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Digital education in the disciplines:

A snapshot of digital teaching, learning & assessment practices in Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences

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Purpose of this report

This report has been written as part of Trinity College's Digital by Design project, funded by the Irish National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. The Digital by Design project aims to build capacity for digital education across the disciplines within Trinity College, building on what we have learned from our pandemic experiences of digital learning.

The purpose of this report is to provide a snapshot overview of digital teaching, learning and assessment practices within Arts, Humanities and Social Science disciplines, including those within Trinity and across the broader national and international higher education sector. By profiling and disseminating these practices, this report aims to support and inspire academics and those with teaching responsibilities at third level to enhance digital teaching and learning practices within their disciplines.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this report, we have taken commonly used terms to have a particular meaning as follows:

Blended learning refers to learning that integrates complementary face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences.

Digital assessment is an assessment approach or process which is enabled by digital technologies. This includes:
- assessments which are fully enabled by digital technologies and often defined by their use of technology—such as blogs, wikis, online discussion fora, virtual simulations, multimedia artefacts.
- more traditional assessment types, elements of which are now often enabled using digital technologies—such as essays, annotated bibliographies, presentations.
- assessments which have moved into a digital context due to Covid-19, but may also be undertaken in traditional face-to-face formats—such as performances or debates (Academic Practice, 2021).

Digital learning refers to the use of digital technologies to enable and/or facilitate learning and teaching experiences, activities and processes. Digital learning encompasses a wide variety of learning models and approaches including blended, hybrid, hyflex or online learning.

Hybrid learning refers to modules or programmes that can be taken simultaneously by online and on-campus students working together as a single cohort. Also called "hybrid-flexible" or "hyflex" learning.

Hyflex learning combines the terms 'hybrid' and 'flexible'. Often used interchangeably with the term 'hybrid learning', students have a choice in how they participate in the module—in the classroom or online or both.

Online learning is any form of learning which is facilitated wholly via the internet, encompassing both asynchronous and/or synchronous activities.

Pedagogy, defined broadly, refers to the practice of teaching and its associated discourse of educational theories, values and evidence (Alexander, 2009).

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Foreword

The enforced closure of university campuses, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, has placed digital learning at the heart of higher education. For many it has led to the re-invention of teaching, learning and assessment practices across the disciplines, taking advantage of the affordances of digital technologies. In a short period of time, educators across the sector have developed core pedagogic competencies in digital teaching and learning, competencies which have long been deemed essential for a digital age (National Forum 2015).

However, while the pandemic led to significant pedagogical innovation in some programmes, it has also presented many challenges. For many educators, time pressures and limited experience of digital pedagogies resulted in a "quick-fix" whereby long-standing pedagogies (often dominated by traditional lecture delivery) were rapidly moved online (Academic Practice, 2022). In addition, the necessity to deliver programmes remotely presented challenges for educators and students, with particular difficulties emerging for pedagogies supportive of experiential, laboratory, and work-based learning.

Recognising these ongoing challenges and the clear need to build digital pedagogic capacity at personal, disciplinary and organisational level, the Digital by Design project was developed with the intention of:
- equipping educators with core pedagogic competencies for digital learning, teaching and assessment;
- enabling the development of differentiated digital learning strategies which address discipline-specific competencies;
- building and supporting disciplinary Communities of Practice focused on digital education within cognate fields.

This report, authored by Research Assistants within the Digital by Design project team, was written as part of the initial research phase of the project and is one of three research reports, each of which focuses on disciplinary pedagogies within the three Faculties at Trinity College: Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences (AHSS), Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) and Health Sciences. With a focus on AHSS disciplines, this report provides a snapshot overview of digital education practices in research-intensive universities within Ireland and internationally, particularly those practices enacted during the emergency pandemic "pivot" to online delivery.

I would like to thank our Research Assistants, Fiona, Ariana and Kathleen, for their commitment and professionalism while researching and writing this report. We are more convinced than ever that if we are to build on what we have learned during the pandemic, guidance and support on the effective design and development of blended and digital learning is essential. Providing an insight into the practices and experiences of other AHSS educators during the pandemic, we hope that you find this report useful in informing your own pedagogic practices as we move beyond emergency delivery towards a post-pandemic "normal".

Dr. Pauline Rooney, Digital by Design Project Lead

Introduction

The sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 forced many educators to shift to an online mode of teaching overnight, posing an unexpected challenge to universities that had previously offered primarily on-campus learning (Crawford et al., 2020). As institutions have since adapted to the move, many now offer a blended model of education, providing both in-person and online instruction (Ju & Choi, 2017). The shift to what has been referred to as Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT) (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020) revealed vast differences in the institutional and individual approaches taken to address the crisis. Before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning was considered an alternative educational model in comparison to traditional in-person methods of learning (Srichaiyarat & Lao-Amata, 2020). While the impact on teaching, learning and assessment has been significant, it has also presented opportunities for developing digital capabilities among the teaching community (Ginty, 2021).

This report provides a snapshot overview of digital teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) practices in Arts, Humanities and Social Science disciplines (AHSS), particularly in the context of the emergency "pivot" to online delivery during the pandemic.

It should be noted that while there are numerous journal articles available on digital TLA during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bartolic et al., 2021; Hensley, Iaconelli, & Wolters, 2021; Oliveira, Grenha Teixeira, Torres, & Morais, 2021; Shin & Hickey, 2021), there is limited discipline-specific information relating to the higher education disciplines of AHSS (Bose, 2021). Although there are several published studies on teaching the Arts at primary and secondary level (Shaw & Mayo, 2021), the lack of literature makes it challenging to identify the specific challenges and opportunities of digital TLA within the AHSS disciplines at third level.

This report aims to:

- identify current and emerging practices in digital teaching, learning and assessment within AHSS disciplines at Trinity, nationally and internationally, inclusive of in-person, blended, hybrid/hyflex and online approaches;
- gain an insight into the effectiveness of digital TLA approaches, and their limitations and challenges;
- explore student and staff perspectives on, and experiences of, digital teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in the context of the pandemic period;
- reflect on implications for teaching, learning and assessment over the longer term, and, in particular, how institutions might support staff to develop and innovate in digital education provision.

Methodology

A desktop research methodology was adopted for the purposes of this report, with a focus on research-intensive national and international universities. Due to the emerging and evolving nature of many digital TLA practices, university sources constituted the primary focus of investigation, including institutional repositories, websites and institution-affiliated news sources (for example,

blogs and online newspapers). For consistency during the research process, information was collected for those disciplines within the AHSS Faculty at Trinity College Dublin.

A search string was composed using key terms relating to digital TLA within AHSS disciplines. The inclusion criteria were limited to articles and/or digital learning projects conducted after 2015 that were available in English. Sources were included if they related to digital TLA practices implemented in higher education AHSS disciplines, inclusive of in-person, blended, hybrid/hyflex and online approaches. Journal databases such as Taylor & Francis and SAGE Journals were also consulted. All examples of digital TLA practices were compiled within a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and sorted according to the pedagogical strategy underpinning the activity (for example, problem-based learning, team-based learning, etc.). The sections that follow provide an overview of our key findings.

Teaching & learning practices/signature pedagogies in AHSS

When exploring digital TLA practices within any discipline, it is useful to consider underpinning teaching and learning practices or signature pedagogies. The term 'signature pedagogy', coined by Shulman (2005), refers to the forms or styles of teaching that are common to specific disciplines, areas of study, or professions. Signature pedagogies are defined as "the types of teaching that organise the fundamental ways in which future practitioners are educated for their new professions" (Schulman, 2005, p. 52).

AHSS encompasses a wide range of academic fields. For example, the 'Humanities' refers to a vast number of disciplines, including Philosophy, Languages, Religion, and Business (Feldt & Petersen, 2021). While the traditional style of teacher-directed curriculum-based teaching is a common feature of teaching within the Humanities (Feldt & Petersen, 2021), there are a wide range of pedagogical approaches employed. The following selection of pedagogical approaches, while by no means exhaustive, provides an overview of common teaching and learning approaches within AHSS disciplines.

Critique

Critique is the use of oral or written discussion to analyse an artefact. Critique is an accepted signature pedagogy in the performing arts (Kornetsky, 2017) and in both visual fine arts and visual design-orientated programmes (Motley, Chick, & Hipchen, 2017). Traditionally, critique was conveyed hierarchically, with the educator delivering feedback to the student. However, this method has changed to a more integrated approach where equal voice is given to self, peer and faculty critique (Kearns, 2016). Critique is used in the studio, classroom, and rehearsal hall to teach students theory and practical skills.

Case-based learning

Case-based learning (CBL) is an active pedagogy that places students at the heart of a complex problem that is based on a real-life example or one that is designed to be similar to the types of problems that occur in real-life (Penn, Currie, Hoad, & O'Brien, 2016). Crossing disciplinary approaches, CBL can assist students in concept-based problem solving, by placing them in realistic scenarios where they can work individually or in groups (Martin & Beese, 2020).

Experiential/Practice-based learning

Learning by 'doing and making' is a common pedagogical approach in a number of Arts disciplines. This practice-based approach affords the student the opportunity to enact what it means to be an artist, designer or performer, by linking processes and skills in order to gain an understanding of what it means to practice (Shreeve, Sims, & Trowler, 2010).

Problem-based learning

Problem-based learning (PBL) is a student-centred pedagogy that encourages students to identify and research the concepts and principles required to solve complex problems (Hansen, 2006).

Project-based learning

Project-based learning (PjBL) is described as a comprehensive approach to teaching (Blumenfeld et al., 1991). It is an inquiry-based instructional method whereby students (individually or in groups) engage in knowledge construction in order to develop solutions and products that address real-world challenges (Guo, Saab, Post, & Admiraal, 2020). What distinguishes PjBL from other inquiry-based pedagogies, such as problem-based learning, is "the creation of artifacts that solve authentic problems" (Guo et al., 2020, p. 2).

Team-based learning

Team-based learning (TBL) is an active learning strategy that addresses the challenges of motivating students to prepare for a class as well as engage in class activities (Ruder, Maier, & Simkins, 2021). Students are placed in 'fixed teams' where they are encouraged to work productively together. They are required to be accountable to both the educator and fellow teammates for their input and their out-of-class preparation. TBL encourages students to foster responsibility for their own learning as well as that of their team (Thomas & McPherson, 2011).

Digital teaching, learning & assessment in AHSS

During the COVID-19 pandemic, a range of digital TLA strategies were utilised across AHSS disciplines, facilitating the migration of signature AHSS pedagogies to remote delivery. However these were not without challenges. Before exploring exemplars of how these pedagogical approaches were facilitated, this section provides an overview of general digital TLA strategies which were evident in the AHSS literature, including staff and student experiences and emerging challenges. It is noteworthy that when conducting this research, discipline-specific information for AHSS was scarce—a finding echoed by Bose (2021) who notes the scarcity of literature on online teaching for undergraduate law and economics. This highlights the need for further research and supports in this area.

Moving lecture-based delivery online

In many institutions during the pandemic, a common approach to emergency remote teaching was to replicate in-person activities in an online environment (Bond et al., 2021). Face-to-face lectures moved online and were delivered either synchronously through videoconferencing platforms, such as Microsoft Teams or Zoom (Srichaiyarat & Lao-Amata, 2020), or asynchronously via virtual learning environments (VLEs) such as Blackboard, Canvas and Moodle. Therefore, for many students, other than delivery being remote/online, there was little change in teaching strategy.

Flipped classroom

In contrast to this, several institutions implemented a flipped classroom approach, where students were given course material in advance of a lecture, freeing up class time for discussion and questions. Some lecturers who adopted this approach circulated previously recorded lectures (Khan, 2020), shared webpages (University of Oxford Centre for Teaching & Learning, 2020), and other preparatory materials such as videos, articles and discussion boards (Horn, 2020). A few educators are preparing to embed the flipped classroom in future programmes, as they found it enabled lively engagement (Horn, 2020). At one such institution, student feedback regarding language learning suggested that the use of online learning improved the speed at which foreign languages were acquired (University of Oxford Centre for Teaching & Learning, 2021b). This was attributed to the use of the flipped classroom approach, where students spent the majority of their study time working on language structures in advance of a half-hour online conversational activity. Using the flipped classroom model provided students with more opportunities to exercise their language skills in a practical way.

Building a community online

Some institutions utilised digital tools to provide their students with experiences that physical barriers may have prevented in an in-person scenario. For instance, in a Psychology course at Harvard University, a professor hosted a podcast-style class, where students were joined by a different author each week for a short interview and discussion following a reading of the author's

work (Khan, 2020). At the University of Liverpool, a series of webinars was held to complement workshops for research students (Cooper, 2020). These webinars were reported to facilitate peer interaction and foster a research community within the University. Fine Art students at the University of Oxford were provided with a virtual space called 'The Bench' to meet, discuss projects and share objects while access to a communal studio space was restricted (Triming & Simblet, 2020). These projects helped to facilitate peer interaction and form a sense of community in a digital space, which is often seen as a challenge of online learning.

Moving assessment online

There were variations in reported assessment practices during COVID-19. A 2021 survey conducted at the University of Queensland noted that the majority of academics (90%) had not substantially changed their existing assessment structure in the rapid move to online teaching. A common approach to delivering online assessments, across the institution's various departments, was to simply use an alternative, online, delivery mode (Slade et al., 2021). For instance, for Drama students, a collaborative performance research assignment that involved a 10-minute group performance took place on Zoom instead of at a physical drama studio (Slade et al., 2021). The authors proposed that assessment became somewhat of an afterthought, the focus being on pedagogical interactions with students. Suggested reasons for this outcome may be that existing assessment formats are linked to specific learning outcomes; there was also the perception among some academics that lack of time was a barrier to the introduction of new modes of assessment. This is in contrast to an earlier US study which found that 64% of respondents had made changes to the kinds of assignments and exams that they were asking students to undertake with some 46% of staff respondents, dropping some assignments or exams altogether (Johnson, Veletsianos, & Seaman, 2020).

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) conducted an analysis of changes to teaching, learning and assessment practices across a number of Irish higher education institutions which were implemented as a result of the pandemic (QQI., 2020). Results of their research showed that alternative modes of assessment took place in lieu of invigilated in-person examinations. These included open-book examinations with a long-time window, open-book examinations with a short time window and alternative forms of assessment. Several institutions issued guidelines to Faculty and staff on how alternative assessments could be implemented. For example, University College Dublin (UCD) offered guidance on alternatives for the end-of-term formal exam (takeaway, open book exams; online quizzes and assignments) as well as options for continuous assessment (using the College VLE: online assignment submission; online quizzes and video presentations) (UCD Teaching & Learning, 2020). At the University of Oxford, an e-assessment platform, *Inspera Assessment,* was implemented across all departments, where previously it had only been used in the Medical Sciences Division (University of Oxford, 8 February 2021). Apart from facilitating online open-book exams and coursework submission, it had the added advantage of offering students the opportunity to take practice exams.

At Harvard University, with a return to campus-based teaching in late 2021, some educators continued to conduct online assessments, such as Zoom oral examinations for Spanish studies (Nair, 2021). Psychology students at the same university continued to undertake exams remotely

during the 2021-22 academic year. However, recognising that that this can present challenges for some students due to living environments, they were also given the option to sit exams in the physical classroom if they did not have access to a quiet space in their dormitories.

The next section will provide some additional case studies of innovative digital teaching & learning approaches within the AHSS disciplines, some of which were implemented in direct response to the pivot to online learning in early 2020.

Moving signature pedagogies online in AHSS: exemplars

Critique

Critique (or "crits" as they are commonly called) is an important TLA activity within the Fine Arts. During the pandemic, individual and group critiques for Fine Art students at the University of Oxford were held over Microsoft Teams (University of Oxford Centre for Teaching & Learning, 2020). Students presented their studio work via web camera or sent links and photos in advance of a crit, which were distributed by the tutor to the entire group. Some students used the web camera for performance pieces. If students wished to speak during the crit, they could use the chat box or the 'raise hand' function. Teaching staff found online delivery to be advantageous in continuing conversations with students and providing peer feedback for students. However, the amount of screen time required to conduct the critiques, in addition to technical difficulties, was challenging for students (University of Oxford Centre for Teaching & Learning, 2020).

Case-based learning

Educators utilised a range of digital tools to enact case-based learning remotely. At Monash University, Social Work students undertook a modified Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCEs) (Bay, Maghidman, Waugh, & Shlonsky, 2021). To help students prepare for the OSCEs, teaching staff developed online Clinical Practice Laboratories (CPLs). The aim was to improve students' clinical communication skills, particularly for students who did not speak English as a first language. Out of 154 students in the course, 83 (<50%) were identified as having English as an additional language. Each of the three synchronous CPLs took place over Zoom in groups of 16 students. Each two-hour long CPL was based on a unique client scenario. Trained actors were recruited to simulate a client that the students might encounter in a professional setting, staying in character for the session's duration. The first CPL aimed to improve students' understanding of the client's presenting problems. The second CPL was dedicated to practicing summarising the case at hand. The third, and final, CPL focused on reflecting on the client's feelings, with the aim of demonstrating empathy with a client.

Those students who engaged with the online CPLs prior to summative OSCE exams performed equally well to students from previous years. However, one challenge which arose for students during online CPLS was being able to accurately identify the simulated client's emotional state, which proved difficult for many. The reasons for this were unclear: while it may have been due to a

lack of cultural awareness, constraints of the digital environment may also have caused difficulties. To resolve this, students were asked to consider the cultural differences in which emotions are expressed via anonymous evaluation. Feedback was generally positive with many students reporting that the CPLs helped them to prepare for the OSCE examination. Most students appreciated the peer interaction and expressed a desire for more opportunities to work with simulated clients (Bay et al., 2021).

At the University of Oxford's English Literature department, a five-part lecture series, entitled 'Democratising the Classics' was designed to depict the influence of classical literature on the eighteenth century's middle class (University of Oxfore Centre for Teaching & Learning, 2021a). A key component of the class was to illustrate this influence through examining objects from this period. Educators used *Cabinet*, an online platform that allows users to upload and present 2D and 3D digitised images which can be annotated or magnified. The educators noted that *Cabinet* enhanced the study of materials that were typically text-based. While developing the course was labour and time-intensive, students were able to interact with digital representations of objects in a manner that would not be possible in a physical space. Additionally, students had access to a wide repository of video and audio artefacts that served as a revision tool.

In 2018, Sociology, Social policy and Criminology students at the University of Liverpool completed case-based digital assessments (University of Liverpool Centre for Innovation in Education, 2018). Students examined historical cases in crime and justice in the 18th century that were stored in online historical datasets. In three-hour sessions, students identified an offender from the department's online resource bank, the *Digital Panopticon*. Students sourced complementary records, such as the British Library's newspaper archives, to produce a case study on the individual's neighbourhood, family and demographic, situating the individual within the context of their society. Students completed two assessment tasks; (1) a short multimedia blog entry for the Digital Panopticon site aimed at national and international family historians, and (2) a short critical essay. Student feedback was positive, with students reporting enjoying the hands-on experience of gathering historical evidence (University of Liverpool Centre for Innovation in Education, 2018).

Experiential/Practise-based Learning

Students who are conducting fieldwork often face challenges as a result of not being physically present on university campuses. At the University of Copenhagen, Anthropology educators have been utilising Salmon's five-step e-tivities model for a number of years with the aim of supporting and facilitating online assessment processes and peer interaction via the University' learning management system, *Absalon* (Jensen, Stenbæk, & Bundgaard, 2016). After an initial face-to-face meeting on campus, students embarked on their respective fieldwork. This was followed by five online assignments which students completed throughout the semester. Students were divided into groups to allow them to network and share their individual projects online. Groups contained two online discussion forums—one for peer assessment and another for academic/social discussions. Feedback from students and staff indicated that reflective assignments, supported by online peer feedback and collaboration, was highly effective, providing both social and academic support throughout the fieldwork process (Jensen et al., 2016).

Problem-based learning

The implementation of problem-based learning in an online or digital context is often seen in the use of digital learning games: indeed many learning games are underpinned by problem-based learning pedagogies (Rooney, 2012). At Cornell University, educators developed such an immersive game-based learning environment to facilitate and assess language learning (Cho, Andersen, & Kizilcec, 2021). Called *DeliveryGhost,* the game aimed to teach beginner level **Mandarin Chinese**, with learners adopting the role of a delivery worker tasked with collecting and delivering items for town characters. To create a linguistically immersive environment, explicit instructions were not included. Instead, expressions were introduced in the context of the users' interactions with virtual characters and complemented by visual aids. Through repetition and completing multiple levels within the game, learners acquired vocabulary and understanding of sentence structure. Learners were rewarded with virtual money and positive feedback from virtual characters when they answered correctly. If the wrong answer was given by the user, a warning noise was played and the virtual characters displayed a negative reaction.

One hundred and fifty nine (159) students took part in the pilot and evaluation of *DeliveryGhost*. Students were assigned to different groups with varied levels of immersion and interactivity. A background survey was conducted to assess current knowledge of Mandarin, in addition to a pre- and post- test survey. Educators found that, regardless of the level of immersion or interactivity, students deemed the game to be a positive learning experience. Challenges identified included managing the cognitive load of learning game rules and becoming familiar with game layout and control mechanisms.

Educators in a **Business** programme at Chiang Mai University, Thailand, designed a gamified digital environment for teaching undergraduate students (Pakinee & Puritat, 2021). Both an online gamified and non-gamified systems were developed, with 72 participating students randomly assigned by the university's learning platform to either the gamified or non-gamified system. The game included a point system and multiple levels measuring the user's progress, in order to encourage the user to work towards a specific goal; a public leaderboard for users to compare their performance to other students; and an avatar to represent the user, boosting their esteem' multiple challenges that required effort from the user. There were higher levels of student engagement in the gamified online system compared to the non-gamified online system. However, in student interviews, students reported feeling less curious about the game as time progressed, indicating the common challenge of maintaining motivation and engagement in learning game design (Paras & Bizzocchi, 2005).

Project-based learning

Project-based learning is commonly implemented via digital education practices, particularly in AHSS disciplines. One such approach was taken by educators in **Art** and **Architecture** at the University of Hong Kong, where students were asked to create produce a digital art exhibitions using *Artsteps*, a free digital tool (Lastra, 2020). In another assessment practice within the same department, instead of completing a traditional written assignment, students were asked to design and develop a video artefact on an art object or monument of their choice. The educator noted

higher levels of engagement among student as they grappled with making their projects interesting to a wider audience.[1]

Using a similar project-based learning approach, final year students in **Communication and Media** at the University of Liverpool were asked to create a short video on a skill or theory that was relevant to their field of interest (Traynor, 2020). The three-minute videos were aimed at potential students for the next academic year and were intended to be accessible to the general public. However, demonstrating that this approach is not without challenges, educators found that the researching and purchasing of required software and equipment was particularly time-consuming (Traynor, 2020).

Team-based learning

The flexibility of online learning can be used effectively to facilitate team-based learning. At UCD's School of **Information and Communication Studies**, an online collaborative note-taking project was implemented by one academic (Deasy, 2020). Students contribute to a collective notes document in each lecture, using BlackBoard's wiki tool, Google Docs and Brightspace. Educators' found that students' note-taking skills improved as a result of working with their peers. This team-based approach to note-taking has since replaced the traditional delivery of lecture notes by academics (Fulton, 2020).

In one module, **Philosophy** students at UCD were encouraged to use audiovisual story-telling to present philosophical theory. Working in groups, students were provided with templates and guides for script-writing to help create a written plan for their videos. Their written plans were subsequently reviewed by their peers and educator in a synchronous online session. An external provider produced draft videos, which were reviewed by the group and educator. The educator placed emphasis on the student's own responsibility to communicate with the external provider and to manage imminent deadlines. Additionally, students produced three posters to explain their topic of choice, using *Canva*. The posters were created in live tutorials under the educator's guidance and were later presented in online sessions. Some students chose to work on their project individually, producing podcasts and audio plays using the free sounding editing tool *Audacity*. The educator noted that the pace at which the students adapted to digital learning approaches varied from student-to-student: as many have previously noted, it should not be assumed that students are digitally fluent or "tech-savvy" (Losh, 2021).

A similar team-based learning approach was adopted in the **Economics** department at University of Copenhagen, where collaborative note-taking helped students to document and share group results with their class (Nielson, 2020). Students were asked to read a chapter from a module text and were subsequently divided into groups based on the chapter they had read. They were then asked to write a short summary of the chapter using the virtual notice-board *Padlet*. As students posted their summaries to the padlet, they had the opportunity to see how others had approached the task, which presented a peer learning opportunity. While it was reported that students took

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[1] Examples of students' videos can be found at https://www.romanesquespain.com/medieval-art-video-project.

some time to adjust to this new approach, their work improved considerably as a result of learning from their peers.

Opportunities & challenges of digital/remote delivery: staff and student perspectives

The Covid-19 pandemic and consequent campus closures led to the rapid move of traditional on-campus programmes to online forms of delivery. This emergency "pivot" (Nordmann et al., 2020) was immediate, with many educators teaching online for the first time—which created multiple challenges for educators, students and institutions.

Commonly reported challenges included maintaining student motivation, decreased social interaction and consequent feelings of isolation (Jones, Samra, & Lucassen, 2021; Yang, 2021; Yıldız, 2021). Some AHSS educators reported missing the atmosphere generated in a physical classroom, and felt that they were not able to gauge students' reactions as easily in an online environment (University of Oxford Centre for Teaching & Learning (2021b). Students reported challenges in maintaining motivation to study, finding it difficult to concentrate on back-to-back online lectures (Yang, 2021) and facing distractions in their home environment (Srichaiyarat & Lao-Amata, 2020). Working collaboratively with peers in an online environment was cited as an additional challenge for many students (Yang, 2021). A 2020 survey circulated to twelve higher education institutions in Wuhan to ascertain the impact of online learning on English education reported that the main challenges facing educators included students' disengagement with online learning and difficulties tracking students' progress in an online environment (Zou, Li, & Jin, 2021). Technical issues also arose for educators and students including unreliable internet connections, inadequate access to required hardware/software etc (Academic Practice, 2022, Li, Li, & Han 2021). Poor internet connectivity sometimes interfered with online activities, particularly synchronous activities which are reliant on stable internet connections (Deasy, 2020; Yıldız, 2021). For students, commonly reported issues concerned poor communication negatively impacting the learning process and a lack of interaction with peers and educators (Academic Practice 2022; Zou et al., 2021). Difficulties with online collaborative group work also emerged (Academic Practice, 2022).

While the emergency move to remote teaching surfaced a multiple challenges for educators and students, it also presented new opportunities for re-thinking long-standing teaching, learning and assessment strategies (Green, 2020). Implementing purposefully designed online TLA practices which are underpinned by a clear pedagogical strategy can assist in providing the interaction needed in the AHSS disciplines. An online survey with **English** teachers reported the availability of game-based platforms, collaborative digital tools and messaging platforms provided varying modes of interaction with students to counteract the physical distance of online learning (Moorhouse, Li, & Walsh, 2021). A **Law** educator at a US university found that asynchronous learning allowed for deeper reflection on the course material, in comparison to an in-person, live class (Bose, 2021). An academic in **Business Management** at the University of Queensland found the transition to online learning strengthened student interaction and feedback regarding assessment development (Slade et al., 2021). At Dublin City University, the institutional VLE and social networking tools were used to create online communities for students and tutors, which were pivotal in creating a sense of belonging (Farrell & Brunton, 2020).

Online learning is not bound by the location or physical presence of students and educators, providing a more dynamic learning experience (Yang, 2021), and is often characterised by learner-centred pedagogical approaches that prioritise active learning (Keengwe, 2010). Online learning provides a flexible model of learning, as students are often able to learn at their own pace, adjusting their studies to suit busy schedules. Self-regulated learning encouraged within online and blending learning environments has been linked to positive outcomes in the AHSS disciplines, such as improved language acquisition for language students (Wargadinata, 2020) and opportunities for independent, active learning in **music education** (Ruokonen & Ruismäki, 2016).

Educators who have never previously encountered digital learning tools quickly upskilled during the pandemic (Deasy, 2020). Some instance reported that the online environment encouraged students to participate more freely and allowed educators to gain a better understanding of their students' progress. For example, at one institution, questions and answers posted on online discussion boards proved to be an effective way of gathering insight into the level of learning achieved by students (Deasy, 2020). The anonymity of these discussion forums allowed students to engage more freely. Some students stated that by integrating interactive aspects, such as discussion boards, into online learning, they felt more connected to their peers and educators, despite the physical distance (Yang, 2021). Additionally, online learning is linked with enhanced technology skills and improving students' life-long skills, such as self-discipline and independence (Patra & Sahu, 2020).

Moving forward

The COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted how global education systems function: in an uncharacteristic, but necessary, swift response, universities moved their course delivery online while educators rapidly upskilled their digital teaching skills. While it is important to recognise that there is a significant difference between well-designed and planned online or blended programmes and emergency remote teaching, lessons have still been learned. How will this change in practice impact on the future of teaching and learning? How will we build on what we have learned to ensure that our programmes are underpinned by robust digital pedagogies?

Feedback from student cohorts suggests that pandemic experiences of teaching and learning have shifted students' perspectives and expectations of online/blended teaching: while some indicate that their preference for online learning has increased significantly as a result (Sutton, 2021), others have hinted at an expectation that "digital" elements will be retained as part of programme delivery (Academic Practice, 2022). Research suggests that neither a completely online or entirely in-person learning experience will characterise education as we move forward (Eringfeld, 2021, Academic Pactice 2022). It is likely that a blended approach will be adopted, which embraces the flexibility and improved access to higher education that digital TLA strategies provide, while maintaining components that suit in-person methods of learning (Eringfeld, 2021).

As digital learning offers an array of opportunities to innovate traditional education methods, it also provides its own unique challenges. The main challenges identified regarding the transition to

online learning included a lack of infrastructure, poor learner motivation and feelings of isolation due to a lack of socialisation (Yıldız, 2021). However, many of these challenges can be resolved through purposeful design of digital TLA practices which are underpinned by robust pedagogies: this design process takes time however, time which was not available in 2020 due to the emergency nature of the "pivot". As highlighted in the exemplars of this report, despite this lack of time, many educators have responded to the challenge, implementing practices that successfully encouraged peer interaction and socialisation in an online environment. However, AHSS educators also stressed the need to have (a) sufficient time to develop digital TLA strategies and (b) appropriate and timely institutional supports (Li et al., 2021). If institutions are to build on the learnings of the past two years and sustain pedagogical gains, institutional commitment to, and guidance on, the effective design and development of blended and digital learning will be essential.

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Appendix 1: Digital TLA practices in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines

Pedagogical Approach	University	AHSS discipline	Aims	Method	Observations (Challenges/Strengths)
Case-based learning	University of Oxford	Fine Art Teaching	Replacing in-person individual and group critiques in an online environment (University of Oxford Centre for Teaching & Learning, 2020)	In-person group crits were replaced with online virtual spaces where students sent pictures or links to their work ahead of time. The tutor distributed student updates via a folder using Microsoft Teams and students were offered feedback from both their tutors and peers. Students could use the "Raise hand" function or the chat box to make comment, with the tutor having the option to organise an order of speaking.	Students were able to continue to get feedback on their work and it also allowed Tutors to maintain contact with their students. Potential challenges included the amount of screen time necessitated for each session, and technical issues such as internet access etc.
Case-based learning	Monash University	Social Work	Developing online Clinical Practice Laboratories (CPLSS) to prepare students for a modified Objective Structured Clinical Examination	Out of 154 students in the course, 83 (<50%) spoke English as an additional language. Each of the three synchronous CPLs took place over Zoom in groups of 16 students. Each two-hour long CPL was based on a unique client scenario. Trained actors were recruited to simulate a client that the students would encounter in a professional setting, staying in character for the session's duration. with a client.	Feedback was generally positive and reporting the CPLs as important in assisting students to prepare for the examination. Most students found the CPLs enjoyable, appreciating the strong engagement with their peers, and wished to have more opportunities to work with simulated clients.

Pedagogical Approach	University	AHSS discipline	Aims	Method	Observations (Challenges/Strengths)
			(OSCEs), particularly for students who speak English as a secondary language (Bay et al., 2021).		
Problem-based learning	University of Liverpool	English Language Centre	Incorporating mobile phones in listening activities in English language learning (Wood, 2021).	The educator used QR codes for students to scan audio files in advance of a live class. Students could control how they interacted with the material on their mobile phones. Students were provided the correct answers upon completion, and allowed time to self-assess where they had made errors.	Mobile listening allowed for students to focus on the listening components that they found challenging at their own pace. The educator noted that mobile activities helped students to personalise their learning and transformed listening from a passive activity to a more active learning experience. Informal feedback indicated students felt motivated to learn using the mobile listening.
Problem-based learning	Cornell University	Unknown	To develop and assess an immersive learning environment built to facilitate language learning	Educators developed *DeliveryGhost* with JavaScript, to teach beginner level Mandarin Chinese. To create a linguistically immersive environment, explicit instructions were not included. Through repetition and completing multiple levels within the game, learners acquired vocabulary and	Educators found, regardless of the level of immersion or interactivity, that students found the game to be a positive learning experience. Challenges identified included cognitive load of learning game rules and familiarising with the layout and control manoeuvres.

Pedagogical Approach	University	AHSS discipline	Aims	Method	Observations (Challenges/Strengths)
			(Cho et al., 2021).	understanding of sentence structure. 159 students were assigned to different groups, with varied levels of immersion and interactivity. A background survey was conducted, in addition to a pre- and post- test survey.	
Problem-based learning	Dublin City University	Law	Evaluating the use of eportfolios to encourage student reflection and the development of critical thinking skills (Gallen, 2021).	Eportfolios were used as a new form of assessment in an undergraduate programme with 90 students. Example eportfolios were circulated to students in advance. The tool allows for the integration of text, video, audio, and embedded documents. Students could use a blend of academic sources and informal resources for the assessment.	Some students did not strongly engage with the eportfolio tool. Some students used the tool as an extension of an essay assignment with limited reflection or use of multimedia, while other embraced the possibilities the eportfolios offered. For future years, the educator intends to provide clearer instructions and examples.
Project-based learning	Chiang Mai University, Thailand	Business	Designing a gamified digital environment for teaching undergraduate Enterprise Resource	A gamified online learning ERP was developed and compared to a non-gamified system. 72 students were randomly assigned to the gamified or non-gamified system. The game included a point system and multiple levels measuring the user's progress, in order to encourage the	There were higher levels of student engagement in the gamified online system compared to the non-gamified online system. However, in student interviews, students reported feeling less curious about the game as time progress. To maintain motivation and engagement, the educators suggested

Pedagogical Approach	University	AHSS discipline	Aims	Method	Observations (Challenges/Strengths)
			Planning (ERP) course (Pakinee & Puritat, 2021).	user to work towards a specific goal; a public leaderboard for users to compare their performance to other students; and an avatar to represent the user.	adding small new tasks to the game every few weeks until the course has ended.
Project-based learning	University of Hong Kong	Art and Architecture	Creating videos for assessment (Lastra, 2020).	Students produced and made videos on an art object or monument of their choice, as opposed to conducting a traditional written assignment. Students created storyboards and filmed and edited their videos.	The educator noted higher levels of engagement among student as they grappled with making their projects interesting to a wider audience.
Project-based learning	University of Hong Kong	Art and Architecture	Creating online exhibitions for assessment (Lastra, 2020).	Students produced digital exhibitions using *Artsteps*, a free digital tool. Students decided on a theme for their exhibition, chose virtual art pieces that represented the theme and wrote wall labels.	Through organising the virtual objects, student considered how to convey their theme digitally to an audience.
Project-based learning	University of Liverpool	Communications and Media, School of the Arts	Student video production projects as pedagogic tools (Traynor, 2020).	Final year Communication and Media students were asked to produce a 3-minute e-learning video about a theory or skill that is relevant to their field of study.	Researching, testing and, where relevant, purchasing equipment and software was enormously time-consuming.

Pedagogical Approach	University	AHSS discipline	Aims	Method	Observations (Challenges/Strengths)
Peer-based learning	University College Dublin	Philosophy	Facilitating anonymous peer evaluations through the use of a digital tool (Deasy, 2020).	In teams of 5-7, students provided anonymous feedback for each member of their team via *TEAMMATES*, a free digital tool. Feedback was gathered during the semester and at the end, with the final peer evaluation contributing 5% to the final grade. Feedback was completed outside of the classroom. Students were involved in the process of selecting the criteria on which students will be peer-assessed.	Involving students in the process of selecting peer assessment criteria allowed them to identify attributes required for successful teamwork. *TEAMMATES* was found to be intuitive in its usability. Peer feedback was found to be meaningful if enough students engaged. For this to occur, the educator noted that incentives need to be in place.
Team-based learning	University of Copenhagen	Economics	Using collaborative notes to help students document and share their group results with their class (Nielson, 2020).	Students were asked to read a chapter in a book and divided into groups based on the chapter they had read. Then, they were asked to write a summary of the chapter. As they wrote in *Padlet*, the students could view each other's work and approach to the assignment, and therefore learn from each other.	The course material was covered in a relatively short time. Some time was needed for students to adjust to using *Padlet*. Students' work improved due to peer learning within the group exercise.
Team-based learning	Dublin City University	Humanities & Business	Facilitating team learning using digital tools	Final year students learning French interacted with undergraduate students from University Paris Sciences et Lettres (PSL) in Paris via Zoom to practice their foreign language skills.	The activity helped to increase students' confidence in speaking a language with native speakers.

Pedagogical Approach	University	AHSS discipline	Aims	Method	Observations (Challenges/Strengths)
			(Dey-Plissonneau & Smeaton, 2021).		
Team- based learning	University College Dublin	Philosophy	Providing students with the opportunity to use audio/visual storytelling to present philosophical theory

(Deasy, 2020). | Students worked in groups to produce a written plan for their video, which was reviewed by their educator and peers in an online class. Templates and guides for scriptwriting were provided. An external provider produced draft videos, which were reviewed by the group and educator.

Students produced three posters to explain their topic, using *Canva*, in synchronous tutorials under tutor supervision. Then the posters were presented in virtual classrooms. Some students worked independently, with the support of their educator, to produce podcasts and audio plays, recorded using a free sound editing app (*Audacity*). | While many students quickly adjusted to using digital tools in their learning, the educator noted that this shouldn't be assumed as a given or treated as an 'age' issue (i.e., that younger students will adapt more easily than older students to digital learning). |
| **Flipped Classroom** | University of Oxford | Languages | Applying a flipped classroom approach to | A flipped classroom approach was adopted. Students spent three-quarters of their study time working on language structures and content | Student feedback suggested that there was an improvement in the speed of language acquisition. The flipped classroom allowed more time for |

Pedagogical Approach	University	AHSS discipline	Aims	Method	Observations (Challenges/Strengths)
			language learning University of Oxford Centre for Teaching & Learning (2021b).	knowledge to apply within a half-hour online group discussion.	students to speak within the class, increasing their confidence in using a foreign language. Some students felt the half-hour session was too short and some tutors missed being able to gauge physical reactions from students and therefore being able to adapt the content accordingly.
Peer-based learning	University of Copenhagen	Anthropology	Using *Absalon*, a learning management system, for students who are not able to conduct in-person fieldwork (University of Copenhagen, 2020).	After an initial in-person meeting, students undertook five online assignments. Deadlines were set throughout the semester. Students were divided into groups in order to allow them to get to know their project and each other better. Two discussion forums were established: one for peer-to-peer feedback, and the other for academic and social discussions.	The programme proved to be successful and, as a result, it is now mandatory for students to take part online.