

What's really changed?

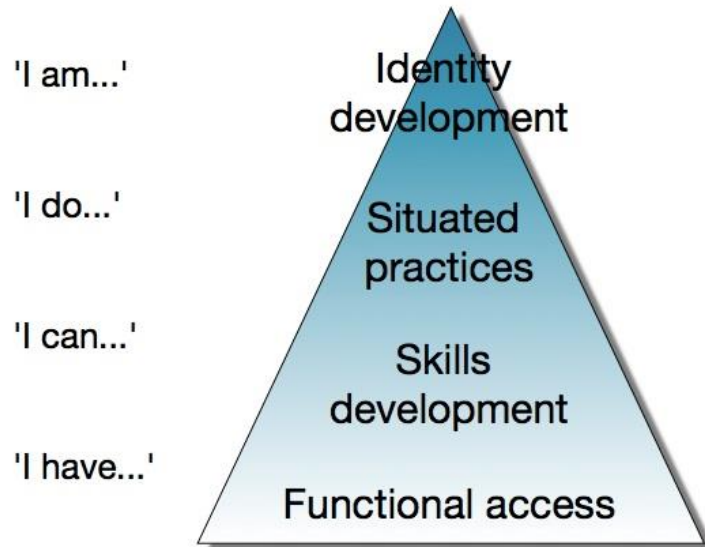
Exploring the impact of the pandemic on values-based decision making in higher education

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@rjsharp

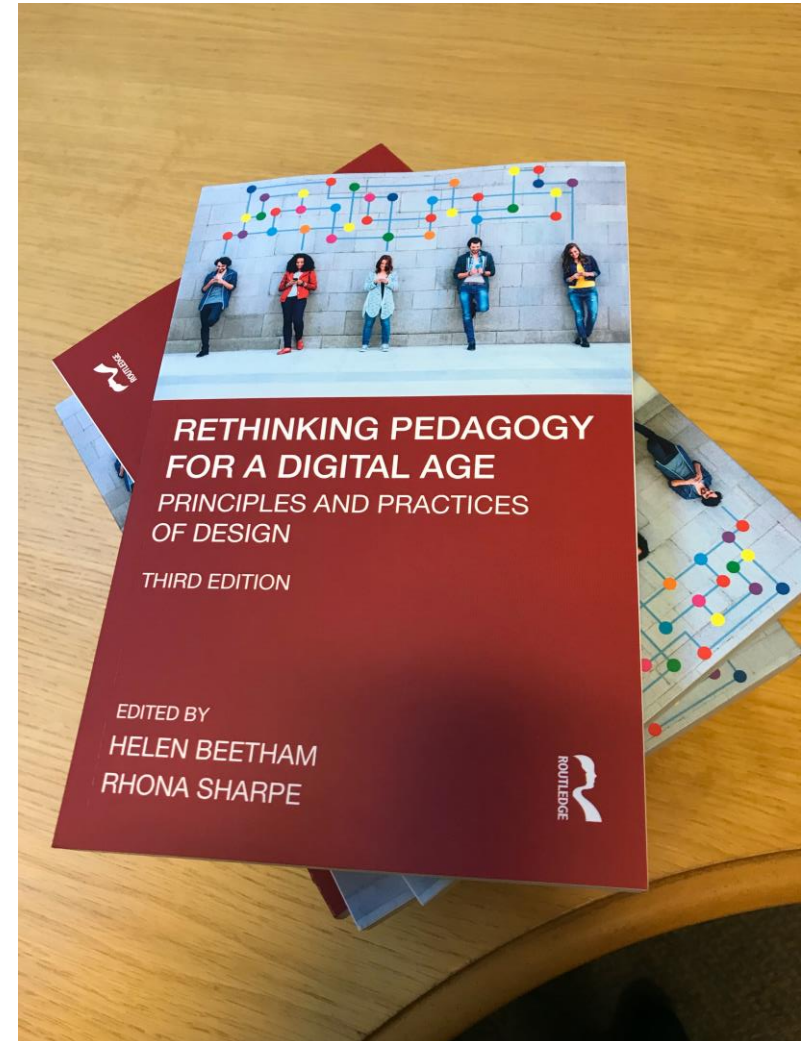


The Open
University

Eaquals



Beetham and Sharpe 2010



Reflection



Photo from Raygar HE on Unsplash

Reflection

- To what extent has decision making been values based?
- Why should this continue?
- What would happen if it did?

REFLECTION POINT 1

What was your initial reaction to the pandemic?

How were your actual actions/decisions similar or different to your initial thoughts?



Experiences at Oxford during the pandemic

Photo from Raygar HE on Unsplash

Teaching remotely



Guidance and resources to support you teach online



**Remote
alternatives to
undergraduate
practical
classes**

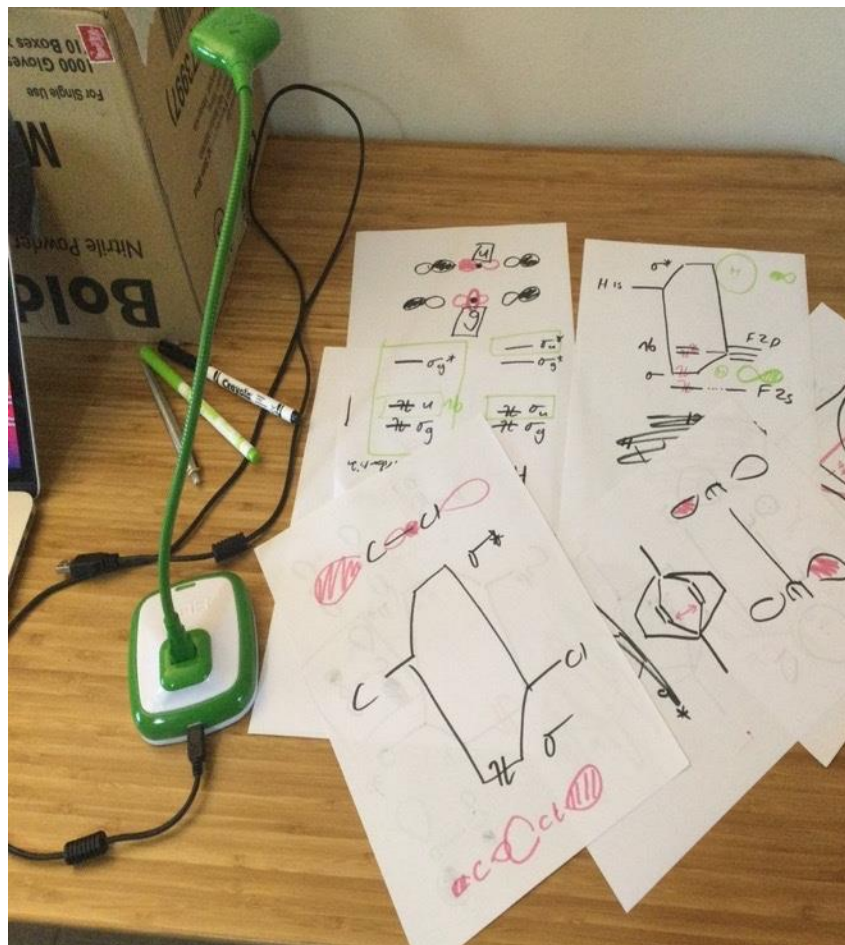


**Tools for
remote
lecturing**



**Tools for
tutorial
teaching**

Student feedback on remote teaching



“Tutorials via Teams are working well.... lots of diagrams are involved - tutors have been screen sharing and drawing on a blank document, whilst we describe our answers. Surprisingly comforting sense of normality.”

“I like having my [subject] lectures recorded. I can pause and make sure I get down everything I need in my notes. If I don't understand anything I can re-watch the slides until I do. “

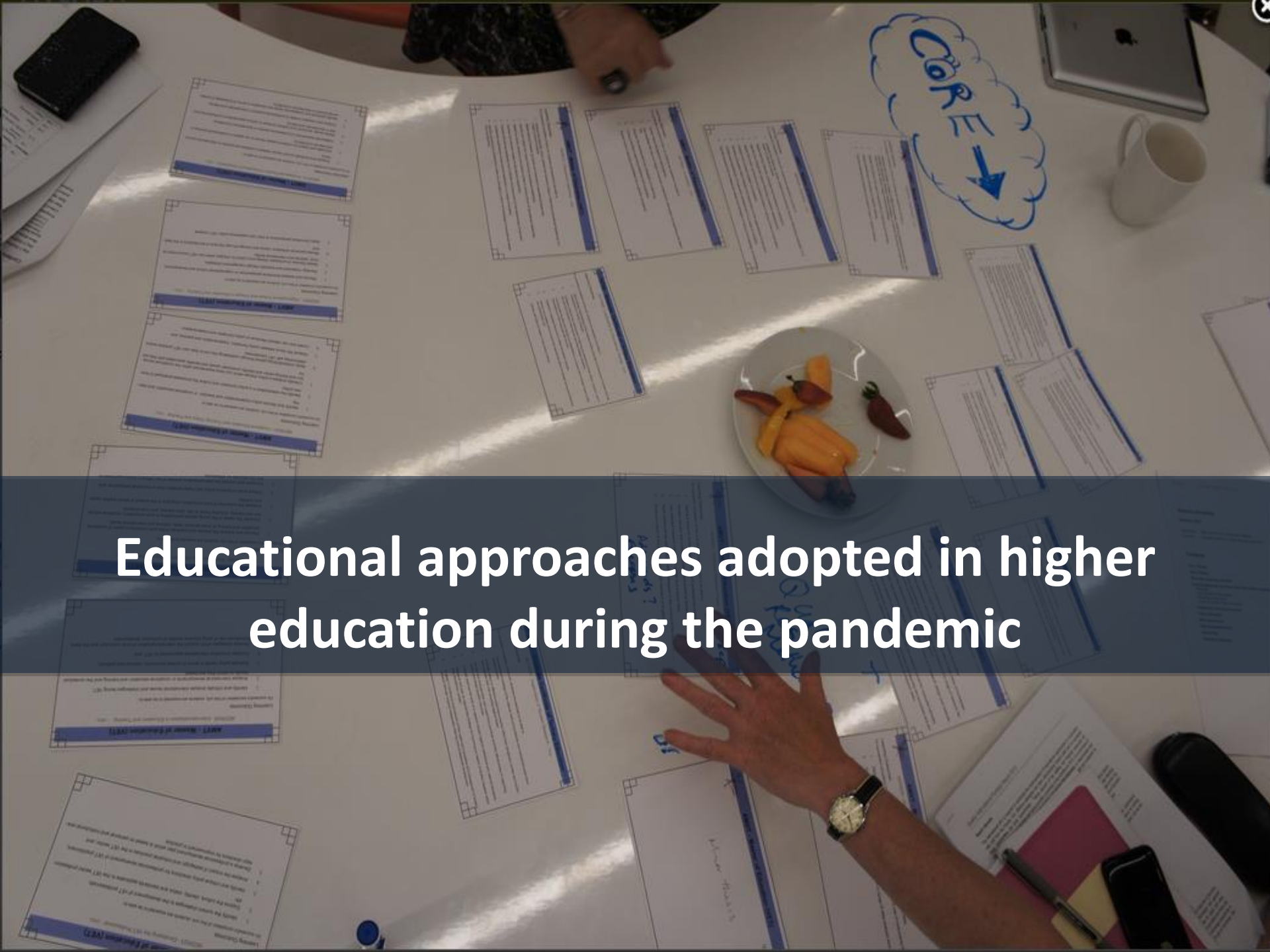
In addition to adapting teaching:

- swift procurement of digital tools
- online open book exams, take home exams (or no exams)
- remote assessment e.g. vivas
- remote application interviews
- larger cohort sizes
- no detriment policies
- COVID hardship funds

REFLECTION POINT 2

What changes have you seen to educational practices?

I'm interested in changes which had been hard to implement before the pandemic.



Educational approaches adopted in higher education during the pandemic

Educational approaches adopted during the pandemic:

Hybrid

HyFlex

Blended

Online

Integrated

Mixed mode

Flipped learning

???

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Hybrid

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???

These place importance on the distinction between online and in-person teaching – not what we value about education

Connected Learning principles:

1. the context of the module underpins **learning design**;
2. a clear and **consistent course structure**;
3. a strong sense of **community** and regular and active engagement
4. students are **active participants** in their learning
5. **assessment** is linked to learning outcomes and activities

Flexible and inclusive teaching



**Inclusive and
flexible tutorials**

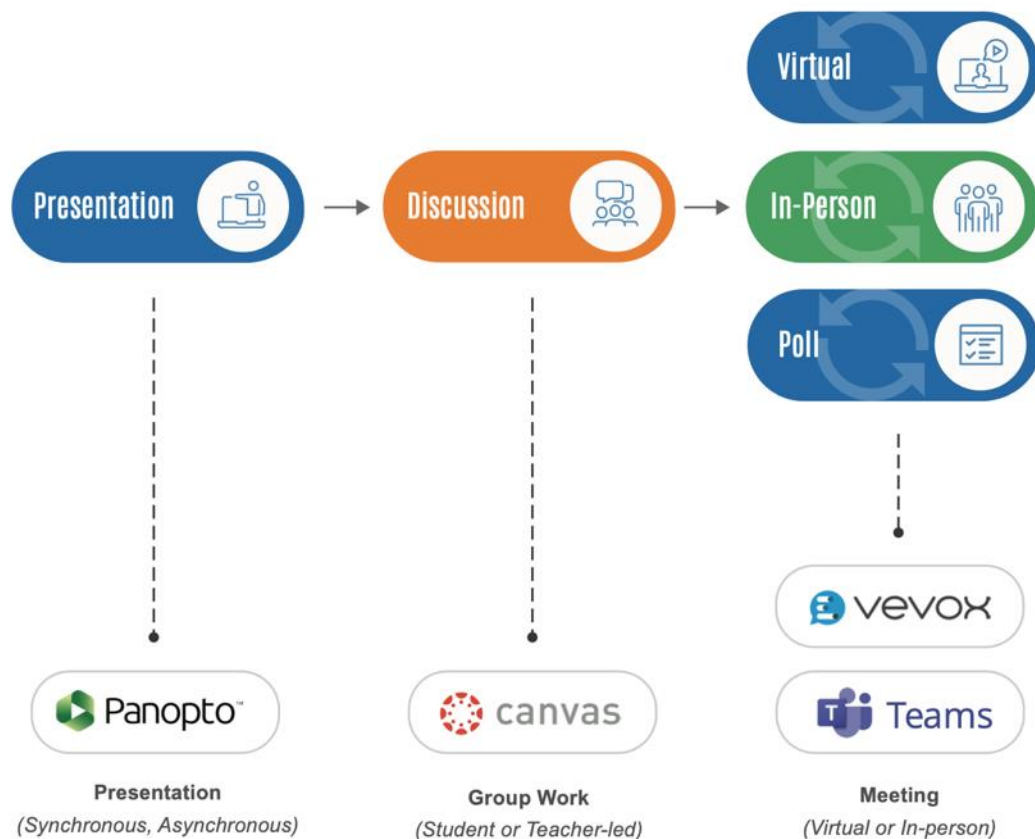


**Inclusive and
flexible small
group teaching**

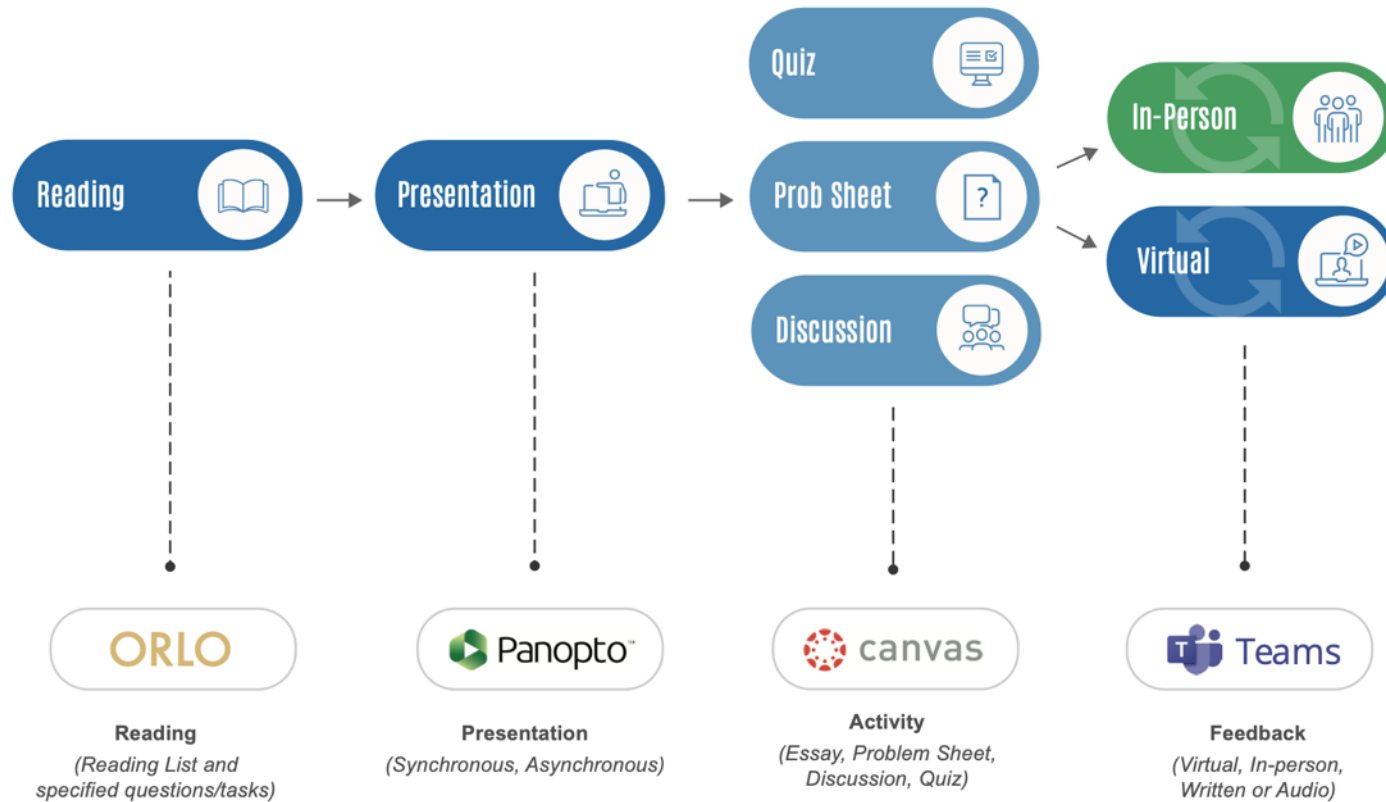


**Designing or
adapting
programmes to
be flexible and
inclusive**

Lecture

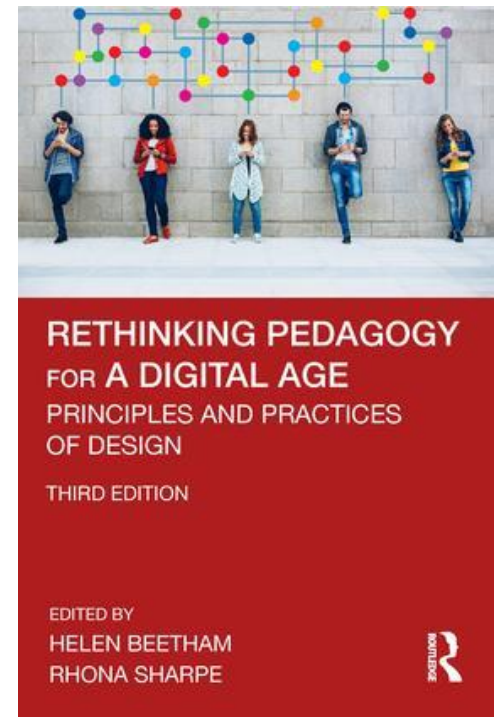


Small Group 1



Features of flexible and inclusive teaching

- Visual learning designs
- Seen from the student perspective
- Anticipating and accommodating students' needs
- Allows for a range of times and modes of participation
- Can shift from in-person to remote teaching without a new design



REFLECTION POINT 3

The pandemic has made the things we value about education more visible.

What do you value about education?

An aerial night photograph of a city, likely London, showing a dense network of lights from buildings and streets. A semi-transparent dark blue banner is overlaid horizontally across the center of the image. The text "Values based decision making" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font on this banner. The city lights are a mix of warm yellow and orange from streetlights, and cooler blues and whites from building windows and signage. A large, dark, curved structure, possibly a bridge or part of a ship, is visible in the lower right corner.

Values based decision making

Photo credit: Rhona Sharpe



Decision making in times of crisis

- Continually collect and use **information** as the crisis unfolds (McKinsey & Co, 2020)
- Have the right **experts** in the room - and no-one else (Nyenswah, 2016)
- “take the time to carefully consider your personal, departmental, and institutional **values**, and use these values as an anchor to inform the decisions you make” (Gigliotti, 2020)

Decision making during the pandemic became more **student-centred**

with the express aim to create a learning and teaching environment

which would **better serve the needs of students** and sustain their involvement in education.



Student-centered leadership

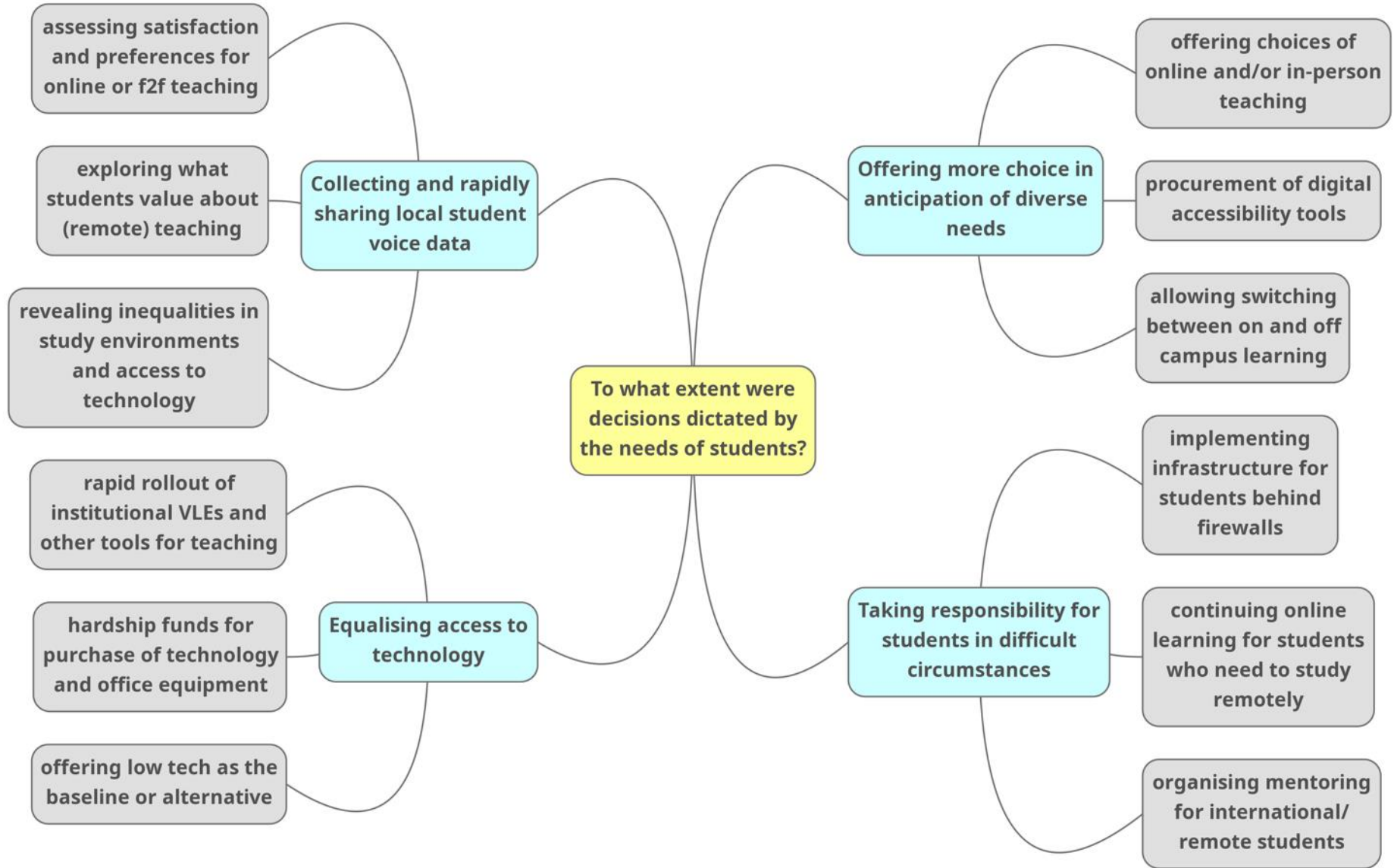
Robinson's (2011) five principles

1. Establishing goals and expectations
2. Collective vision
3. Resourcing strategically
4. Ensuring quality teaching
5. Leading teacher learning and development
6. Ensuring a safe and orderly environment

Harris et al (2015) added 3 more:

7. Engaging and working with the community
8. **Values based, ethical leadership**
9. Listening to student voice





Source: <http://doi.org/10.5334/jime.649>

Continuing student-centred decision making: 6 things we learned (and must not forget)

1. The technological infrastructure is in place to teach inclusively.
2. Teachers know how best to teach their subject, and can be hugely creative when freed from constraints e.g. timetabling, tradition.
3. There is a research base about online learning - and about most aspects of education.
4. Our previous educational provision wasn't optimal for everyone.
5. Fewer individual adjustments are needed when inclusivity is designed in.
6. The student experience needs to be understood holistically.

What comes next?



Imagine

Student
pulse surveys

Student
partnership
activities

Student
review of
timetables

Vacation
dongles

Dial in access

Mobile friendly
open
textbooks

Collecting and rapidly
sharing local student
voice data

To what extent were
decisions dictated by
the needs of students?

Equalising access to
technology

Offering more choice in
anticipation of diverse
needs

Taking responsibility for
students in difficult
circumstances

Due date
'windows'

Recordings
of all live
sessions

Accessible
versions of
digital content

Vacation
mentors

Routes for
part-time &
international
students

Extended
induction
programmes

Summary

- We have seen that education can **shift rapidly**.
- Now we need time to **reflect on the decisions** that have been made – and how they have been made.
- Questions about what comes next should **emphasise what we value** about education.
- One value which could continue to drive decision making is **student-centredness**.
- Take time to **imagine** what education would look like if it did.

Further reading

Varga-Atkins, T., Sharpe, R., Bennett, S., Alexander, S. and Littlejohn, A., 2021. The Choices that Connect Uncertainty and Sustainability: Student-Centred Agile Decision-Making Approaches Used by Universities in Australia and the UK during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, 2021(1), p.16.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/jime.649>

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Harris, J., Spina, N., Ehrich, L. and Smeed, J. 2013. *Literature review: Student-centred schools make the difference*. Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, Australia. Report. Available from: <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/69161/>

Nyenswah, T. (2016) Leadership in times of crisis: a personal reflection from the center of the Ebola epidemic response in Liberia, *Health Systems & Reform*, 2(3): 208-212

Robinson, V. 2011. *Student-centred leadership*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.