rooms were available which accommodated a hybrid teaching mode, and that a central listing was accessible through timetabling services. However, they found it difficult to navigate and often had difficulties coordinating with the timetabling services to book these rooms consistently for their hybrid classes. Two main areas for improvement were identified: (1) a lack of access

to reliable information about how to negotiate an appropriate room, and (2) the actual availability of rooms to suit class scheduling.

Moreover, staff who commented on face-to-face teaching with technology enhanced learning viewed some rooms, particularly in the Humanities building, as significantly technologically inferior. Several staff raised issues when running hybrid classes from Humanities with room equipment, including microphones, cameras, lighting, adequate screens/projectors and in some instances issues with wireless access. These barriers, staff perceived, not only reflected a poor hybrid/online experience for students, but also created a lower level of engagement for in-room students.

Timetabling concerns were key amongst online and hybrid class staff issues. Staff reported that having consistently timetabled classes had been problematic in a hybrid mode with a necessity to schedule two separate classes at the same time – one with an online availability and one with a room presence. There were further issues in this process for ensuring student numbers were equally manageable I all face-to-face and online availabilities. Rooms and equipment were also raised in relation to timetabling, particularly around a need to create a high-quality visual experience for students which was enabled through use of technology.

- Staff across disciplines were disappointed in **offerings of training and support from CILT**. A majority of staff expressed the concern that while they received high quality one-on-one training and support from the eLearning and Media Support Officers and the Learning Designer, the offered training was not fulfilling their needs.

They strongly emphasised the **inflexibility** of the current CILT training, noting that sessions had become particularly didactic and not about sharing expertise in the room. Some staff called out training and support by academic developers as being too rigid and not driven by staff in the College. Other staff commented that the learning design support was useful but inadequately resourced, highlighting that while they were able to access point-of-need support for developing interactive online learning, this support was insufficient for whole-of-course redevelopment work. Moreover, staff emphasised that they would like to see a stronger and more reciprocal relationship with CILT, in particular, academic development and educational quality. The current relationship is perceived as a barrier to fulsome engagement in the processes of curriculum renewal which would leverage good practice in technology enhanced learning.

Some staff observed that the efforts by the Student Learning Support Service to embed resources into FLO sites appeared useful but resulted in an effort in 'locking down' their rubrics and sites. In addition, there was a general lack of awareness of services offered by CILT and other portfolios in terms of support for technology and for teaching and learning. Staff also requested training and support for digital tools not within the remit of the eLearning team (including the Microsoft Suite). It was consistently noted that current efforts, such as tip sheets, training and good practice guides do not support staff in their skill development. Currently, it is perceived that the resources provided through tip sheets are not engaging, timely or useful. Overall, staff felt that they were stifled, rather than supported, by extant training offerings and preferred the **just-in-time support and strategic advice** offered by the eLearning team embedded in the College.

Working with Specific Technologies

- **FLO** - Overall, staff had high praise for FLO as a platform for communication with students. While some staff raised issues of slowness and accessibility problems, for some international students, the overwhelming messaging was that FLO as a platform was a good starting place for learning and teaching. Issues in this space emerged, however, particularly as staff saw a need to hone and build on tools presently available in FLO. Consistently, across focus groups, staff expressed the concern that while the tools available on FLO could often be made to do what they wanted, there was often a perception of unnecessary set-up or configuration before the tools would work in a reasonable way.
- **Collaborate -** Staff have emphasised issues with specific limitations in the Collaborate virtual classroom environment: with group sizes, response latency, file sharing, participant visibility 'on screen', and navigating between and gathering feedback from breakout groups. While the integration of Collaborate into FLO provides relatively straightforward scheduling capacity, access to recorded sessions and reliable recording of sessions are further stressors. In addition, in the College some staff have expressed issues with accessibility and stability of Collaborate sessions, particularly when teaching interstate or overseas students. Overall, several groups of staff have moved to alternative virtual teaching environments. These include the supported Microsoft Teams environment, as well as unsupported tools such as Zoom.

Success Stories and Aspirations

Digital education is not necessarily high-tech. When asked about which aspects of digital education they are most pleased with, staff have highlighted the benefits of experimenting with the mainstream tools such as the ones currently available to teachers, including Microsoft suite, Moodle and Kaltura, to create and share media. Many colleagues have improved their ability to use them effectively.

- Kaltura (Geography) and Collaborate (Tourism, Screen and Media) have been used to enhance students' oral presentation and feedback skills. Collaborate also enabled Screen and Media to hold successful online forums, connecting guest lecturers, students and their families.

- Online projects (placements in Tourism and PhD fieldwork in Geography) have been a success, yielding good outcomes.

- Staff have modified conventional lectures to make them more appealing to students and better integrated pedagogically within the curriculum. A series of short videos have been coupled with longer seminars for interactive learning in ENGL2140 (English), and video essays have been created to diversify delivery modes (Screen and Media). Online lectures have also been reported to encourage introverts to contribute to classes (English). In Tourism, 5-minute introductory videos in combination with PPT slides have helped lecturers connect with online students. In Indigenous Studies, lecture recordings from the Art Museum, joint by guest lecturers, helped address complex topics in a personable and engaging way. These initiatives have generally resulted in high student satisfaction. Preparation of online lectures has also been reported to invite lecturers to be more organised and prepare for classes in advance.

- Asynchronous discussion forums on FLO can be very effective in facilitating social collaborative learning and sustaining activity beyond the classroom. Examples included students discussing each other's photographs of ruins in Introduction to Cultural Heritage Management (Archaeology), and communities of learners that have at times thrived online in comparison to face-to-face groups (Languages).

- PowerPoint can assist in generating interest and adding value to content during presentations through the use of embedded media and animations. Recordings of PowerPoint presentations are highly rated by students and, if carefully designed, slides from presentations also provide material for study that is both convenient and clear (Languages, Philosophy).

- The adoption of the new HTML Topic guide template on FLO has improved the quality and clarity of how important information and instructions are communicated to students. It is quite straightforward and well laid-out (History, Philosophy).

- Podcasts have been created as a version of 'extra reading' and as an assessment item which is easy to assess when coupled with a transcript (English).

- With external funding support, Archaeology was able to create animated, captioned, accessible digital content in Blender and practical demonstrations of archaeological practice through digital media for the underwater methods class with positive student engagement. The UK Nautical Archaeological Society requested to license this content.

The aspirations that staff would like to achieve, providing they had the necessary support and resources, include a wide range of ideas, some of which highlight the value of and the desire for collaboration:

- A Scientific Visualisation Centre, used for digital heritage topics combining the skills of archaeology and creative industry to teach digital heritage visualisation and preservation. Other disciplines that would also benefit from such a centre are Indigenous Studies where images of built and non-built environments are integral to students experiencing the lens of Kaurna and neighbouring nations, and Geography and Tourism where there is a strong need for connecting students with global communities in the absence of field trips and the technological challenges with embedding Google Earth technology in classrooms.

- To combine quality lecture recordings with hybrid forums to facilitate conversations around them, using a team-teaching approach, and to procure a local First Nation digital artist to represent the core teaching themes visually and consistently onto the digital interface of each topic: Relationality, Cultural Transformation, Identity and Resistance, Social and Emotional Wellbeing.

- To establish models for best practice that can be applied and adapted to a variety of likely teaching conditions and to develop 1) an asynchronous online undergrad topic which teaches students how to video edit, sound, mix and colour grade at a very basic level, for all Screen and Media students or anyone at university who wants to enrol; 2) potentially, a new short topic or short course on independent film-making (e.g. travel videos) (Screen and Media); 3) to design a team topic that is

best practice (Geography); 4) a postgraduate digital program to reach students in less wealthy countries (Tourism).

- To ensure that digital education strategies are as equitable as possible in order to maximise its potential (History).

- To enable students to create digital content as part of student-led teaching and assessment and identify the right tools and approaches to cater to the needs of individual students as broadly as possible and to foster work readiness (English).

- To engage with the evolution of materials from the traditional, expensive textbooks to more flexible packages and delivery and to seek increased support from the library to host online materials and activities (Languages).

- To explore strategies for more interactive online teaching, particularly gamification (Philosophy, Languages).

Ways Forward for Digital Education

Special groups for attention: Vice-President and Executive Dean for CHASS, Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching Innovation), Deputy-Vice Chancellor (Students), IDS Platforms Lead (Student Learning & Teaching), Associate Director (Online Learning and Teaching), Deans (Education).

Theme	Summary	Stakeholders
Staff Wellbeing and Workload	**Workload compensation (First Priority)** Awarding staff workload allocation units for curricular development which meets the College's Digital Education Plan recommendations for flexibility and sustainability, including recognising delivery of online learning as resource intensive. Moreover, consideration of staff leadership of initiatives in sharing practice in a CoP model. To foster good online teaching, the University must reconsider the workload model to acknowledge these efforts and employ more teaching staff.	Dean (P&R) Workload planning
Resourcing and Other Supports	**Hybrid teaching infrastructure (First Priority)** Investment in rooms and facilities which support video conferencing using multiple cameras, in-room microphones and dynamic switching of video through a standardised central control panel which operates with the University's online classroom technology. This must be consistent across rooms around the university to ensure staff have appropriate know-how to leverage technologies. **High quality (professional and impactful) video resources (First Priority)** Dedicated specialist support for creating and maintaining competitive (professional and trustworthy, with consistent Flinders look and feel) and impactful (effective at achieving learning objectives) content that is superior in visual and educational quality to any free alternatives that students can find online. **Library resources (First Priority)** Investment in further resourcing through the Library to enable more copies of digital text-books, access to journals and readings, and multimedia support to enable easy on-campus and at-home access to audio-visual materials which are equitably accessible.	Corporate services (PFD) Library (Learning and Teaching Librarians)

	Point of need and professional learning Concomitantly with the CoP (above), tailored point-of-need support should be considered for delivery in discipline/teaching teams to support staff where they are at for technology enhanced learning development. Brief training videos should be available on demand for using technology in context. Moreover, staff should be supported to develop curriculum which leverages relevant technology (LD).	Online Learning and Teaching Team College (Academics)
Pedagogy	**Digital Education CoP Channel and Online Depository** Staff facilitated, centralised peer exchange, supported through workload allocation, which enables timely sharing of practice and storage of resources at point of need during curricular development and pedagogical design (Appendix B). **Models for leveraging technology (First Priority)** Research-informed models for employing digital education strategies across a range of delivery modes (including fully online and hybrid) to enable and facilitate student immersion in the university community and rigorous learning. Information on available models (and approaches and tools within them) will facilitate the process of adoption by those who need more guidance in this area.	College (Academics) Learning Designer College (Teaching Specialists)
Student Experience and Performance	**Online Study Skills Foundation Course (First Priority)** A drop-in module (similar to the Academic Integrity Module) which enables students to develop necessary online study skills and relevant dispositions towards self-paced and flexible delivery modes to set them in good stead for their university career.	College Student Learning Support Service
Centralised Timetabling	**Accounting for modes of delivery (First Priority)** Timetabling systems do not currently have the capability to enable multiple modes of delivery for a single timetabled class. This introduces two complications: staff are unable to find what rooms are capable of working for hybrid/online teaching, and students are not adequately notified about the availability being face-to-face or online in order prepare for learning. The information available to students about what particular availabilities are online and what the expectations are for those students is critical to the ongoing success of hybrid/online teaching. The timetabling system needs to be adapted to suit this information conveyed to students.	Student Administrative Services

	Flexibility for teaching hours Current timetabled hours for teaching fall between 9am – 5pm on weekdays with special exemptions for out of hours teaching. This should be reconsidered in light of increasing numbers of offshore international students whose time differences may be better supported through after-hours classes, and access for students who may have employment or other requirements throughout their 'work hours', this should be factored into staff workload and working hours for suitability.	Dean (P&R) Student Administrative Services
Working with Specific Technologies	**Collaborate (First Priority)** Review the use of Collaborate as the endorsed virtual classroom environment for enhanced flexibility, more 'faces' on screen, better interactivity between multiple participants, centralised breakout-group boards/screen sharing and better announcement and collaboration capabilities (Appendix B). **Investment in unsupported technologies** Some staff are employing licenses to various educational technologies including Zoom, Padlet, Lucid, IdeazBoard and the TurnItIn Feedback Studio. These technologies should be piloted through the University's technology pilot process and serious consideration should be given towards investing in technologies that many staff are using. **FLO** Determine how FLO can better enable active sharing of learning and be used to fluidly and proactively collaborate on projects and learning experiences (Appendix B).	Student Learning and Teaching (IDS) CILT executive Learning Designers Online Learning and Teaching Online Learning and Teaching Student Learning and Teaching (IDS)
Orchestration	**Coordinated approaches to digital education** Recommendations above form part of a comprehensive strategy required to address each key tangent essential for the improvement of digital education strategies across the University. In order to be successful this requires orchestration at leadership levels for teaching and learning. Moreover, given the multi-dimensional nature of digital education; spanning technology enhanced face-to-face teaching, through hybrid hyflex classrooms, serious consideration is needed towards coordinating an approach across the University.	CILT DVC (S) PVC (LTI) Deans (Education)

Appendices

Appendix A – Discussion Guide

The findings in this report were organised around the following open-ended semi-structured focus group questions:

Views:

1. What does digital education mean to you?
2. How does digital education impact on your discipline?
3. How does this fit with your pedagogical views and approach?

Practices:

4. Which aspects of your digital education are you most pleased with?
5. What sources of support for digital education are you using?

Future:

6. What are your ambitions in this space for your discipline?
7. What would enable you to achieve this?

The operationalised aims of conducting the research were:

1. To understand the current online learning and teaching practices in the College;
2. To support the professional learning and resourcing needs of teaching staff in the College;
3. To gather evidence on current discipline-based models of learning and teaching; and
4. To synthesise current good practice with practice in the College.

Importantly, the questions in the focus groups were partly designed around two key recommendations of the College's Digital Education Plan. These important cornerstones of the College's strategy are made possible through staff input. The relevant recommendations from the plan are:

1. The College will increase digital approaches to curriculum delivery with the aim of offering flexible study options to students. Where possible, topics will have the capability to cater for online students either synchronously or asynchronously. Exceptions will be made in relation to practice-based topics.

2. The concept of lectures will be reconsidered to adapt to contemporary education and online delivery. This will be achieved through critical reflection on the current practices, adoption of innovative forms of content delivery including interactive narrative formats.

Appendix B – Selected Expanded Recommendations

Digital Education CoP Channel and Online Depository

Interest by Staff

A need for professional communities of practice was raised as a consistent barrier to undertaking professional learning in the College. Each discipline group raised a need to understand each other's practices, in particular the necessity for facilitated sharing of practices with an expert pedagogue or facilitator. They felt that there was a need to learn from each other about emergent practices, and to be empowered to explore and understand how these might be applied in their teaching. A living reflective space where multi-disciplinary contributors can share trialed use of tools **embedded in their own rich teaching contexts** is what has been identified as one of the priorities.

Old Concept, New Format

An opportunity has arisen to leverage staff teaching practice as shareable and real-world snippets. Indeed, many staff are well on the way to engaging in leadership of high-quality pedagogy across the college. Research demonstrates that intentional communities of practice can be effective for idea development and support if mobilised around common practices[4]. However, CoPs are not without complication and practice and research highlight, that CoPs can be ineffective and not clearly understood by their communities, particularly when formed inorganically[5],[6]. **Success is determined** by 1) the media used to facilitate these exchanges 2) the agreed conventions of such exchanges 3) staff motivation for being regular contributors, and 4) adequate workload allocations.

In regards to **technological media**, CoP channels are widely adopted by industry professionals. One example is Research Ops on Slack. As can be seen from the screenshot below, such communities can have multiple problem-specific sub-channels, and their availability as web and mobile applications facilitates the exchange further, as members can participate whenever it is convenient for them. This particular community has dedicated admin roles, one of which is to facilitate monthly 'donuts' – random pairing of researchers, where members can meet new peers and talk about whatever is relevant for them on the day.

The technologies currently available to CHASS include Microsoft Teams and FLO discussion forums. A Microsoft Teams channel was created in 2020 during the emergency transition by the e-Learning team. While some staff engaged in regular exchanges, overall, it did not see the uptake expected. An example of an online depository is the DEWG FLO Library, created for the purpose of this research. What the College can benefit from is staff input on what a positive online CoP experience would look like for them.

[4] Gherardi, S. (2009). Community of Practice or Practices of a Community? In S. J. Armstrong & C. V. Fukami (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Management Learning, Education and Development* (pp. 514–530). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4135/9780857021038.n27

[5] de Carvalho-Filho, M. A., Tio, R. A., & Steinert, Y. (2020). Twelve tips for implementing a community of practice for faculty development. *Medical Teacher, 42*(2), 143–149.

[6] Li, L. C., Grimshaw, J. M., Nielsen, C., Judd, M., Coyte, P. C., & Graham, I. D. (2009). Evolution of Wenger's concept of community of practice. *Implementation Science, 4*(1), 11.

Regarding **agreed conventions**, it is recommended to address the following considerations:

- Rich context-based in constructively aligned learning objectives, attached to assessment design, demonstrating the curricular placement of an activity;
- Discussion of the technological tool and its role in augmenting the practices of teaching/learning; and
- Reflections on possible improvements or other areas of application for the tool, sequence and learning design.

While such a community would depend on the College's learning designer to support sharing and training around tool use, the ownership would reside with staff, who are more likely in a distributed mode, to be able to assist one another at a point of need. Furthermore, as highlighted, disciplines across HASS bring unique perspectives and teaching methods where facilitation of robust practice-sharing could enable further cross-discipline interaction and collaboration.

Workload allocation is another critical success factor. To encourage staff to participate, the community of practice would need to be fully embedded into business as usual across the College's teaching and learning processes. Such a community would require adequate workload modelling to support the formal and informal aspects of maintaining a virtual community of practice. Here staff would need to be incentivised to champion particular aspects of digital learning in and out of their discipline areas. As such, staff robustly engaged in the community of practice, with demonstrable outputs, should be considered for workload compensation and their service and leadership in the community should be a consideration for the Teaching Awards committee(s) across the university. Moreover, as a likely activity of the College's Teaching Academy the group may need access to budget to invite speakers and offer in-depth training and support for colleagues.

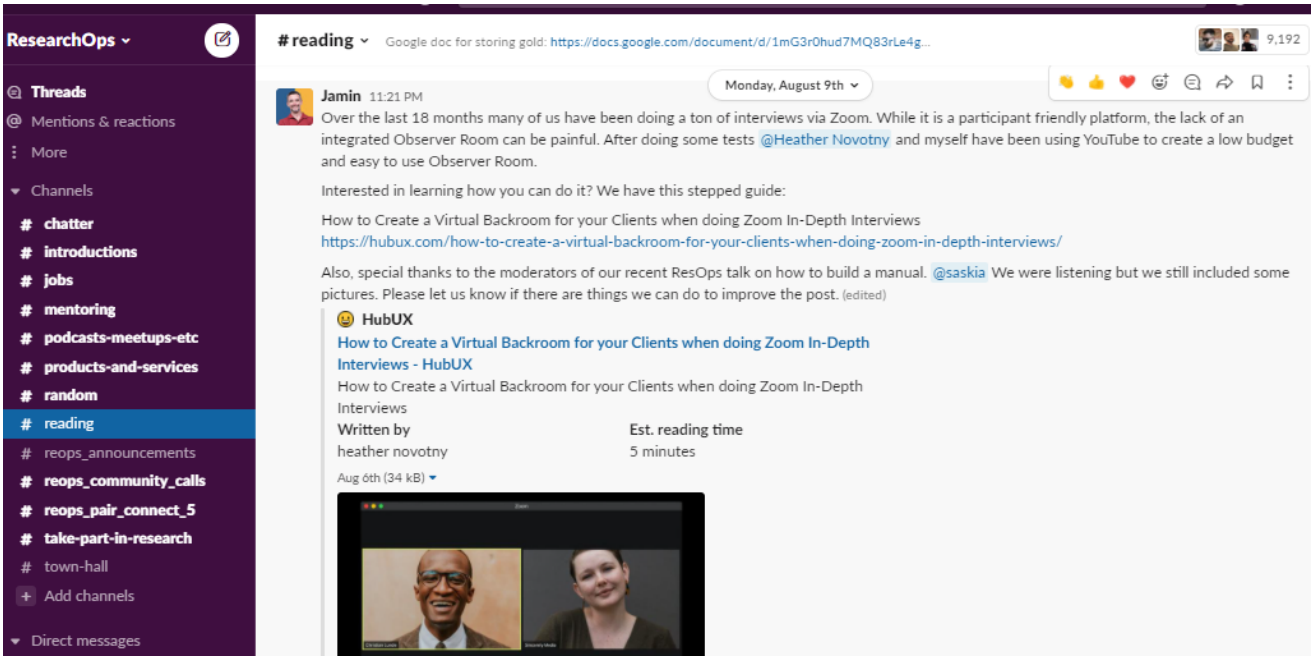

Image 1: Example of member exchanges a digital CoP channel (Research Ops in Slack)

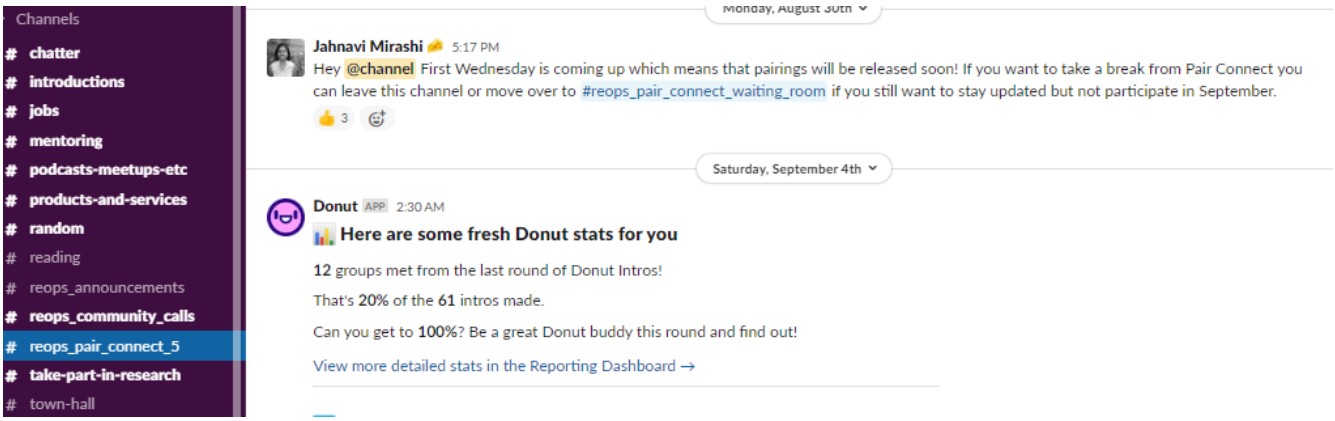

Image 2: Example of organised peer meetups in a digital CoP channel (Research Ops in Slack).

FLO and Collaborate

There was acknowledgement from staff, particularly those who were aligned with the use of online tools, that no platform is perfect. However, there are some key areas for further improvement in the FLO ecosystem before it could be considered a contemporary and useful platform particularly for hybrid, collaborative, flipped and online classes. Areas for improvement raised by staff included:

- Tools for assessment that enable students to build on previous feedback by staff and act on their assessments to incorporate the feedback given;
- Tools such as Cadmus which provide access to supplemental learning for students as they write their assignments;
- Tools which facilitate rich feedback, such as video and audio feedback for less technologically-literate staff;
- Tools which help students proactively address potential academic integrity concerns as they write (such as the TurnItIn Feedback studio);
- Tools for self-assessment and peer-assessment which are less structured and dependent on topic coordinator input; and
- Improved access to analytics on student engagement and assessment tasks to pre-empt problems and provide solutions.

Collaborate was found to be a less capable tool for synchronous contact with students. Some staff found that Collaborate worked for discussion-based activities, delivery of content and structured learning, but anything more interactive, practical or demonstrative required another platform (some disciplines use personal Zoom licenses). Areas for improvement raised included:

- Ability to see multiple faces at once on screen simultaneously to create a sense of community;
- Sharing content from multiple sources in an interactive way. It was perceived that the practicalities of using other tools made it possible to actually engage with students. This included features in other platforms such as use of different cameras for demonstrative topics, the ability to broadcast chat messages into breakout groups, and the ability to capture and record conversations in breakout groups after closing them;
- A list of countries where the technology would work would aid in communication about expectations. A particular difficulty was international students' connection speeds and, generally, access to Collaborate from China. Some staff needed to resort to the use of Teams or Zoom.