

Adapting teaching through a crisis

Lessons from educational leadership staff in Higher
Education

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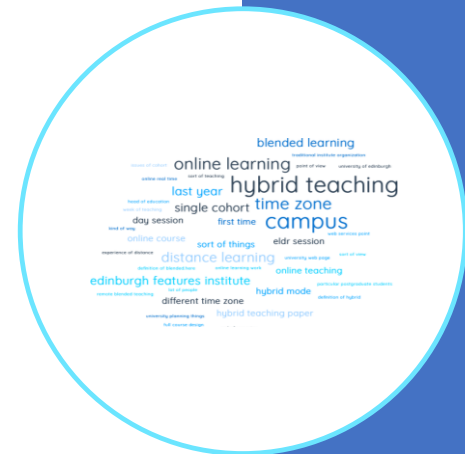
26th August 2021

Today's overview

- Background into hybrid teaching
- Introduce our study and findings
- Discuss key themes and future work

Background

- Hybrid teaching/learning is defined by using technology to combine different cohorts of students together
- Requires roughly 30-80% of teaching to be online (Allen & Seaman, 2010)
- Benefits in student engagement & retention have been shown
- Pandemic made this a widely adopted approach but differences in hybrid and hybrid in covid exist



Background cont.

Leadership plays a key role
for change in HE

Structural issues and what
past research highlights as
potential problematic issues

Research showing pandemic
brings these to the forefront
much more

The importance of Leaders of Learning

*“I would argue people who have the potential to learn how to analyze contexts, understand learning, think politically and critically, possess emotional understanding, think imaginatively about the future, and make connections can within a well-developed succession management program become **leaders of learning** who will make a difference to the learning of all students, in ways that top-down policy initiatives never have and never will”*

Fink (2010)

Project overview



Aim: To understand how staff with educational leadership roles at UoE have:

- adapted their own teaching and that of their staff,
- made key decisions about how to implement aspects of hybrid teaching,
- used this knowledge to guide future decision-making

Timeline

March 23rd 2020

- Lockdown 1.0 initiated
- March – June 2020: immediate period of teaching continuity

April 2020

- University takes a 'Hybrid' response and
- [Paper](#) by Sian Bayne and colleagues is released

June-Sept 2020

- Summer period spent preparing for hybrid teaching. Restrictions eased

Sept-Dec 2020

- Semester 1 of hybrid/online teaching begins

Jan 2021

- Lockdown 2.0 begins

Staff Experience

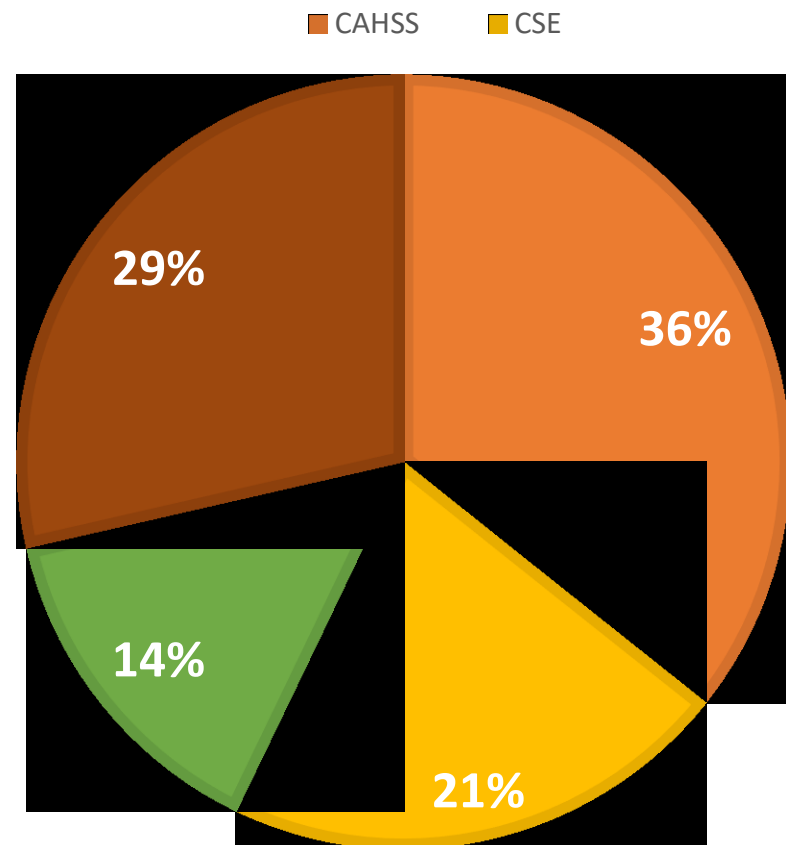
Academic and professional services staff were interviewed about:

- Experiences responding to the pandemic
- Interpretation of 'hybrid'
- Barriers and opportunities
- Plans post-pandemic

Staff roles:

- Directors of teaching and learning
- Leadership in Digital Education
- Leadership in Information Services
- Leadership in Institute for Academic Development

STAFF DISTRIBUTION

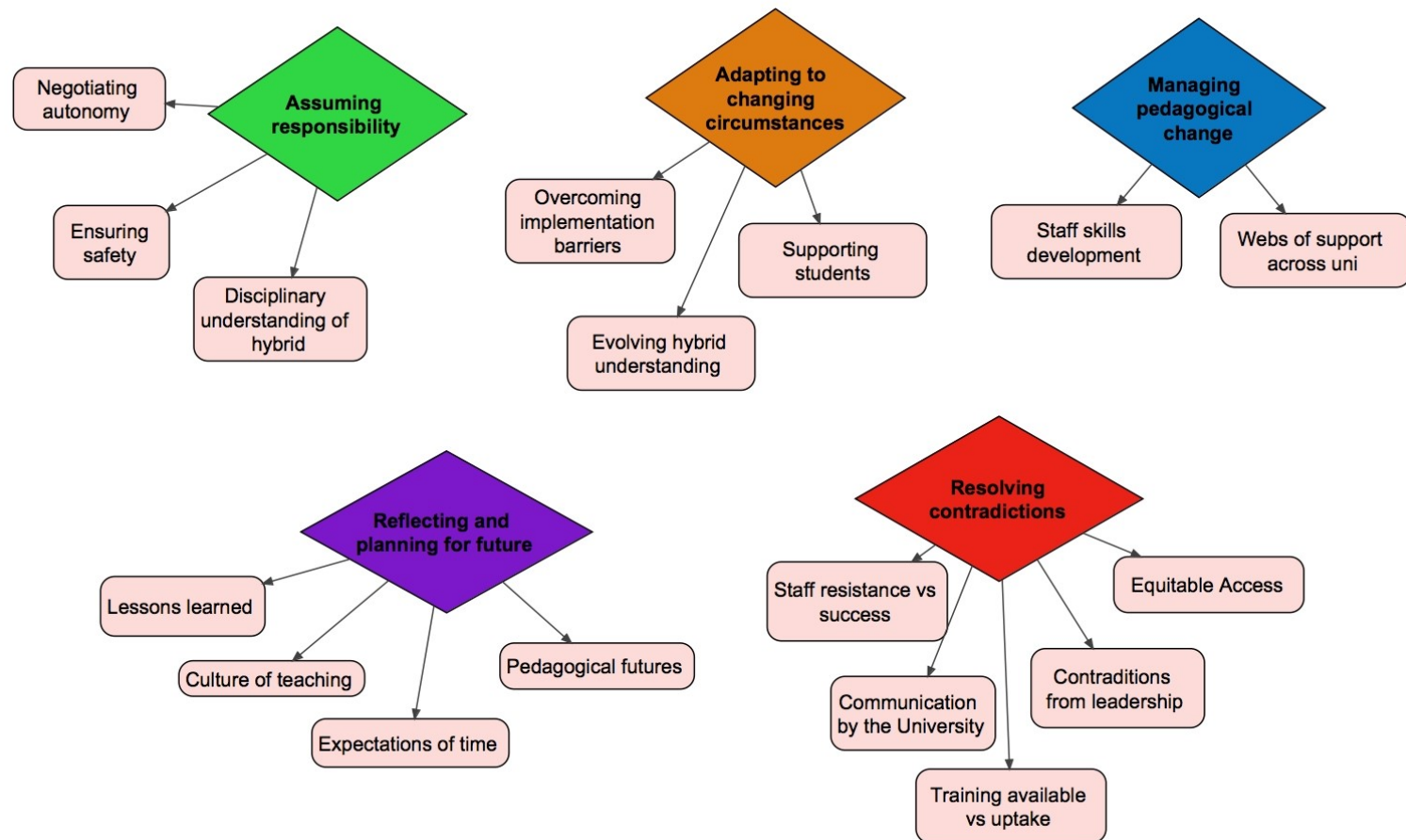


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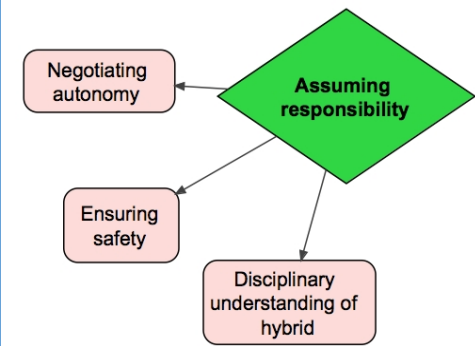
Table 1 Phases of thematic analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Thematic map

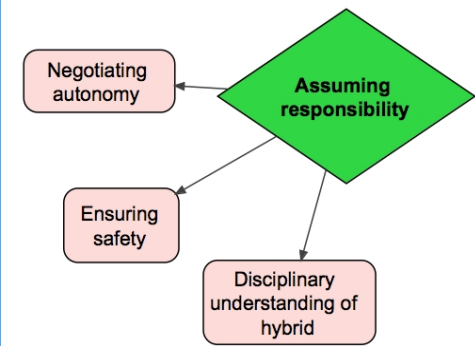


Assuming responsibility: Autonomy



- ...because of the highly devolved nature of the University – it very quickly moved beyond the control of any one individual or anyone team, and I know that that was a bit of a shock maybe for some people at the senior level...understanding that schools were going to interpret this idea really differently, and that's just how this University operates. Schools, have the autonomy and the kind of the power to decide how they deliver their teaching and that's as it should be. But it meant that it wasn't very easy to control that from a central kind of, perspective ...that's just because of the structure of the University. (P7)

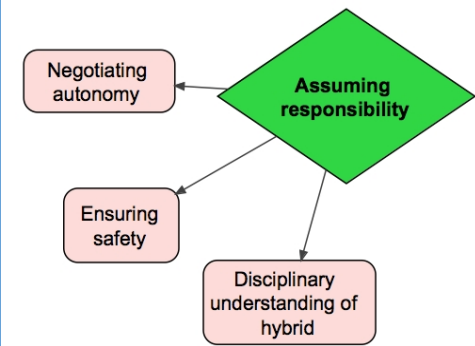
Assuming responsibility: Hybrid within a discipline



“Hybrid in a given school and the disciplines in that school means something. It means something quite distinct from what it might mean at institutional level

You have ...emails ...describing things that then need to be parsed through and interpreted and actually mean something in, say, the music discipline, which itself has multiple disciplines within it, or the architecture, discipline or whatever. What does it mean? What's the nature of that hybrid experience?” (P2)

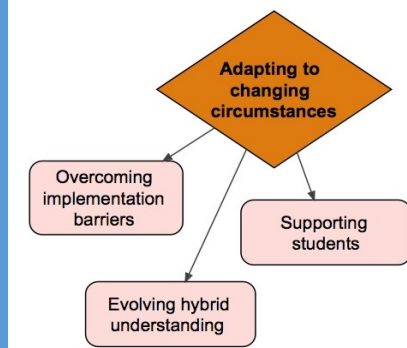
Assuming responsibility: Safety



“There was this feeling like am I going to expose myself to the sickness if I'm there? And yes, your risk factor is probably a little bit higher if you do go, teach, etc... that was a big hurdle. I mean, how do we get around that thing? **Because we can't force people to do it, nor would we want to.**” (P9)

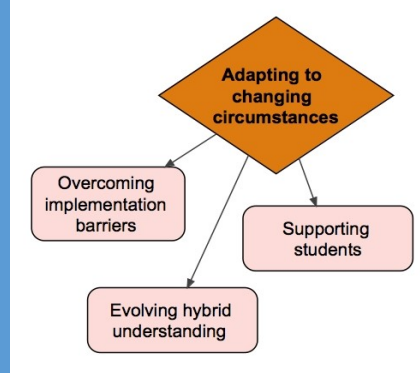
“I feel extremely uncomfortable with asking or forcing even staff to work on campus if they don't feel comfortable about this” (P5)

Adapting to changing circumstances: Overcoming barriers



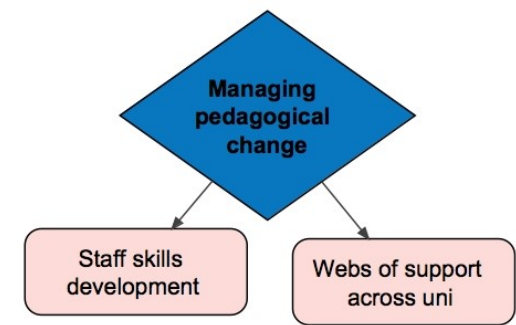
“There were challenges ...because of the data security regarding Zoom... For me as a Director of Learning and Teaching to go and just put a stop and say ‘you cannot use them’ [causes] frustration for member of staff [...and] students in different parts of the world...Other forums are not working, other platforms are not working and Zoom seems to be functioning within that part of the world. A question for me would be what should the University do at that particular point?”

Adapting to changing circumstances: Evolving understanding of hybrid



“I think we got to a point, particularly in semester two planning this year, but we really had quite good developing sense of what that was, and I think it's quite distinct it's quite evolved from what was in the hybrid teaching strategy document itself.” (P2)

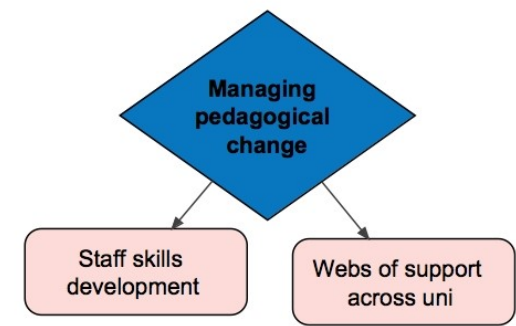
Managing pedagogical change: Staff skills development



“I was quite encouraged by the number of people who really did go back to the learning outcomes and really did think about how they could take a mixture of asynchronous and synchronous material, how they could give kind of self study material and pathways through, to guide students through the learning. It seemed to me quite a pedagogically informed approach that a lot of people were taking and quite a student centred approach as well” (P14)

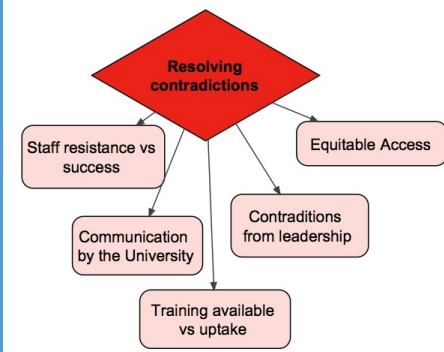
“We got some of our colleagues to experiment with different teaching formats, and some of these teaching formats will stay with us...some of our colleagues are positively impressed and want to keep a format here where they say ‘OK, this has worked a lot better because I've recorded some sort of series of videos that I can actually speak with the students here on a weekly basis and directly interact with them and solve problems with them” (P5)

Managing pedagogical change: Web of support



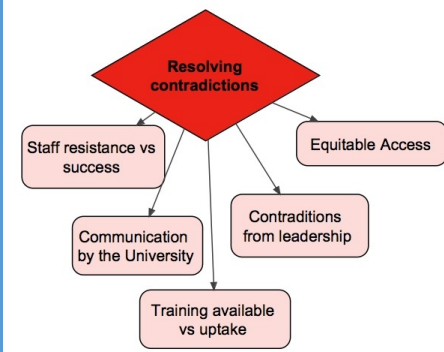
- “Colleagues have been supporting each other as much as they can, and a lot of that support has been training, but also really informal support, so there's been lots of forums and networks” (P13)
- “It's just been absolutely fantastic output of this that you know we have a shared backchannel where ...I know my peers’ children’s names at this stage...It's just been a huge shift in awareness and collegiality and support in terms of understanding what's going on in other schools” (P6)
- “I have very close links with my counterparts in all the other [subject discipline] schools in the UK and there's only eight of us. We all know each other well, we were talking every couple of weeks so we had a good community talking through all these issues” (P11)

Resolving contradictions: Equitable access



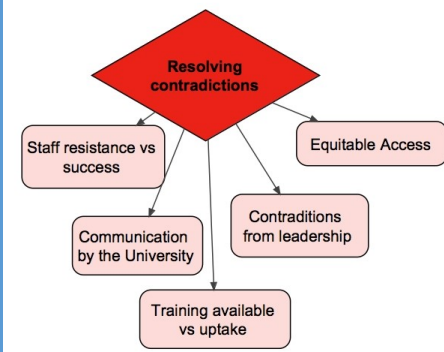
- Interviewees were concerned with the barriers to inclusion for student groups: lack of connectivity or access to equipment, accessibility
- “Our School values are helping social justice, inclusivity, diversity and ... accessibility for some particular students. Our concern was if we are sensitive to the values that we expose and we want to live to the values that we talk about, social justice, there will be students out there who are coming from places where connectivity isn’t that good and they will be left behind”. (P4)
- “I think we're just recognizing that there is possibilities for supporting those students outside your traditional undergraduate teaching model, which was not very inclusive for a lot of people”. P13

Resolving contradictions: University leadership



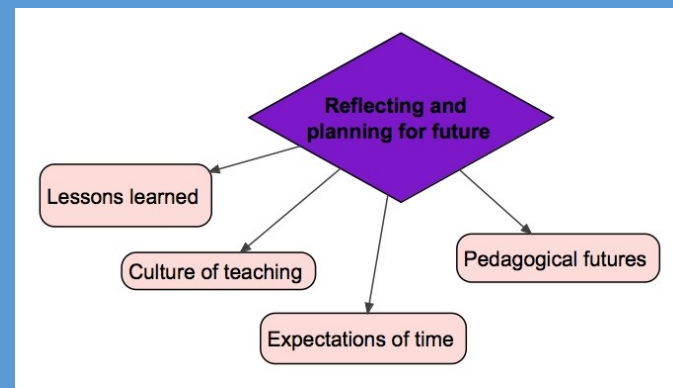
- “I was sort of struggling to make sense of the various agendas that seem to be pulling in different directions both within the school and within the college and within the senior management team as well...”. P10
- “I felt as a University, we were not honest to say come to Town X, you're gonna have teaching on campus and that message became maybe... there was discontent in terms of how that message was communicated”. (p5)

Resolving contradictions: Resistance vs success



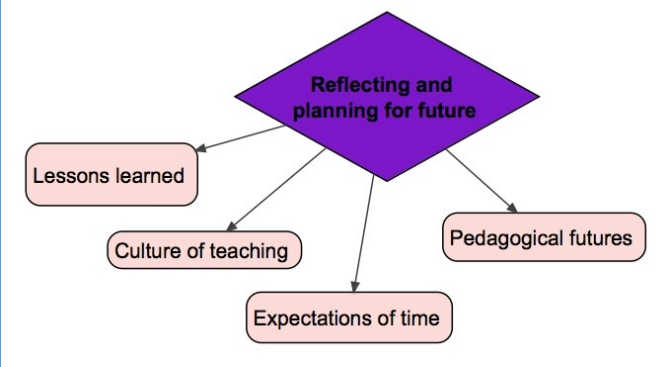
- “Yeah, I think there's been a main switch for a lot of people from being terrified and not knowing we're going to gradually very slowly building up some confidence in that digital environment and just seeing how their students have reacted. And being quite surprised about how some students have engaged in that space. It doesn't happen by magic, it needs to be designed and there needs to be a lot of support.” (P13)
- “We were saying it's really important for you to run your hybrid seminars in this way because it's an interactive space for students to engage in, and there's that discipline saying, ‘we've heard you, but we've decided we're going to go and do something differently.’” (P12)

Reflecting & planning: Pedagogical futures



- “I think we’ll have done some profound thinking about the role of the campus at the centre of Higher Education teaching, and we’ll have done some quite serious thinking about **student mobility**...and how we might design new [teaching] models which are more **resilient**, but also more **inclusive**. So, I think there will be some quite big gains in the future, for the organizations and for the sector as a whole.” (P7)
- “There's a lot of negative press around online teaching and how it is 'less' than in-person teaching which is absolutely not the case. There are colleagues who do believe that and colleagues who value the traditional model of teaching. Although I think that's slowly changing, we've seen a gradual change in perceptions and mindsets around that.” (P13)

Reflecting & planning: Expectations of time



- “Staff responded differently and most have expressed burnout stress and that stress has come from the frequency of commitments, of meetings, and then they still have to prepare their materials.” (P4)
- “There's a global health crisis and there's a lot of stress and concerns, [staff are] having to juggle their home environment, schooling, other responsibilities. So there's lots of triggers and pressure points there, but they're still having to get on with the job in hand.” (P13)

For future consideration

- Designing online instruction is hard when you have to factor in how long students need or will cope. Or whether they get 'value for money'
- Student engagement needs to be engineered as part of the course to some degree.
- Senior leadership need to understand how DLTs use their time and DLTs want to be part of conversations around dealing with workload.



Questions and discussion

