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ELSE REPRESENTED AT:

6th Annual Flipped Learning Conference Post COVID 19: Evolution of the Classroom, University of Northern Colorado, USA, 3-4 June 2021

3rd International Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities: Challenges of the Changing World – Building a Safer Future, University of Houston Clear Lake (USA) and International Balkan University (North Macedonia), 10-11 June 2021

The work done within ELSE was mentioned in:

- Di Ciolla, N., Nerantzi, C. and Chatzidamianos, G. (submitted) Block 'n' Flip, chapter for Active Learning Network book publication (full details TBC)
- Nerantzi, C., Chatzidamianos, G. and Di Ciolla, N. (eds.) (2021) Moving to block teaching: challenges and opportunities, Special Issue, *Learning and Teaching in Action*, Vol. 14 No. 1, <https://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/ltia/>
- Nerantzi, C., Chatzidamianos, G. and Di Ciolla, N. (2021) Reflections on block teaching, three practitioners, three voices, in: Nerantzi, C., Chatzidamianos, G. and Di Ciolla, N. (eds.) (2021) Moving to block teaching: Challenges and opportunities, *Special Issue, Learning and Teaching in Action*, Vol. 14 No. 1, pp.18-34, <https://www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/ltia/>
- Sibi, P. (2021) Storyboarding as Teaching Practice and Assessment Technique in Teacher Training: A Survey Study, in *Trends in Economics Finance and Management Journal*, Vol. III, Issue 1. Skopje: IBU Press



**ELSE AT THE 6TH ANNUAL FLIPPED
LEARNING CONFERENCE *POST
COVID-19: EVOLUTION OF THE
CLASSROOM*, UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHERN COLORADO, USA, 3-4
JUNE 2021**

The 6th iteration of this established conference provided a forum for academics to share their experiences with flipped learning, especially those enhancements designed and tested in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whilst wreaking havoc with students, staff, and institutions, the pandemic has also forced innovation and a rethinking of pedagogical approaches that have led to revolutionary changes in Teaching, Learning and Assessment.

Over the two days of the conference, held entirely remotely and connecting academics from all over the world, presenters and participants discussed the challenges encountered during the academic year 20-21, the strategies developed to mitigate them, the inevitable mishaps, and the useful insights gained. Great emphasis was placed on identifying what legacy – from a pedagogical perspective – COVID-19 will leave behind.





MAST Institute

6TH ANNUAL FLIPPED LEARNING CONFERENCE

The keynote address from flipped learning pioneer Professor Eric Mazur of Harvard University (the preview of his presentation can be watched [here](#)) was linear and inspiring, showing how eclectic the flipped methodology can be, and how it can apply equally effectively to all disciplinary areas.

Professor Mazur's examples of flipped Physics lectures with Harvard students— including the initial reservations expressed by students unaccustomed to the style - was an apt introduction to the presentation from the Manchester Metropolitan University team, which illustrated case studies showing the use of EVOLI in Humanities subjects.

The presentation delivered by ELSE partner Nicoletta Di Ciolla, reflected on the experience of applying the flipped classroom methodology at Manchester Metropolitan in the utterly peculiar academic year 2020-21, when not only did teaching take place almost exclusively in distance mode, but when the decision was made to divide the year into four blocks of 6 weeks, each carrying 30 CATS (15 ECTS) worth of modules. With no access to campus (the option of the study bubble was discarded, once the UK government decided for a national lockdown),

Block 'n' Flip

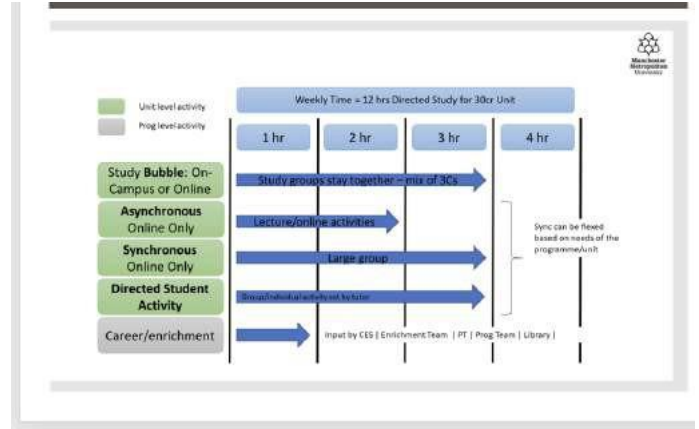
Boosting student engagement in the HE classroom.
The challenges and opportunities in *Coronial* and *post-Coronial* times

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staff and students connected remotely from living rooms or bedrooms, from the kitchen table, from a shed in the garden. Uncomfortable chairs, ironing boards or coffee tables repurposed as desks, laptops precariously balanced on laps (hence for once true to their name), flaky internet connections – all became staples in the new order. And so did juggling home schooling, caring responsibilities, health, illness, and work.

Whilst the temptation to replicate standard classroom practice was strong – at least in some part of the academic body - it soon became clear that this was not a sustainable or effective option, and **synchronous and asynchronous learning and teaching** entered our pandemic vocabulary quickly. Finding a balance was not easy during the time of physical distancing, when digital networked technologies were the only answer to the need to be with others, to share. The format of synchronous sessions, especially when it simply entailed transmission of information, didn't seem to encourage much participation from students, and was challenging for academics, who felt like they were speaking into a black hole or, as someone put it, **“conducting a séance”**. Switching cameras on or keeping them off became a regular discussion point in sessions, and some students reported feeling under pressure to appear on video (Harkin, 2021), which raised questions about what could be done to involve them more, to stimulate their participation. It became obvious that replicating campus-based provision online would not work, especially because in block teaching there is even less time overall to complete a unit despite the experience being more intensive and immersive.

The new teaching and learning framework was an opportunity to re-imagine our pedagogical approaches, exploiting creativity and innovation. Armed with the tools developed within ELSE – EVOLI in particular – we found ourselves in a good position to make judicious use of the flipped classroom methodology.



Verywell / Alex Dos Diaz



Laura Green / APOD

We were adamant that a mere “physical” flip – with instruction simply moved outside the live sessions, and summed up with a generic “watch this video” order to students – would not be enough. And we were convinced that we needed to use the experiences and the tools made available to us by ELSE as an opportunity to engage students in active and deep learning, to help them become empowered and autonomous.

The case study presented at the conference related to a Latin module, delivered to students of Ancient History (a mixture of undergraduates, MA and PhD students). The presentation showed how EVOLI was used to create a multimodal and interactive set of sessions, where students were made to feel that they were co-constructors of their learning journey.

It gave a demonstration of the EVOLI software, together with a rationale for its use in the very specific context of teaching a foreign (allegedly dead) language to Anglophone students. The presentation emphasised the eclectic nature of EVOLI as a tool that supports the versatility of the flipped classroom approach and its ethos: students learnt to take ownership and responsibility for their learning, they were encouraged to work with each other, and were enabled to learn at a pace that suited them.

Reflections on the ‘post-Coronial’ times were also offered, and the debate that followed focussed in planning ahead, showing that the awareness that COVID-19 marked a significant turning point in our practice was shared by all.

The “post-Coronial” road ahead (and the map to travel it)



Bridge the gap between “the sage on stage” and “the guide on the side” (Wilson, 2020)

Integrate, do not augment

- Make preparatory work essential to the live session

Dispel the “sense of an absence”

- Students missing the tutor delivering the core course element (FOMO)

Make conditions equitable – do not ignore digital poverty and digital capabilities

- Time-poor students could be excluded from the full learning experience
- Kit, and skills to use it (loan equipment/hardship funds/training workshops)



ELSE AT THE 3RD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES: *CHALLENGES OF THE CHANGING WORLD – BUILDING A SAFER FUTURE*, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON CLEAR LAKE (USA) AND INTERNATIONAL BALKAN UNIVERSITY (NORTH MACEDONIA), 10-11 JUNE 2021

In the section of the conference dedicated to papers on Education and Digital Innovation, project coordinator Alba Graziano and Patrizia Sibi, of the Università degli Studi della Tuscia, Viterbo, Italy delivered a paper that illustrated the pedagogical value of storyboarding and presented ELSE tool ECORE, the digital editor designed to create learning games (Serious Games) to be used in higher education environments.

Highlighting one of the core objectives of the ELSE project, which was to create digital tools that were accessible to – and could be used by – all practitioners, and did not require specialised technical expertise, the presenters demonstrated how ECORE could also help academic tutors enhance their lesson planning skills, and learn how to convey specific academic content through a story, by representing a lesson plan through a storyboard. A concept – or a cluster of concepts – typically delivered through a lecture or a seminar could now be conveyed through a game, presenting a simulated situation.





Whilst during the life of the ELSE project the testing of the tools was conducted mostly with groups of undergraduate students, the authors of the paper wanted to investigate the possibility that different groups of learners could benefit from the innovation. They therefore considered using the principles of storyboarding and the ECORE editor to develop sessions to be delivered to the teacher trainees that typically attend the training courses organised at the Università della Tuscia, and to the in-service teachers attending courses of professional development. Their aim was to discover whether storyboarding could be adopted as part of an efficient teaching practice and as an assessment tool in teacher training and continuous professional development courses. Significant indicators supporting a positive response to this question were collected through a qualitative survey conducted on teachers who had enrolled in the Special Educational Needs training at Università della Tuscia in the A.Y. 2019-20. After playing a Serious Game created by the project team which addressing topics of relevance to school life, the group of 40 teachers produced storyboards to simulate additional typical school situations, involving all grades. The analysis of their outputs revealed a significant educational potential for storyboarding as a teaching/learning strategy and provided practical indications in favour of the research hypothesis.

