

## Centre for Distance Education

### Research in Distance Education (RIDE) conference 2021

## Learning through disruption

### Abstracts and biographies

#### Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> June: Student Support and Student Engagement

##### KEYNOTE

Ellen Helsper, London School of Economics, UK

##### *Digital Disconnect: Educational inequalities in a digital age*

The pandemic led to the rapid digitisation of all things related to education which has made the harsh consequences of digital inequalities impossible to ignore. Basic access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) is essential to be able to engage in informal learning and formal education, but it is not sufficient to have a rich and productive experience with the opportunities that the digital world offers. Problematic is that inequalities in the extent to which someone can acquire knowledge online echoes and often amplifies historical inequalities in education between regions and between different socio-economic and socio-cultural groups. The causes and consequences of access inequalities are studied quite extensively, and many interventions have been set up to remedy these. However, we know less about explanations for inequalities across the broad range of digital literacies that go beyond operational and technical skills and even less for inequalities in different experiences of online learning, especially when it comes to informal learning and countering negative aspects such as misinformation. This talk will address the causes, consequences and potential solutions to combat these digital inequalities based on the ideas and data presented in the book *The Digital Disconnect*.



**Dr Ellen Helsper** is Professor of Socio-Digital Inequalities in the Media and Communications Department at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE). Her research interests include digital literacy; the links between social and digital inequalities; vulnerability and discrimination in digital spaces; mediated communication and interpersonal relationships; and methodological innovation in quantitative and qualitative media and communications research. She currently works on the [YSkills](#); [From Digital Skills to Tangible Outcomes](#); [Global Kids Online](#); [Connected Communities and Inclusive Growth](#); [Communication crisis: Media Representations of COVID 19 Inequalities](#) and [World Internet](#) projects. She has a PhD in Media and Communications

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from the LSE and an MSc in Media Psychology from Utrecht University. Ellen holds Visiting Scholar positions at research institutes in Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and the USA. She consults widely for governments, the third and commercial sector on client and citizen (dis)engagement in increasingly digital societies.

**Respondent:** Virna Rossi, Ravensbourne University London, UK

#### PARALLEL SESSION A: Students at the Heart of Design

**Virna Rossi, Ravensbourne University, London, UK**

*Roots to Shoots: Inclusive Course Design to support wellbeing*

How can teachers promote wellbeing by the way they design courses? By using the analogy of a tree, we will discuss the roots (or values) which nourish the branches (the main ones are: set up and engagement; input and practice; outputs and feedback) which in turn, bear fruit (the student learning or outcomes). In this interactive session, you will be invited to reflect, design and share your very own curriculum design tree to promote wellbeing.

**Virna** is a passionate teacher, with 22 years teaching experience in 10 different institutions of all types and sizes, in all educational settings: Primary, Secondary, College (FE), Adult Education, Higher Education. She has been in teacher education for 12 years and finds it very rewarding to assist colleagues develop their practices.

Virna is particularly interested in inclusivity: inclusive learning design, inclusive assessment as learning, and inclusive feedback for learning. She is currently co-creating a book on inclusive learning design with over 70 contributors from all the continents.

Virna's motto is 'learn to thrive'.

**Nicola Byrom, King's College, London, UK**

*Adapting pedagogy to support student mental health*

Increasing concern about student mental health is well founded. The most recent data from population level surveys indicates that 40% of young adults in our university communities are likely

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to meet criteria for a mental health problem. In this context, the sector is being urged to consider a whole university approach, recognising that everyone across the university community needs to play a role in improving student mental health. As the curriculum is the only guaranteed point of contact that universities have with their students, it is essential that we consider how pedagogy impacts student mental health. This presentation will share some early observations from the Office for Students funded project - Education for Mental Health, where we have been investigating how we might be able to adapt the ways we teach to better support students.

**Nicola** is a senior lecturer in psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neurosciences at KCL. Her research focuses on university student mental health. With a particular interest in peer support, informal networks of support and settings-based approaches to improving public mental health. She is currently directing SMaRteN, the UKRI funded Student Mental Health Research Network.

Nicola's research here is inspired by her personal experiences and her work in the charity sector. She founded the student mental health charity, Student Minds, in 2009 with the ambition for all students to feel confident talking about mental health. She has worked to build and support better formal and informal networks of peer support to normalise conversations around mental health.

#### **PARALLEL SESSION B: Students at the Heart of Community**

**Sue Beckingham, Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield, UK**

*Students as Partners co-creating innovative scholarship: Reflections on achievements using the 4M framework*

This presentation will share the outcomes (what the students gained) and the outputs (co-created resources) of a Students as Partners initiative which began by looking at how social media could be used in learning and teaching within their own course. Initially set up as an extracurricular short-term project in 2017, it continued and has evolved over four years. Adopting the 4M framework, reflections on achievements will be considered using the following set of lenses: micro (individual); meso (departmental); macro (institutional); and mega (broader [higher] education community).

**Sue** is a National Teaching Fellow, Principal Lecturer in Digital Analytics and Technologies in the Department of Computing at Sheffield Hallam University with a lead role in Learning Teaching and Assessment. She is also a Visiting Fellow at Edge Hill University, Senior Fellow of the Higher

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Education Academy, Fellow of the Staff and Educational Development Association, Certified Member of ALT, and Certified Management and Business Educator.

Her research interests include social media for learning and digital identity, and the use of technology to enhance learning and teaching; and she has published and presented this work nationally and internationally as an invited keynote speaker.

She writes a blog called [Social Media for Learning](#) and can be found on Twitter as @suebecks. In 2015 she was shortlisted by Jisc as one of the [Top 50 most influential higher education \(HE\) professionals using social media](#).

An advocate of informal learning, she is a co-founder of the international '[Learning and Teaching in Higher Education Twitter Chat](#)' (#LTHEchat).

#### **Elisabetta Lando and Ellie Gill, City University of London, UK**

##### *Building an online support community for students*

##### Student support

A pilot project around a Teams community space for students; supported by 4 Digital student advisers and coordinated by the digital education team at City, UoL.=

##### Why a student community?

To support students with their digital skills for studying. It was also felt that an online community could help students' isolation. The Digital student advisers' role was to be advocates of the student voice as they themselves were dealing with the issues of learning online during lockdown.

##### What has worked:

The student digital advisers created guidance, podcasts on themes such as 'our uni experience in lockdown' as well as blogs on tips for studying online. They supported students on one-to-one basis; collaborated with other students' bodies for example, they held a 'Cameras off and Cameras on' debate with the Student Union.

##### Lessons learnt

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It takes time and trust to build up a community, many students did not engage with the space- preferring to contact individual advisers. So, the future focus should be on engaging students wherever they are and develop a strong presence and voice through podcasting and blogging to build up a relationship of trust and communication at the beginning of the academic year, as part of the induction process.

As a languages graduate with a Master's degree in Science, Technology and Society, **Elisabetta** worked for many years, in the further education sector, as a course director and then in the Quality department involved in strategic development focusing on eLearning. This included being a teaching coach across different educational provisions including adult community and offender learning. In 2012 she joined the Jisc Regional support central London as an eLearning advisor involved in many initiatives around developing digitally enhanced education across different Higher Education institutions. For the past three years, Elisabetta has been working as an Educational Technologist in the Higher education sector. Her background as an educator and coach, together with her enthusiasm for digital education innovation, means that she is very interested in exploring effective learning experiences for all students.

She is on Linked In as <https://www.linkedin.com/in/elisabetta-j-lando/>

A sociology graduate, **Ellie** started working at City in 2017 in the Students' Union. Part of her time in her 4 years at City Ellie has worked with Neurodiverse and Disabled students and really enjoys supporting students learning and success. Ellie is a Support Officer in LEaD, supporting the MA in Academic practice, the Academic Skills Team and in recruiting and assisting the student-lead projects run this year.

Elisabetta and Ellie will be joined by **Noor Adnan** who is currently studying computer science at city university and loves web development. Noor has been working as a digital community assistant and loves helping students.

### PARALLEL SESSION C: Students at the Heart of Community

David Baume and Stephen Brown, Centre for Distance Education, London, UK

*What do we know about how students learn at a distance?*

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#### Abstract

**David** has since 2001 been an independent international higher education researcher, evaluator, consultant, staff and educational developer and writer. He has been a CDE Visiting Fellow since 2010. He was founding Chair of the UK Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA); co-founder of the UK Heads of Educational Development Group (HEDG); a founding council member of the International Consortium for Educational Development (ICED); and founding editor of the International Journal for Academic Development (IJAD). His contributions to academic development have been acknowledged by awards from SEDA and ICED.

**Stephen** is Emeritus Professor of Learning Technologies at De Montfort University, a Fellow at the Centre for Distance Education, University of London and Director of the learning media design consultancy Hyperworks Ltd.

He was previously Head of the School of Media and Communication, Director of the International Institute for Electronic Library Research and Director of Knowledge Media Design at De Montfort University; Senior Technology Adviser at the JISC Technologies Centre; Head of Distance Learning at BT; Royal Academy of Engineering Visiting Professor in Engineering Design; and President of the Association for Learning Technology.

He is a member of the editorial boards for *Research in Learning Technology* and *Interactive Environments* and has extensive experience reviewing for a range of other journals and academic conferences. Since 2005 he has been a registered European Commission expert in the fields of Technology Enhanced Learning, Digital Libraries and Cultural Heritage and he was a member of the AHRC Peer Review College for ten years.

**Mario Barahona Quesada, Universidad Estatal a Distancia, Costa Rica and Gina Patricia Suárez España, Universidad ECCI, Bogotá, Colombia**

*Towards a framework for developing digital learning competences in higher education*

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The adoption of online learning by Higher Education institutions in Latin America has not necessarily been accompanied by a systematic account of the competences that learners and educators require to succeed in digital learning environments. To create such a framework and, at the same time, to provide a means for fostering the development of digital skills among faculty and students, a joint research project was devised between the Costa Rica's State University of Distance Education (Universidad Estatal a Distancia [UNED]) and the Colombian School of Industrial Careers (Escuela Colombiana de Carreras Industriales [ECCI]). The initial phase of this project involved conducting an online survey aimed to assess participants' self-perceived proficiency in digital learning environments and opinions regarding the level of technological development found in both institutions. Three hundred and forty-seven undergraduate students (171 females and 176 males) from ECCI (133 females and 141 males) and UNED (38 females and 35 males) between ages 18 and 61 ( $M = 25.31$ ,  $SD = 7.76$ ) voluntarily completed the questionnaire. This session will explore some of the key findings of this first study, will discuss open questions and further directions for the ongoing project, and will invite feedback from the audience.

**Mario** is a researcher at the Research Program on Foundations of Distance Education (Programa de Investigación en Fundamentos de la Educación a Distancia [PROIFED]) at Costa Rica's State University of Distance Education (Universidad Estatal a Distancia [UNED]). He holds an MSc in Cognitive Science and a BA in Classical Philology. He is interested in the interplay of language, culture, and cognition in learning contexts, primarily from an evolutionary perspective. His current projects focus on digital learning competences, machine learning applications to better understand student experience, student online engagement, and micro-credentials. His previous work has included language evolution, knowledge representation, literacy and numeracy, reading habits among higher education students, educational technology, and cross-cultural variation.

**Gina** is a researcher in the Pedagogical Innovation line and a teacher of digital resources applied to education at the ECCI University in Colombia. She is a biologist and a specialist in teaching innovation mediated by ICT. Gina has extensive experience in higher education teaching in virtual environments, guiding students in the natural sciences and environmental education areas in official secondary schools, and advising environmental management projects related to control, surveillance, use, and exploitation of natural resources. She is currently working on projects related to learning and digital skills among higher education students.

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#### **INVITED TALK**

##### **Jonathan Baldwin, JISC, UK**

Over 7 months in 2020, Jisc facilitated a major piece of work to understand responses to the pandemic in both the short and long term. Steered by a Group of 14 Vice Chancellors and reaching over 1,000 participants, the project outlined a series of challenges and made a number of recommendations. Crucial was the student voice which will be explored and discussed here.

As the UK executive lead for Jisc's Higher Education Division, **Jon** leads higher education (HE) member engagement with the account management team, and the development and coordination of Jisc's HE strategy and its implementation. This includes engaging with senior sector stakeholders and, internally, working closely with product executive directors to ensure Jisc meets sector needs.

Between 2013--2019 Jon worked for the Tribal Group as MD HE, having joined from Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia, where he was the deputy vice chancellor.

Jon was registrar/secretary at both the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology (UMIST) and at the University of Warwick and has also held management, teaching and administration posts at the University of Wolverhampton, Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh and Lancashire Polytechnic, as well as teaching at the Open University and in further education. He has also published papers and articles on a wide range of education-related topics.



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### Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> June: Redesigning Assessment

#### KEYNOTE

**Linda Amrane-Cooper, Stylianos Hatzipanagos and Alan Tait, Centre for Distance Education, London, UK**

#### *Moving Assessment Online at Scale*

After the onset of coronavirus, most universities across the Globe moved their assessment operations to online spaces. The rapid transition to online assessment (inc. traditional, pen and paper, fixed time examinations) has demanded changes in approaches to assessment and has facilitated evolution and revolution in assessment approaches and student responses to assessment; with positive and negative consequences. The transition has also stimulated innovation by revisiting how assessments are designed. For instance, online timed assessments formats present opportunities to improve student motivation and engagement and online assessment can increase authenticity as it uses digital tools and require digital literacies relevant to the professional lives of students.

Our presentation draws from a project that evaluated the move to online assessment and provided the opportunity to understand approaches to assessment. The talk will explore the experience of moving examinations online at scale, at the University of London, and will reflect on the evolving consequences of that move. We will discuss:

- (1) the findings from the perspective of the experience of the students and staff involved.
- (2) the implications for assessment in distance learning and campus based environments and in particular the threats to academic integrity as well as the demand to revisit pedagogy and learning design.
- (3) some of the key challenges and opportunities presented for the sector and wider implications for practice in assessment.

We propose that new approaches to assessment will form an essential part of the evolving landscape in higher education.

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**Linda** is head of the University of London's (UoL) Centre for Distance Education (CDE). She leads a team that support the development of expertise in the field of distance education, providing a focus for the development of high quality teaching and research in open and distance learning. Linda is also in the senior leadership team as Director of Strategic Projects and leads the UoL PG Learning and Teaching in HE programme at UoL.

Twitter: @lamranecooper

**Stylianos** is CDE (University of London Centre for Distance Education) Fellow and Executive Co-lead for Research and Dissemination. His expertise is in technology enhanced learning, research informed innovation of academic practice, and doctoral/postgraduate education management. His research and scholarship portfolio includes: learning design and evaluation of online learning environments, formative and technology-enhanced assessment, computer supported collaborative work, flexible and distance education, digital literacies, social media and social networks in an educational context. His output has been peer-reviewed articles, books, edited journal special issues and has led and participated in research projects at an international (EU Digital competences and social inclusion, Lifelong learning, eLearning professional training programmes) and UK level.

Twitter: @hatzijs

**Alan** is Emeritus Professor of Distance Education and Development at the Open University UK and has a long record of practice and publication. From 2013-2015 he was Director of International Development and Teacher Education, and before that was Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) at the Open University UK 2007-2012, and from 2004-2007 Dean of the Faculty of Education and Language Studies. He was Editor of the *European Journal of Distance and E Learning* (EURODL) 2005-2013, was from 1989-1998 Editor of *Open Learning*, was President of the European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN) from 2007-2010, and Co-Director of the Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Learning 1988-2013.

**Respondent:** Dr Monica Ward, Dublin City University

**Monica** is the Assistant Head for Teaching Excellence in the School of Computing at Dublin City University. She has extensive experience in teaching and assessment a range of subjects from technical to transversal skills modules. She is a champion of the use of technology in education and she advocates a co-creation and culturally-responsive approach with academics and students. Her

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research interests include: Computer Assisted Learning (CAL), Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), particularly for minority and endangered languages and Human Computer Interaction (HCI). She is the co-founder and Chair of the Less Commonly Taught Languages Special Interest Group at EUROCALL. She has led a team of academics in the development of two fully online master programmes. She is an advocate for novel approaches to formative and summative assessment, with a Students as Partners in assessment approach and a focus on assessment that has real-world applicability and is academically rigorous.

#### PARALLEL SESSIONS

#### PARALLEL SESSION A: Large scale redesign of assessment in the UK and Spain

**Simon Walker and Norbert Pachler, University College London, UK**

*Exploring the frontiers of digital assessment*

Although there were a number of drivers for adopting a more contemporary approach to assessment, the pivot to online teaching and assessment in 2020 dramatically accelerated the pace of educational change at UCL. Whilst moving assessment online was a response to an emergency, our success in doing so provided a much-needed confidence boost for thinking afresh and putting new ideas and resources in place. Alongside the procurement of a dedicated digital platform (used this year with 49,000 candidates in 1000 timed centrally managed exams), several academic assessment related groups were set up and new guidance for alternative assessment and student assessment load were produced. Whilst these important steps mark considerable progress in practice, they are just a start in some potentially fresh thinking about the nature and purpose of assessment. We discuss whether a digital first approach to assessment can provide greater opportunities for authentic assessments that mirror real-world tasks and what risks this the so called 'final frontier' hold for the academy?

**Simon** is Professor of Educational Development at UCL. He is currently co-leading cross university initiatives to improve assessment and feedback and programme design. His research interests lie in Learning Design. He established the annual Academic Practice and Technology (APT) international conference in 2003; *Compass - Journal of Learning and Teaching* in 2009; and the *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change* in 2015. He co-led the Students as Change Agents UK Network. He has worked on many international higher educational development projects across

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the world including in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and Bangladesh. He is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and was awarded a National Teaching Fellowship in 2006.

**Norbert** is Professor of Education at the UCL Institute of Education and Pro-Vice-Provost in the Office of the Vice-Provost: Education and Student Experience at UCL. As Pro-Vice-Provost Norbert is the academic lead for digital education. Between 2013 and 2020 he was Pro-director: Teaching, Quality and Learning Innovation at the Institute of Education and as such had strategic oversight of all taught provision at the Faculty. In addition to foreign language education, Norbert's research interests include the application of digital technologies in teaching and learning and teacher education and development. He has published widely in these fields.

#### **Ines Gil Jaurena, National Distance Education University, Spain**

##### *Changing assessment in a distance education university: students' and faculty perspectives*

The pandemic situation in spring 2020 demanded a rapid change in the assessment system used at UNED. Being the largest university in Spain, with more than 125,000 Bachelor's degree students enrolled in 2019-20 that were used to completing the final exams on site in the regional centres, UNED had to find a quick and effective solution to guarantee the students' right to complete the course and be assessed. The university developed its own online assessment system, called AvEx, and the students could take the online final exams in June 2020. In the CO-Lab teaching innovation group, we developed a study about the impact of the transition to online assessment on student's performance and perceptions. That first experience shown an increase in all the performance rates, and the students' responses to a survey shown an interesting input about their experience and preferences. Now, one year later, we have kept using the online assessment system and have received the university guidelines for designing the exams and controlling integrity issues, and we can also share faculty concerns about the use of the online assessment system.

**Inés** is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education at the National Distance Education University (*Universidad Nacional de Educacion a Distancia-UNED*), Spain. She coordinates the CO-Lab teaching innovation group at UNED. She is member of the Steering Committee of the European Distance and E-learning Network of Academic and Professionals (EDEN NAP) and member of the Steering Committee of the UNESCO Chair in Distance Education (CUED), based at UNED. She is the Editor for *Open Praxis*, a journal published by International Council for Open and Distance Education (ICDE). Her research in open and distance education includes topics such as assessment and curriculum design.

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**PARALLEL SESSION B: Moving Towards Inclusive Assessment**

**Simon Jarvis, Queen Mary's University of London, UK**

*Online exams and inclusivity: the dream and the reality*

Simon will be reflecting on a year of online examinations and what they have taught us about the hopes and aspirations of the inclusive practice agenda versus the realities of students' experiences and expectations. As we (hopefully) head toward the end of the pandemic, this session will also look at what future assessments will look like in the wake of two academic years of online examinations.

**Simon** is Head of Student Wellbeing at Queen Mary University of London, where he has worked for thirteen years. Simon has spent over twenty years working in student support and first became interested in the concept of inclusive practice when government cuts to funding for disabled students took effect in Higher Education. As someone with a background in disability support, he is very conscious of the high value students place on their examination arrangements and what they perceive as being fair.

He is also Chair of the University of London Worldwide's Inclusive Practice Panel.

His LinkedIn profile can be found at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/simon-jarvis-82270b2a/>

**Linda Amrane-Cooper, Amardeep Sanghera University of London**

*Inclusive Practice: Learning from our Students*

The shift to online assessment at the University of London in summer 2020 affected all students who were due to undertake end of course unseen written examinations in examinations halls. For those students who would normally have adapted arrangements for the pen and paper examinations, such as longer time or separate rooming, the move online presented both opportunities and challenges. We will report on some perspective from our students, and explore the implications for developing inclusive practice approaches.

**Linda** is head of the University of London's (UoL) Centre for Distance Education (CDE). She leads a team that support the development of expertise in the field of distance education, providing a focus for the development of high quality teaching and research in open and distance learning. Linda is

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also in the senior leadership team as Director of Strategic Projects and leads the UoL PG Learning and Teaching in HE programme at UoL.

**Amardeep** works in the Surveys and Student Voice team in University of London Worldwide. His work involves working on student surveys, including on design and analysis, and he is the Assistant Secretary to the Student Voice Group. Amardeep has been involved in various projects such as the evaluation to online assessment during Covid-19 and the Student Experience Survey, which is UoLW's primary student voice mechanism used to measure student satisfaction. Amardeep also played a central role in the recruitment of student fellows for the Centre for Distance Education (CDE), who are given the opportunity to gain transferrable skills through collaborating with CDE Fellows on current projects.

#### PARALLEL SESSION C: Assessment Innovation in a Time of Disruption

**Elisabeth Hill, Goldsmiths, University of London, UK**

*Disrupting the assessment of performance in the creative disciplines: lessons from Covid*

Abstract

**Elisabeth** joined Goldsmiths in 2003 as a Lecturer in the Department of Psychology. After being promoted to Senior Lecturer, then Reader and Head of Research she was appointed as Head of Department for Psychology. She then joined Goldsmiths' Senior Management Team as Pro-Warden for Learning, Teaching & Enhancement in January of 2015. She was promoted to Deputy Warden of the College in 2017, expanding her remit across the professional and academic services across Goldsmiths.

In her role as PWLTE, she is responsible for the development, delivery and evaluation of learning and teaching strategies, as well as optimising student experience, achievement and employability. This involves areas such as curriculum design, assessment and feedback, learning resources, academic support, and embedding employability within the curriculum. She works closely with colleagues across academic and professional services departments, including the Graduate School, Teaching and Learning Innovation Centre (TaLIC), and Goldsmiths Students Union (GSU).

Prior to her time at Goldsmiths, she was a Research Fellow within the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience at University College London, and a Research Associate at the University of Cambridge. Professor Hill's research concerns the importance of motor development and its impact across the

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lifespans. In particular, her work focuses on the causes and impacts of motor and cognitive difficulties in neurodevelopmental disorders, particularly DCD (Developmental Co-ordination Disorder) and ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder).

**Gwyneth Hughes, University College London, UK and Alan Tait, Centre for Distance Education, London, UK**

*Has the pandemic triggered a radical rethink of assessment?*

Abstract

**Gwyneth** is Reader in Higher Education at the UCL Institute of Education, where she leads and teaches on Masters programmes in higher education and supervises doctoral students. As a CDE fellow, she is part of the development team for the online Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching for University of London.

Her teaching has included facilitating and designing several online modules at UCL and previously at the University of East London, Thames Valley University and the University of Surrey where she held e-learning leadership and development roles. At UCL she led a three-year JISC funded research project: Assessment Careers: learning pathways through assessment. This work has enabled her to become a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy.

**Alan** is Emeritus Professor of Distance Education and Development at the Open University UK and has a long record of practice and publication. From 2013-2015 he was Director of International Development and Teacher Education, and before that was Pro-Vice Chancellor (Academic) at the Open University UK 2007-2012, and from 2004-2007 Dean of the Faculty of Education and Language Studies. He was Editor of the *European Journal of Distance and E Learning* (EURODL) 2005-2013, was from 1989-1998 Editor of *Open Learning*, was President of the European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN) from 2007-2010, and Co-Director of the Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Learning 1988-2013.

#### INVITED TALKS: RETHINKING TEACHING AND LEARNING

**Betty Vandenbosch, Coursera, USA**

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*Preparing for the new normal: The promise of online learning*

The pandemic has accelerated the rate at which universities worldwide are investing in online learning. As students prioritize flexibility, affordability, and employability, universities are reimagining how education is delivered.

Betty Vandebosch, the Chief Content Officer at Coursera, will discuss the four major ways the higher education landscape will evolve post-COVID and how increasing access to high-quality online learning can create a more just world.

**Betty** is Chief Content Officer at Coursera, where she oversees the company's content and credential strategy and partner relationships. Before joining Coursera, she was chancellor of Purdue University Global, an institution resulting from Purdue University's 2018 acquisition of Kaplan University. At Purdue, she oversaw academics for more than 32,000 students -- most of whom earned their degrees online.

Before that, Betty held a number of leadership positions at Kaplan University and served as associate dean and associate professor at the Weatherhead School of Management at Case Western Reserve University. Throughout her career, she has won several awards in teaching and research. She earned her Ph.D. in Management Information Systems and MB from Western University in Ontario, Canada.

**Sam Brenton, University of London, UK**

*Questioning the consensus in online pedagogy for higher education*

This invited talk is a reflection, a provocation and an exhortation. It will feature a personal reflection about trends in the pedagogy and practice of online education as it has expanded over the last generation – slowly at first and then with a bang during the pandemic. It will pose provocative questions about some of the fashions, assumptions and custom and habit that have become attached to the design and delivery of online education. It will conclude with an appeal against homogeneity in online learning, informed by rapid learning over the last year, and by taking a long view of the history of instructional design.

**Sam** is Director of Online Education at the University of London, where he is responsible for devising, designing and developing the University's distance learning programmes, which serve some 50,000 students in more than 180 countries. He has over twenty years of experience of technology-



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enhanced learning, learning technologies and distance education, and deep knowledge of the strategy, implementation, pedagogy and practice of online teaching and learning. Prior to joining the University of London, he was Director of Digital Learning at Cass Business School. Previously, he was Director of the Learning Institute at Queen Mary, University of London, and he has also worked with various online learning firms in the private sector.

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### Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June: Rethinking Teaching and Learning

#### KEYNOTE

**Neil Morris, University of Leeds, UK**

*Enhancing student learning and engagement through effective use of digital technologies and online learning*

The global pandemic has heightened the focus on digital and online education to unprecedented levels around the globe. All educational providers and many industries are now working on strategies to use, harness and embed digital technologies and online education in working practice, education and training. The experience of the last 12 months has highlighted the importance of much of the previous research in distance education, including the need for access, flexibility and inclusivity, and the risks of exclusion through digital poverty. In this presentation, I will discuss the impact of the last year and try to describe some of the future scenarios in digital and online education, to support research activities.

**Neil** is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for digital transformation at the University of Leeds, supporting the University to achieve its strategy to be a globally leading digital university. His brief is cross-cutting, and spans digital research, digital education and the digital operations of the University. He leads initiatives to enhance the blended, hybrid and online education and experience of students, and provide lifelong and professional learning opportunities for learners globally. Professor Morris heads activities to harness the potential of digital technologies, data and digital approaches to enhance our research activities, outcomes and impacts, and to improve ways of working at the University. He also holds a Chair of Educational Technologies, Innovation and Change and has extensive experience of research and educational practice in blended and online learning.

**Respondent:** Stephen Brown, Centre for Distance Education, London, UK

**Presentation by Roger Mills Prize winners**

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#### PARALLEL SESSIONS

#### PARALLEL SESSION A: Humanising Pedagogy

**Eileen Kennedy, University College London, UK**

*The matter with interaction: supporting a pedagogy of care for online teaching and learning*

During the Covid-19 pandemic, survey responses and interviews with university teachers showed that the major source of complaints about the limitations of technology gravitated around one thing: interaction with students. Teachers were trying to enact a pedagogy of care by finding signs that they were meeting students' needs online in the same ways they did in face-to-face teaching. However, technology mediated communication made this much more difficult online, resulting in an increase in emotional labour. This is important for leaders to address, particularly since emotional labour is often borne by the least privileged sections of the academic workforce. This presentation will examine vignettes from research data that show the efforts and struggles staff are experiencing working with technology. It will argue that institutional educational technologies often fall short by failing to address the emotional dimensions of technology use by staff and students, which results in staff improvising their own solutions. Unless institutions find a more flexible and teacher-focused educational technology support, they will increase the burdens on staff – emotionally, technologically and financially – and risk burnout of experienced educators.

**Eileen** is a Senior Research Fellow based at UCL Knowledge Lab. Her research focuses on ways of enhancing and sharing practice in online and blended learning with two ESRC-funded research centres: the Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE) and the RELIEF Centre. With CGHE, Eileen is exploring ways of realising the transformative potential of digital technologies for higher education. With RELIEF, Eileen is researching ways of using digital education to build inclusive prosperity in the contexts of mass displacement. This involves co-designing collaborative MOOCs with educators and professionals in Lebanon to scale up excellent practice, and embedded blended MOOCs in local contexts to create sustainable change.

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**Oscar Mwaanga, University of London, UK**

*The Conversational Model as a framework for rethinking teaching, learning and decolonisation*

University teachers and course conveners who are interested in decolonising the HE curriculum are searching for efficacious frameworks to guide them in the rethinking and progression of this colossal agenda. This is more so in the present era of the Covid19 pandemic when health, social and educational inequalities have been exposed and exacerbated. In this talk, I share initial reflections from an ongoing exercise where tutors and module coordinators on the PGCert in International Sport Management (ISM) are collaboratively reviewing the 'pedagogy' and 'curricula' of five online modules in order to improve the students' learning experiences in readiness for the next academic year.

The ongoing PGCert ISM review is underpinned by Professor Diana Laurillard's Conversational Framework model. The application of this framework involves colleagues engaging in a series of critical and evaluative conversations about the annual performance of the curriculum and pedagogy in terms of learning and decolonisation. Here the 'curricula' is taken to mean what we teach (content) while 'pedagogy' essentially refers to how we design, teach and deliver the whole curricula including learning outcomes. 'Pedagogy' also includes our beliefs and understanding of the purpose of education as well as our views of how education works in practice. Specifically, the six identifiable learning activities of the Conversational Framework (i.e. Acquisition, Investigation, Collaboration, Discussion, Practice and Production) are collaboratively evaluated in a series of conversations to ascertain the extent to which decolonisation and learning have been fostered or not.

**Oscar's** academic and professional career has traversed in Higher Education, Sport for Sustainable Development, social activism, social-entrepreneurship and innovation. Oscar is the Programme Director for the PGC in International Sport Management and Innovation at the University of London Worldwide (UoLW). He is also a sport policy consultant for the African Union and a visiting scholar at a number of Universities including University of Tsukuba (Japan), University of Ibadan (Nigeria) and University of Zambia.

His research and practice is in the decolonisation of HE sport education and sustainable sport for development and Physically Active Learning approaches. Alongside leading the designing and delivery of the PGCert International sport management programme, Oscar has taken an active role in promoting work towards decolonising the distance-learning curriculum of UoLW with the support of the CDE.

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**PARALLEL SESSION B: Innovation through Disruption**

**Stephanie Marshall, Queen Mary's University of London**

This session will present the lessons – both short and long term – which have been learned from the experience of moving to online and mixed-mode education over the past 18 months at Queen Mary University of London. It will set out students' experiences, the benefits which have been reported (not of all of which had been anticipated from the outset), and also where students have found this approach to be more challenging. The session will present a vision for the future of education, which draws on the advantages offered by technology and in which learning can be a social and interactive activity.

**Stephanie** is the Vice-Principal (Education) at Queen Mary University of London, a role she started in 2018. As Vice-Principal she led the development of the Education and Student Success Enabling Plan to support Queen Mary's 2030 Strategy: "Opening the doors of Opportunity". Working closely with the network of Directors of Education, roll-out has begun with a focus on diversity, inclusivity and success. Since February 2020, Stephanie has led Queen Mary's approach to co-creating a blended and mixed-mode education.

She was previously Chief Executive Officer of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) from 2013 to 2018, positioning the HEA as a global leader in teaching excellence. At the HEA, she led its transformation from a government-funded organisation to become a highly successful, sustainable organisation with extensive global reach and membership spanning 45 countries worldwide. This includes growth in the number of HEA Fellowships from 3,500 in 2012 to 100,000.

She is the author of approximately one hundred articles, book chapters and books, all focused on international comparisons. Most recent publications in 2019 included the 5th edition of "A Handbook for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Enhancing Academic Practice" and "Strategic Leadership of Change in Higher Education".

**Laura Brammar, The Careers Group, University of London, UK**

In this session we will be exploring the successful design and delivery of careers and employability resources and interactive teaching to University of London distance and flexible learners, informed

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by the increasing amount of research in this space. This work, led by The Careers Group, won the 2020 CDE Roger Mills prize for Innovation 2020 in recognition for its innovative use of a global virtual careers classroom. From micro modules in employability and career planning to interactive webinars and career drop-ins, the programme of support enhances the digital literacy skills of the students, which are so vital in (post) Covid labour markets and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. We will also look at how both the student voice and alumni voice have been incorporated into the careers provision, which is also tailored to the different career stages of our cohort of students, from career starters, career developers and career changes. We will also reflect on the significant success of the Bright Network virtual internships scheme delivered in 2020 and also look to the future with the potential of careers registration data to help inform future delivery and decision making.

**Laura** is a Senior Careers Consultant within the Research Unit, The Careers Group, University of London and is member of the team which delivers careers and employability support to UoL distance and flexible learners within UoL Worldwide. Prior to her current role she worked with undergraduates, postgraduates and research staff at a range of member institutions, such as UCL, KCL and QMUL. She also has extensive experience of working with both individual and organisational clients as part of The Careers Group Consultancy. In 2014, along with her colleague David Winter, Laura was an instructor of the world's first careers and employability MOOC, Enhance Your Career and Employability Skills, commissioned by University of London Worldwide, which went on to win the 2015 AGCAS Excellence Award for use of Technology. In 2020 Laura was also awarded the 2020 CDE Roger Mills prize for Innovation in Teaching and Learning for her careers work with UoL Worldwide. She has an MSc Organisational Behaviour from the School of Management and Occupational Psychology, Birkbeck College. Her work has been published in the National Institute for Career Education and Counselling and the Australian Journal of Career Development.

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#### **PARALLEL SESSION C: Supporting Innovative Teaching**

**Julie Phillips, Thomas Jefferson University, Philadelphia, PA, USA**

*Borrowing Evidence-Based Practices from Online Learning to Enhance Teaching & Learning in all Classrooms: A Faculty Developer's Perspective*

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The COVID-19 pandemic-induced rush to remote instruction occurred as Thomas Jefferson University was in the process of transitioning learning management systems (LMS). Adoption of the retiring system varied widely across campus locations. The LMS transition team developed an approach to faculty development that focused on reducing anxiety and resistance to educational technology integration while delivering a digitally-enhanced, learner-centred experience. This approach drew upon research and expertise in online learning pedagogy. Use patterns and feedback from faculty, staff and students indicate the increased adoption of the LMS and many of the digitally-enhanced learner-centred experiences will persist beyond the pandemic and across learning environments.

Julie serves as Assistant Provost for Faculty Development: Curriculum & Instructional Design and Assistant Director of the Academic Commons at Thomas Jefferson University (Philadelphia, PA). Her current responsibilities focus on the intersection of pedagogy, technology integration and curriculum design. She leads strategic planning efforts to enhance teaching and learning across all learning environments. Through formal programming, informal learning communities and 1:1 coaching, she develops and facilitates curricular and co-curricular programming that cultivate a campus climate focused on learner achievement, evidence-based teaching practices and learning design.

She manages a multi-disciplinary team that supports educational technologies that also administers and supports the university's learning management system, which was mid-transition when the pandemic forced the school to adopt remote emergency instruction.

She began her career in faculty development while pursuing her doctorate in Communications (emphasis Rhetorical Theory & Public Address) from Purdue University (West Lafayette, IN). She integrated faculty development and curriculum design at Temple University (Philadelphia, PA). She led a university-wide reform initiative to create a competency-based core predicated upon evidence-based practices and defined learning outcomes. The re-vamped curriculum led to improvements in Temple's four- and six-year graduation rates and retention among first year and transfer students.

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**Sarah Sherman and Julian Bream, Bloomsbury Learning Exchange**

*Informal approaches of helping peers to support wellbeing and development in lockdown (and beyond)*

Within this new space lie generative opportunities for creating different ways to support organizations and society through the phases of reconfiguration and regeneration that are still emerging. The disruptors have themselves been disrupted.

The Bloomsbury Learning Exchange (BLE), a cross-institutional centre in digital education, had to quickly modify its way of working to ensure staff in its six member institutions continued to be supported and developed. We became increasingly aware of a range of responses to lockdown working including feelings of loneliness and isolation, and with increased workloads competing with family pressures. We responded to our colleagues' challenges and experiences by meeting in informal, online social spaces and interacting with them intentionally to promote wellbeing.

This session therefore examines how working within the confines of technology-mediated communication (including Zoom and Teams) has impacted staff within the wider context of adapting to working at home. We will share how we worked with professional services and academic staff to improve and promote wellbeing using simple techniques and activities.

In this session, attendees will also have the opportunity to explore an informal 'pop-up', to model the approach we have developed over the last year. We will invite participants to share their own experiences of adapting to lockdown, reflecting on their needs and considering what they can learn from working together.

**Sarah** is the Director of the BLE. She began her career working as a primary school teacher and educational researcher. She has since worked in the field of digital learning for over 20 years and has headed up the BLE since 2007. Sarah is responsible for managing the coordination, implementation and development of Technology Enhanced Learning activity across the BLE partners, helping to support institutional digital learning strategies. Sarah is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, a Fellow of the Centre for Distance Education, a former Trustee of the Association for Learning Technology and coordinates a number of regional and national digital education user groups in the UK.

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**Julian** is the Digital Learning Coach at the BLE. He coaches digital transformation for academic, professional and leadership staff across London's HE, FE and Adult Learning sectors. For 20 years at



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the University of London, he has been encouraging dialogue across London's post16 learning providers. A founder member of the Jisc Regional Support Centre for London and runs the Digital Innovation Roundtable communities of practice, recognised as one of the #EdTech50 influencers in 2020. Retraining since 2015 as a professional coach, Julian is helping staff teams adapt to new ways of working together.

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#### **PARALLEL SESSION D: Transforming Education**

##### **Dr Tana Wulji, Ms Sally Parsley, WHO Academy**

*Transforming lifelong learning for health impact*

Less than 5% of countries are on track to achieve the health Sustainable Development Goals and 90% of countries report disruptions to essential health services since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Scheduled to launch its first online programmes this summer and headquartered at a futuristic campus in Lyon, France, the WHO Academy aims to engage 10 million learners around the world by 2023 and close the gap between "can" and "do" in health care that negatively impacts billions of lives.

The Academy uses a participatory co-creation approach, with expert teams, stakeholders and communities, and the application of the latest educational and learning science evidence, to develop multilingual, scalable, and competency-based learning solutions which address identified health challenges and meet the needs of target learners.

A single digital Learning Experience Platform connects devices, users, and data to support learning via artificial intelligence (AI), virtual reality technology, personalised learning pathways, simulations, serious games and open credentials.

This presentation will share the WHO Academy's vision and approach in more detail and showcase some of the first solutions and programmes being released.

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- World health statistics 2021: monitoring health for the SDGs, sustainable development goals. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021.

**Dr Tana Wuliji** (PhD, BPharm) is a passionate and unapologetic feminist and a leading expert in health workforce. Tana co-founded the WHO's Global Health Workforce Network Gender Equity Hub in 2017 and has over 15 years of experience in leading large-scale international programmes and has lived and worked in 15 countries across Africa, Middle East and Asia. Tana is the Team Lead for the establishment of the World Health Organization Academy, a special initiative of the WHO's transformation agenda to develop cutting-edge lifelong learning to empower people with the competencies they need to solve the greatest challenges in health. The Academy will be launched in May 2021 and will engage 10 million people by 2023 in state-of-the-art lifelong learning programs to achieve health impact. Tana formerly led the establishment of the Working for Health programme from 2017-2019 and its Multi-Partner Trust Fund. As the world's first interagency programme with WHO, ILO and OECD, the Working for Health programme aims to catalyse country action and investments to address the 18 million health worker shortfall by guiding and stimulate the creation of 40 million decent jobs. Tana served as the WHO's focal point for health workforce during the Ebola outbreak in 2014-2015, based in Liberia, she led analysis of health worker infections and supported the development and implementation of plans to protect and rebuild the health and social workforce. Tana received her PhD from the University of London and a BPharm from the University of Otago. She's a proud IPSF Honorary Life Member and served as IPSF President 2004 -2005.

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**Sally Parsley** joined the WHO Academy as senior learning designer in January 2021. Her main responsibilities are to work with WHO expert teams, partners and communities to co-design, co-create and coordinate the delivery of impactful learning programmes and learning communities that accelerate health for all and contribute towards achievement of the WHO triple billion goals and health-related 2030 sustainable development goals.

Previously, Sally was based at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine leading the design and production of relevant and applicable Open Access professional development courses for eye health workers.

Sally has a proven record as design and production lead for health teams delivering accessible, inclusive, relevant and applicable digital learning experiences for diverse groups of learners at tertiary level and for life-long learning. She has a demonstrated ability to collaborate with multi-disciplinary decision makers, designers, technologists, data analysts, and subject matter experts in taking educational products from idea to reality and is adept at learner-centred design and the application of continuous quality improvement to ensure consistent measurable learner achievement of intended outcomes or competencies, and performance enhancement. And she is able to plan and manage data driven projects aligning strategic goals with technology solutions to drive results.

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**Maynor Barrientos Amador, Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED), Costa Rica**

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*(Re)Imagining Social Learning in Latin America: Digital Transformation in the Heart of Collective Learning*

The digital transformation of learning spaces within and outside learning organizations will eventually change the development, understanding and importance of collective and social learning in Latin America. Collective and social ways of learning have always been part of formal and informal educational models in Latin American countries, but the rapid appropriation of online, open educational resources and digital technologies by diverse social collectives in the region is taking collective learning to a new level. Social collectives are now able to generate tailor-made, self-regulated learning experiences, and have been able to decentralize learning, opening the way to more meaningful lifelong-learning activities, and to new social dynamics by and for themselves. This input will try to show examples of the way social collectives in the region are using digital learning technology for their own learning journeys, based on their own realities and interests, creating innovative pathways rooted in their own social and collective learning traditions but looking to a future of opportunities. These movements cannot only be explained by the access to technological advances, however. Social, economic, and historical variables related to the reality of the region and of the different countries should also be analyzed and compared.

**Maynor** has Master's degrees in literature and Catholic Theology. He is coordinator of the Research Program in Fundamentals of Distance Education (PROIFED) of Costa Rica's University of Distance Education, UNED, coordinator of the International Network of Research in Distance, Online and Open Education (REDIC) and a researcher at UNED's Student Observatory. He is part of the study group on Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence of UNED and a member of the Ibero-American Network of Positive and Inclusive Education, the International Academic Network on Organizational Studies in Latin America and the Caribbean (REOALCel) and the Network DigiTech, UNAD Colombia.

He is a researcher with an emphasis on literary studies, linguistic studies, historical studies (especially in relation to the 19th century and the Middle Ages), theology, philosophy, social network analysis, intelligent education, intelligent pedagogy, and gender studies, among others and he teaches topics such as English, composition and rhetoric, literature, philosophy, and research at undergraduate and graduate level. He is a Founding Partner of Barrientos & Gatgens Asociados.

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