Engaging and enthusing cross disciplinary students of mental health through large informal workshops

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oro.open.ac.uk
Engaging and enthusing cross disciplinary students of mental health through large informal workshops

Janette Wallace  
janette.wallace@open.ac.uk

and

Isabella Henman  
isabella.henman@open.ac.uk
Research background

• The Open University – distance 50 years and largely online (10 years)
• SDK228 mental health 2nd year module (~2000 students) is 30 credits (1/4 FTE)
• Scheduled online tutorials – Tutor group (~20) and cluster group (~150)
• Face to face tutorials 4 x 3 hour day schools – cluster group
Research Question

- Attendance at F2F and tutor group tutorials is poor
- Attendance at cluster tutorials
- Style of presentation at tutorials
- And student engagement at tutorials

Can we engage and enthuse cross disciplinary students of mental health through large informal workshops?
Adobe Connect

- Online room software with students as participants
- Students can access on all types of devices
- Recordings are accessible on all device types (mobile devices became available late 2019)
- Tutors can tailor rooms to their style
- Terminology: pods, share, poll, chat, breakout
Welcome to this module wide workshop

We will begin at half past but some notices /
useful information first 😊

Participants can use this chat pod to answer questions, engage with each other and add general comments. During a live session comments are attached to logged in name but on a recording they can be anonymised.
Welcome to this module wide workshop

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Slides to download

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<th>Size</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>343 KB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants can use this chat pod to answer questions, engage with each other and add general comments. During a live session comments are attached to logged in name but on a recording they can be anonymised.
The workshops
Workshops

Aimed to engage students
Provide opportunities to look into topics and skills in more depth

1. Interesting extra on biology
2. Plagiarism
3. Positive psychology/How to be happy
4. Biology in your own words
5. Essay/critical writing
6. Dementia care in the 21st century

Run Tuesday evenings and Thursday day time
Analysis

- Interaction and attendance assessed during workshop and through targeted JISC questionnaire after each workshop
- Questionnaire to all SDK288 students towards the end of the module
- Questionnaire for associate lecturers (ALs) involved in workshops

What are we looking for? attendance, interaction, enjoyment, and overall impressions
Findings - attendance
Findings: Attendance

- Total attendance - 437 (231 different students)
- 13-119 at each session
- Evening > lunchtime (67% / 33%)
### Findings: Attendance

If you did not attend one or more ONLINE module wide workshops can you please give any reasons that apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did not see the relationship to my study of SDK228</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I felt I didn't have the time to engage with more tutorials</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time inconvenient (other study issues eg scheduled tutorial / too close to TMA deadline)</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned to attend but forgot about the workshop(s)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time inconvenient (personal issues)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not know there were any workshop(s)</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)*
Findings: Attendance

If you found a future module had informal ONLINE interactive workshops would you? (please select any that apply)

- Plan to attend to help me engage with the module: 118 (83.1%)
- Plan to attend to help me engage with my university overall: 60 (42.3%)
- Plan to attend to help me engage with other students: 49 (34.5%)
- Plan to attend to enable me to ask questions: 48 (33.8%)
- Plan to attend to engage more with tutors: 41 (28.9%)
- Plan to attend for any other reason: 12 (8.5%)
- Not plan to attend: 11 (7.7%)
- Other: 1 (0.7%)

Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question’s respondents chose that option)
Findings - interaction
Findings: Interaction

- Raise Hand
- Agree
- Disagree
- Step Away

- Speak Louder
- Speak Softer
- Speed Up
- Slow Down
- Laughter
- Applause

- Clear Status
Findings: Interaction
Findings - enjoyment
Findings: Enjoyment

83.9% of those surveyed found the workshops very enjoyable or enjoyable. None of those surveyed said they the events were ‘not enjoyable at all’.

3 How much did you enjoy the workshop you just attended?

- Very Enjoyable: 86 (55.5%)
- Enjoyable: 44 (28.4%)
- Somewhat enjoyable: 19 (12.3%)
- Slightly enjoyable: 6 (3.9%)
- Not at all enjoyable: 0

Multi answer: Percentage of respondents who selected each answer option (e.g. 100% would represent that all this question's respondents chose that option)
Findings: What did students enjoy?

Interaction with others

Community building

Interactive tools

Content
Findings: What did students enjoy?

Good to have some fellowship with others on the course

Listening to others viewpoints
Findings: What did students enjoy?

The friendly way it was presented

Direct instruction makes the topic clearer
Findings: What did students enjoy?

- Seeing the chats between other students
- The interactive nature of it!
Findings: Students did not enjoy

- Too busy
- Lack of time
- Lack of interaction
- Lack of Content
Findings: Students did not enjoy

- Break out rooms were a bit of a waste of time
- Not enough information about where I am up to now
- Overcrowded and not enough time to chat individually
Findings: Students did not enjoy

- too much info on the screen at the same time so hard to follow live
- relation to course was not clear
- Complex technology / inability with technology
Findings – overall impressions
Findings: Students took away

- Confidence
- Improved understanding of module content
- Enhanced skills
- Student community
Initial conclusions
What next at the OU?

• The informal nature increases engagement, community and understanding of both soft skills and content.
• Run alongside traditional tutorials
• Style can be used on other modules
• BUT more in depth analysis is needed
• COVID 19 impact on HE
• “We’re paying a lot of money to jump on a Zoom call.”
• “Those opportunities for networking are incredibly important, meeting those people is a huge part of the degree.”

https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/20/very-very-upsetting-students-face-tough-decisions-over-university

• 13-49% of students won’t enrol if courses are online

https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/may/20/uk-universities-facing-760m-hit-one-in-five-students-plan-defer

• Social distancing and online learning needs interaction
Thank you