

ual: Teaching the creative arts online

Using pedagogic motivation as a bridge between residential and online pedagogies

Introduction and objectives

Online learning has the potential to broaden access to a creative education for those who face barriers to accessing traditional, campus-based learning. But it also presents us with a conundrum: creative arts education and distance learning both have traditional and valued approaches to education, however, at first glance, these approaches do not seem immediately compatible. Our challenge, then, is how we can be faithful to our much-valued subject pedagogies, while also making the most of the online mode of delivery and catering for the differing needs of online learners. Our research project explored this tension, it was our preparation for better bridge building to support the development of fully online arts education.

This presentation, using the example of studio pedagogy, outlines how our research findings help us to meet this challenge by adopting the notion of ‘pedagogic motivation’ to bridge the gap between the creative arts and online distance pedagogies.

Creative arts pedagogies	Online learning best practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ ‘sticky’ co-created curricula are hard to define (Orr and Shreeve 2018)▪ Learning outcomes that are too specific hinder creative learning (Davies 2012)▪ Emphasis on synchronous sessions and personalised (supervision model) teaching and learning▪ Open-ended outcomes with students supported to achieve their individual creative ambition/potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Structured learning design processes (e.g. UCL’s ABC or Gilly Salmon’s Carpe Diem)▪ Defined outcomes that offer clear and transparent learning aims and assessment requirements.▪ Flexible models prioritise asynchronous and self-paced working + pre-prepared materials▪ Constructively aligned (Biggs 1996) teaching materials and learning experiences

Methods

We used semi structured qualitative interviews with colleagues in a range of student facing roles to explore creative arts pedagogies in our institution. Questions and analysis focused on the identification of pedagogies, and the motivations of the staff that applied these.

Results

Unsurprisingly, many interviewees discussed studio pedagogies, incorporating approaches such as live projects, making, the crit, peer learning, building rapport and establishing creative practices. During analysis of the interviews, five motivational categories that underpin teaching approaches emerged: **promoting engagement in the course**, **collaboration and discussion**, **support and scaffolding**, **connection and community** and **uncertainty and unexpectedness**. The table opposite maps these motivations to online distance learning pedagogies (informed by our online teaching and learning model) and the affordances of learning technologies.

Conclusions

Our research identified 5 motivational categories, and 11 pedagogies. In this presentation we focused on studio, a (if not the) fundamental pedagogy in the creative arts: Somewhere where students can work individually or collaborate, ideate, create, build trust, discuss, question and share. The implicit connection of ‘studio’ to physical space initially offered us a challenge, but we now believe that we can shift our thinking so that ‘studio’ becomes more of a concept than a physical location. Fiona Peterson helps us with this:

“Is the studio more ‘a state of mind’ than a particular physical space? Studio as a state of mind demands that learners engage in collaborative and community learning, using available spaces, whether physical, online, inside or outside the university.” (in Orr & Shreeve 2018)

We can think of studio not just as a state of mind, but a state of motivation, and this pedagogic motivation can be the bridge between the traditional geographically-located studio and the unbound, conceptual, intangible studio that we need to teach the creative arts online. More broadly we believe that this approach can support the delivery of other creative arts signature pedagogies online as well as more broadly in other disciplines as higher education leans further into the online space.



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We work together at UAL Online at the University of the Arts London (UAL). Our collaboration draws on Georgia’s experience in creative arts education and Rob’s experience in online distance education. We are committed to widening access and creating transformative learning experiences online.
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Studio: Motivation	Studio: Online pedagogic approach	Online learning technology and environment resolution
Engagement in the course	1. Flexible study; Asynchronous and self-paced engagement makes learning accessible for ‘busy’ learners	1. Mobile friendly, intuitive and low bandwidth approaches
Collaboration and discussion	1. Tutor presence (synchronous and asynchronous) in the learning activities to model constructive interaction 2. Discursive live sessions	1. Work sharing tools including Miro and Padlet to make work visible 2. Inclusive use of live meeting and messaging tools to nurture interaction
Connection and community	1. Opportunities for personalised work 2. Encouraging peer to peer interaction within and beyond the facilitated learning 3. Regular contact with tutors and peers	1. Collaborative tools for sharing work in progress e.g. in Miro, Padlet, draft blogs and portfolios 2. Suggest platforms for self-organised interaction e.g. messaging apps (or even meet ups)
Support and scaffolding	1. Calculating working time so students aren’t overloaded and can plan their time 2. Using low stakes and chunked activities to build knowledge, confidence and trust (in the subject and the learning technologies) 3. Regular contact with tutors and peers	1. Consistent design of VLE supports familiarity 2. Sharing estimated duration for activities 3. A limited number of supported platforms and tools 4. Technologies that facilitate dialogue/feedback
Uncertainty and unexpectedness	1. Subject specialist tutors bring discipline specific approaches 2. Projects celebrate independent inquiry	1. Remote access to a wide range of resources 2. Remote access to support from tutors and a range of university services

References

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Disclosure Statement: All materials included in the poster represent the authors’ own work and anything cited or paraphrased within the text is included in the reference list. This work was undertaken within the authors institution and is part of ongoing research and development.