

## SEED Podcast, Episode 13: Learning Technology and Face-to-face teaching with Amanda Banks Gatenby and Jonny Crook

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Jonny: Hello and welcome to this episode's podcast. I'm Jonny Crook and today I am joined by Amanda Banks Gatenby and is Associate Director of Teaching and Learning, Distance and e-learning. Hi Mandy, how are you?

Mandi: Hi Jonny, I'm good, thank you. How are you?

Jonny: Yeah. All good thanks. Yep. Looking forward to start of year, this new year. Yeah. And so I think in this episode we're going to talk about the start of year and the return to face to face teaching which is now agreed is happening across the University for all staff. So I was just trying to get a sense of how you feel about this and the kind of sense from staff you come across kind of returning to face-to-face, and how it's going to all impacts on the use of technology. Are we, are, we kind of leaving behind all the kit we set up over the past few years or how are we going to go take that forward?

Mandi: Yeah, I think it's really mixed in terms of people's feelings about it, but in terms of the equipment, no let's not leave it on shelves! I think we've all learned so much haven't we? Perhaps it's slightly different for the course that I mostly teach on because we run it has a distance and a face to face program so we'll still be doing both. But even then the last few years has taught us a lot about how we integrate those two cohorts or how we separate them in the different ways that we can buy in the face-to-face and the online and I'm sure everybody has had that experience of, we've done the completely online, we've done the 'being all things to all people', we've done the dual and the hybrid approaches, we've had all these new terms that are still somewhat confusing. So I think, yeah, this year is hopefully space to reconcile some of that to go back to some of the things that perhaps more comfortable with but using that as a pause to see how that's now different. Because of course, our students that are coming in now, a lot of them have had a very different experience to students that we're coming 3-4 years ago. So what we did before is still going to be different even if we're doing it exactly the same way because the students will have different expectations. I think this year taking that opportunity to think about and to look at what's working, how it's working and really trying to get that Student Voice in their experiences of this either face-to-face or...

Jonny: Yeah sure, and I guess we kind of talked about going back to face-to-face teaching but yeah that's exactly what we don't want to do. We don't want to go back just to how things were, we want to try and capitalize on that the use of technology and the approaches we developed...

Mandi: Absolutely.

Jonny: Like learning design and...

Mandi: Yeah, I think that's the key term, isn't it? I think now we've got and opened up that space of possibility and can think differently about that design. And I think everybody also recognizes the time commitment to doing content development, and that kind of design, which is where presumably, then, people can come to you guys for support with all of that.

Jonny: Yeah sure. Yeah and I was just thinking of the day about how all the kit that was installed over the past few years how it can still be used by staff and I suppose we've got to think about staff can still use it to record their teaching if you want to or kind of use the kit that was given out or developing learning resources and yeah, materials for kind of flipped classroom approach and so they can still be record extra material as well as that face-to-face teaching.

Mandi: Yeah, absolutely. And of course, we can still for SEED there's a 70/30 split where we can still do some online teaching. So it's, and that's a nice opportunity to keep some of the resources that have already been made in use and to revisit some of those. I think people probably had that experience where you've made something and you realize looking back that actually you said something or other some aspect of that, that only worked for that particular year. So that's that learning design aspect isn't it, thinking about what to include in a video that will last over a long time.

Jonny: Yeah.

Mandi: And what to do around it, that can change. So all of those kinds of things will be useful to reflect on this year, I think.

Jonny: Yeah. And I think students really value having material that they can go back to you and, you know, watch again, any kind of recordings of and I think it really supports them and to be flexible in how they can access that material as well. And I think the other issue is room capacity because a lot of the cameras and recording equipment that could help to deal with some of the (issues), because I think there's some courses have got a lot more students this year so that might help with some of the room capacity issues, if students can't physically fit into a lecture theatre, they can record a session or access to the teaching remotely.

Mandi: Yes, absolutely. That's a really good point. And I think that obviously that familiarity with the equipment that people have built up over the last year is helpful there. And presumably, there's - people will get support if there's updates needed etc, to that equipment.

Jonny: Yeah, and also, I think hybrid meetings for staff, we are doing training on that now because we think that will still be used for staff meetings. I think that's still going to be hybrid and I think quite importantly, I think that means meetings

can be still quite agile. Yeah, I think online meetings are generally of shorter and more concise than trying to get people together in a room. That's just my personal view.

Mandi: Yeah, that was kind of having the best of both worlds, isn't it? The fact that we can do both now because obviously, there are things that you lose in the online-only environment, especially to, I think most people seem to talk about that, if when you're meeting people for the first time, it's nice to have had that face-to-face experience initially. But obviously, on our course which we do entirely distanced, we never meet our students in person quite often until the graduation ceremony. And yet they can still be fully engaged and connecting with the on-campus cohort throughout the programmes so yeah, I think obviously meetings is a really good example where we're all getting to experience being that person that's online when everybody else is in the room, and how the people in the room and we manage that.

Jonny: Yeah. If you come across, many people have been quite innovative with Technology over the past few years. I know in terms of in geography, some of the technicians, were using the cameras to kind of give a tour of the geography labs. And yeah, they were actually, if they were demoing some geography equipment, and instead of trying to pile all the students into quite a small space to look at some kit, they would set up cameras to record the equipment and give the demo. And then people could then either watch that demo remotely, or record it and they could watch later on and that was just how they could overcome some of the restrictions they were facing.

Mandi: Yeah, that sounds like a great project.

I think that there's been so many hasn't there? - examples of people doing innovative things and doing it in quieter responsive ways as well to situations. I think some of the really innovative things are really small and it's more about the way things have been done. So I've seen things like, I really like the idea that when they're online sessions people have, let the online session run after whatever, the formal session is that the lecture or the, or the seminar and lead the students as you would if you're in a lecture room. Obviously the students would then talk as they are going out. So if you can leave that space as the organizer of it and allow people to do that socializing. Small things like that are really nice for community building. In terms of the technology, the one that comes to mind straight away, thinking about what you were saying was the use of Google Cardboard, which is obviously really simple and cheap virtual reality. Yeah, headsets to do a tour around. I think it was around the Egyptian site, probably know about this. What's really interesting is not that they're using that particularly but the fact that the lecture was given sort of over the top of that. So they're still in a lecture but everybody in that room was sort of in that world seeing the same thing but the lecturer was speaking in the room and talking them through that journey.

Jonny: Yeah.

Mandi: They were really nice.

Jonny: Yeah. They were leading the virtual tour whilst students are using their headsets.

Mandi: Yeah, but still sitting in a lecture theatre so you tend to that. I guess you don't tend to associate VR, you think it's going to be in a particular room with very expensive equipment, but that was something really quite simple that probably made an entirely different experience for the students.

Jonny: I guess in general, staff are going to be quite looking forward to going back to face to face. Just so there's a bit of a change. Have you come across staff, who feel that way?

Mandi: Yeah definitely I think, yeah, I think there's there is something about being in the room with your students, definitely. So I think my sense generally is that people are really happy to be doing that. And as you said, the hope is that we still bring all of this infrastructure and experience that we've had with the online learning into that, and you draw on it to think about the way we're designing for learning, especially with issues like the one you've raised about number of students. And, that's why I think the expertise in the e-learning team is so valuable with that, with the learning design perspectives.

Jonny: Yeah, and we still, we are running learning design consultations and training around that, and we'll be kind of, yeah, continuing to develop learning design, training and approaches throughout the year.

Mandi: Yeah, as well as obviously, I think the Zoom room drop-ins have been really helpful as well haven't they? People have found that useful where 'I've got a problem right now' I just need some help with this one smaller thing to do right now. And there's Zoom rooms. They're carrying on, aren't they?

Jonny: They're still going to be in place yes. We're getting consistent people dropping into these sessions and yeah they're available Monday to Friday.

Mandi: And that's a great example of where I think the online works better because you can do that screen share - you can talk somebody through what they're doing as they're doing it on the screen.

Jonny: Yeah. Definitely. Because previously, we had face-to-face drop-in sessions where you know, hardly anyone would come to those because of either they didn't have time or, you know, they had to walk across campus. So if you can just hop on to Zoom and ask someone, a quick question and get a problem solved in just a few minutes, with a screenshot share its so much better for staff.

Mandi: Yeah, in many ways we spend so much of our time on a screen, don't we, with the onlineway of working, we're sharing that experience more directly. So I think Karenne's workshop and that she did where people took us on a tour, essentially through their Blackboard space and see all the different ways in which people, use Blackboard that worked really well as an online session. Yeah. It would have been quite different in a room when your distanced from the screen in a different way.

Jonny: Should we talk about...you recently won an award - a Humanities Outstanding Staff Award. And that was that was all about your use of technology in your teaching. It was the Outstanding Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) award. Could you just talk briefly about the use of technology in your teaching?

Mandi: Yes, I think in relation to that, my understanding is I think it's around being organized as Karenne put it when we did the Blackboard session, that we do quite a bit of structure in the way that the space is used particularly with to what we call maps. So there's one which is kind of a learning map within the unit. Every week, it's just a simple table, really, but it's got these elements of where we are now. So what was the overview of what was last week; where we going this week - the key points of what we're doing; how we'll know we're getting there - so what you'd expect to know by the end of this week's kind of questions you should be able to answer. And then probably the most important thing: why are we looking at this particular topic or activity in this week. Why is it relevant for the course as a whole. So that's our Learning map. And then I have a sort of Task map, which is based a little bit on quite old school differentiation from when I back in the day the 'Dark Ages' when I was teaching in schools and it's a somewhat contentious model of 'all will, most will, some will' kind of repositioned that a little bit to be: Essential, Additional and Explore. So there's essential tasks that people need to do, if they want to pass and then additional, if you're looking for kind of a deeper understanding, a better mark and an Explorer for those who fly. But it's positioned based on what we've seen students do over the past rather than my expectations of what they should do. So essential is what students who have passed this course have done in the past at this point, or what students who are flying and really engaged the kinds of things that they've been doing. So, it's just given that real signposting, the waypoints to the students about what they're doing. And really importantly, why it's relevant to the learning as a whole and the way we've put that into Blackboard is a little table for each of those in each week. So it's consistent and they can see where they should be. And that seems to be really popular, so it's something that we've done and it's just a very simple table. Obviously, we've been able to just copy that across to other units and we're using it a little bit more in other places in the program as well.

Jonny: Yeah, that sounds really good. Yeah. And in terms of students enhancing their digital skills, are students on your course, are they quite knowledgeable about using technology? Or when they start the course, or can you kind of...I guess they learn a lot during the course of the (programme)...

Mandi: Yeah, they're an interesting cohort because obviously on our programme which is Digital Technologies and Communication, and Education. There's an expectation, that they'll use lots of different tools, which is always something that comes up in student feedback, that they prefer consistent tools to be used. Our students have to use a range of tools, but I think, it's not that they, we have a real diversity of experience coming on to the course, we have people who are in full-time work and practitioners in education, but then we have students coming who have programmed in C++ before. There's a few of those. But then they perhaps

struggle with formatting a contents table in Word. So, that's one student. Then we'll have other students that are very proficient in certain tools. So we have, it's a real range. I wouldn't say our students are expert in tools when they come to us for sure.

Jonny: Yeah. Okay.

Mandi: That's got its challenges too, hence the whole 'some things are essential' and obviously you have to have different pathways through for different levels of experience - prior experience.

Jonny: Okay, great. Okay, thanks Mandy. Should we leave it there?

Mandi: Yeah. Okay. Great to talk to you.

Jonny: Okay. And all the best with the new teaching year.

Mandi: Thank you. Yeah, wishing everybody the best with this hopefully more settled year.

Jonny: Yeah ok, sure. Thank you. Bye.

Mandi: Bye.

Jonny: You can find out more about this topic and so much more by visiting our humanities Pages, which include our best practice resources and is full of information from the e-learning team in Humanities. There's a link to this from the note section of the podcast where you can also subscribe to this podcast and you'll automatically get the latest episode on release from wherever you get your podcasts. Finally. If you liked this episode tell other people about us if you have any ideas of things. We should be covering get in. Touch with us. We love to hear from you. See you next time and stay safe.