Okay, thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. And thank you for signing the participant consent form and completing your demographical information. This interview will be recorded and then transcribe your identity will be anonymized in the transcription of this interview as well as any other information that may identify any other person or institution. You are welcome to switch off your camera or keep it on and you may at any point withdraw from this study.

[Unrelated deleted]

Okay. Um, so as you know, this study is about blended learning. So to start this interview, do you use blended learning?

Yes, I do.

So how would you define blended learning?

So blended learning for me is the combination of online learning and also offline or in classroom classroom learning. You could want engagement with your students, and for me, there's a correlation between the two because blended learning will not be successful unless you've created a golden thread between objectives that you want to achieve and the type of activities that you employ in class. So the learning can be continued between classroom and what you will continue to discuss with them when you are online or in the digital kind of environment.

Okay, so if you were to think of a typical online class, what sort of techniques or activities or things would you use? Maybe if you can mention about three…

Okay. Well, of course, the platform that we use is Blackboard, but activities that I would usually use when I engage with them online… I like to use the principle of giving them a case study, a small little case study, I usually do that by by by means of a QR code, it will take them to a YouTube video and in the YouTube video I'll give them one of two things. Number one, some theory. So we will discuss a topic, or the educator on the YouTube video will discuss a topic very briefly trying to keep it between two or three minutes, we will usually talk about it quickly. The theory, if you don't use the flip approach the flipped classroom approach, then I would, we'll discuss it quickly. And then I'll present them with it, with an opportunity and challenge. So that's usually case study driven. Maybe for Google [unclear], or something by Krispy Kreme finding something that donuts, you know, challenges they're faced with, or even opportunity and then ask them to take the case study, take the theory, go away, find the solution, come back, and then we talk about it in the class. And that's usually open discussion where the students can share ideas. And that's more than often within a chat group environment. The students that are comfortable will open their mics and then they'll talk. That's the kind of standard approach that I take. The second one is when I see the, when I hear crickets, then I throw a quick poll vote on anything, which is kind of topical or completely left field, completely non related to anything just to kind of stimulate the okay, so we're back in class now. And the third thing I like to use is when I have them, when we were talking about the theory, I would put something on the board, which is fairly interactive, where they can write on the board. But you know, if I work with numericals, business type subjects, I would give them a diagram or fit left column with the right column. So maybe five key thoughts on the left, and then five definitions on the right, and then to draw the lines between them -

So they physically draw it?

- and then we kind of say … yes, yeah. So those are some of the tools that I would use.

Okay, and we're going to go to the offline, and then I'm going to circle back to online. So if you think of a normal face to face campus, offline class, what sort of things do you do?

Oh, so they are very similar. But offline, depending on what how the classes, so I need to understand the class dynamics. As example for one first year group, with a very tight unit, their very competitive. So what I would do is tap into that, and arrange a day of games. So I would work through theory by means of games. And what I say there is, what I mean by that is I would give them a small piece of theory and say, go, read about it come back, this going to be a Kahoot on this section, then they will compete for marks. So the podium gets five marks first place, and then for second place gets three marks, then one or two marks. And then these kind of add up throughout the whole class, the whole session. I would have complete diagrams. So I put a diagram on the screen. And they would, they would, I would leave our pieces, this is not numericals, and then they would kind of fit it together, then mark themselves. Another day of games, another game would be role playing. So groups of clients, an agency and then a moderator, if your class is big enough. So the agency is presented with a challenge, they must go check out the theory and come up with the solution. The client has to do the same because they need to kind of spot spot if they talk nonsense, and challenge them on their proposals. And then the moderator is the one that kind of is the silent partner which needs to kind of score them. But they also need to know the theory because they'll quickly know if they're talking rubbish and usually creates a lot of fun, because they take each other out and start dissing each other and so on. But good good thoughts arise. That's the, those are some of the things I used. Do I need to give you more?

No.

Okay, good.

That sounds so good. And we're going to go into detail. I’ve made notes. Okay, um, we’re going back to online. So you started by saying that, um, sometimes you use a case study, which you would give to your class using a QR code, and they would go to a YouTube video, and that’s maybe two to three minutes long. Why would you use a case study?

My view on this is, and this is the way that I approach everything that I do with tuition is, the kids are there to prepare themselves for real life challenges. [Unclear]. But but they will be put in a situation where they have to figure out what the challenges are to problems being presented to them. And my view is that the trends indicate that the challenges are specifically becoming more and more and more. That being said, they have to keep up with pace. And if we send them out into the world without being exposed to real life challenges, as practical as they can be, it will be difficult for them. Number one, number two, these have to be done in group format. More often, I always put them in groups. I rarely have them individually, because if you get into the workspace, it's group based, it's project based, you have to work with somebody, at least one person somewhere. And then the third thing is when I work with them, I try to pick the case studies that I am not familiar with, but which feeds into my realm of expertise or experience. I would bring a real life thing to the table, and then I can advise them. So this is what I did. This is what I did. This is what happened with me. So you kind of tie the knot between theory, you figured out the problem, then this is what actually happened to me as a lecturer. And this is what I found, this is what I did. And this is what which did not work at all. So that's the reason.

So would you say a case study is something that has actually happened, and there was already some sort of a solution, and now the students get a chance to also get some sort of a solution going?

You can create a case study, you can create an, you know, the case study is a very broad term in this in this discussion, because it's not something which is cut and dried. Pick these three possible it's not standardised, it's yes, a situation. I'm not sure what to do about it, go for it. Come back to me with something, discuss, challenge each other. Think outside the box and then talk about it. So it could be a case study or like a scenario. Scenario, case study. I think the, I think the better word that I need another dimension if this scenario is not the best option.

Cool. Um, and then you're the first person whose mentioned a QR code and YouTube. Why would you use QR codes? And why do you direct people to YouTube?

Okay, the reason for that is they are born with a phone in their hand. And to put it down is like severing glue with physical matter. It's difficult. So I want to tap into what they use most. So don't try to change the tool, work with the tool. They use the phones, fine. Let's use the phones. So

I found that if I can stay on the screen all time, every now and then the head will go down to the phone. Okay, well, let's use the phone and go down. They're familiar with it. They're comfortable with it.

So is the QR code on the screen? And then they take the phone and show it?

Yeah, yeah. Sometimes the kids use a phone to dial into the session. So they can't use it. I've popped the link into the chat box. But it's also to break the rhythm. Because attention span is short. So staring at the screen the whole time. State something else on the phone, and then come back to the screen. Yeah, so that's the reason and YouTube why take it to them because they spend a lot of time on it. And it just brings the scenario or the theory across a lot easier. It's audio plus visual.

Okay, great thing you said that you sometimes challenge them or you give them some sort of an opportunity to find a solution. So you give them some sort of a theory or scenario and then they go away and they come back with the solution. Am I correct?

Yeah.

When when we say they go away? Do we mean they go into breakout rooms in groups? Or do they do this individually?

Okay, so online, it's difficult. Your group has to be good and comfortable with a breakout group. Some hate breakout groups, the majority of them, last year had a wonderful third year group, they just loved it. If I didn't come in and tell them, guys, please come back. Like they’d just stay there. So it depends on your group dynamic. If you've got a strong leader in a group, that's also critical, this one person that says okay guys, this we have to sort this out, then stuff will happen. If that doesn't happen, they just talk about nonsense. So breakout breakout groups are used when I know they can handle it. And also when they're comfortable with it. If they go away online, that it's usually unfortunately individually driven. The group dynamic comes in when they bring the collective thoughts back. And in that discussion, I would challenge them to say but, you know, [name deleted] said this, again, he says, what do you say, you know, there you get it done in class, and then send them off. I just put them in groups inside the class and say, hey, guys, if you want to go off, they can go off, I'm very comfortable. But then I would break them. And I always give them the opportunity to say you pick your groups. I don't pick for them, never.

So do you find that group-work works much better face to face than online?

Yes. Personally, I feel it's a stronger weighting towards face to face. That we see each other's body language, you get a lot of dynamic, you get a lot of, kind of when you do it, if you don't do it. If you do it online, you get mind reading, they think this is what it is.

Okay, then you say that, um, you you come back and you have a discussion, some people are comfortable putting off their mics or on their mics and some people use the chat box.

What is your engagement? In terms of either the chat box or the mic? Do you find that they voluntarily engage like that?

Okay, so I have to push them to open the mic. More often I'd say guys, open your mic, or you're welcome to pop in your chat box. I never force them to do something. But more often they don't use the mic. The kids that are in class are very vocal are very comfortable online to open the mic and talk. I also found that and that's that's a personality thing. It's not necessarily a [unclear] as a personality thing, my personal view. But chat, yes, and then emojis, emojis as a strong communicator. It gives you a quick idea of what they're thinking, what they want to convey to you. And I still have to kind of exploit that and say, okay, so by means of emojies, give me your answer. Or by means of emoji. How do you feel today?

I'm a bit of a sorry about this question, but what would you say is a discussion?

Okay, how do you mean a discussion in class online or offline?

Online. What, how would you define discussion?

Oh, cool. Um, that's a very good question. Look, for me, a proper discussion is when you've created understanding, and then you've got the communications model, sender, receiver. But for me, discussion only takes place when they've understood what is being meant. And I see a lot, you know, specifically with the third years, they tend to go deeper into a scenario based discussions because they, they gain value from it, by means of oh, so this is what she said, or he said, so discussion takes place online. For me, what I've gathered more often is they give their ideas. This is what I thought about the problem. This is my thought about the solution. And another one would posts, I would take both, I would read it out loud and I would give my thoughts on top of that, and if I feel there is a need for more clarity then I would ask, and then they would come back. Others will also comment on that. So it's kind of a multi, multi directional communications loop. It's not one sender, one receiver, it's multi multi, multi channel, multi point. Yeah. So So that for me would kind of be a discussion.

Okay, cool. Good. And then you mentioned two other things. The first one is you sometimes use a poll and you said you can either use a poll that's topical, or something that's just left field, why would you use a poll?

It breaks the rhythm, you have to break the rhythm with the kids in the sense of when you see the discussions, because the big stars become still or crickets, then you have to find something and get them focused again. And I found it has to be a tactile thing. It has to be a physical thing in the sense of I'm not only looking and thinking, I'm also using my hand and, you know, touching the mouse and then clicking and selecting on the screen, taking the finger and pointing to the to the tablet. Because there's a body mind connection there.

So you want your students to physically move and that is why you use this poll?

Preferably, yeah, the movement helps a lot. That's why when I have them in class, I've said go and sit there. Before Covid came, I used sticky notes. A lot of sticking notes on campus, but you can't do it now anymore. The sticky note has the solution and they come and stick it up on the board. So it's the paper thing, mind, standing up, walking, pasting, coming back. So trying to incorporate all the senses all the body movements into getting to a point, but you know, online polls, it's different. It's also awesome to write on the board. Use the whiteboard type thing right there. Also, to break the rhythm is I would quickly do do a bit of naughts and crosses. So just while I'm talking, I'm writing I'm doing naughts and crosses, whoever wants to play that we can play it's fine. I don't even know who they are. Or they might not even know to me. The fact is you kind of just break it and then bring it back again.

So when you say you play naughts and crosses, how do you play it online?

I just write on the wall. If there's a whiteboard, even if it's in the middle of class, I would just write it, I would just draw the diagram and then leave it to see who can who's gonna play with me. And let's refocus them to get your attention back to what we're talking about now.

And when you say you write on the board, you said you write on the board and on the whiteboard online. So what is this whiteboard?

So on [programme deleted], you can literally have a whiteboard on. So as you would know, you got your slides online, visible, and then I would go out of the slides, and the guys will put on a white board. They can either write with a mouse or they can type.

And when you say slides, do you mean a PowerPoint presentation? And would you use that for what reason?

The PowerPoint for me is not super effective, but we use it a lot and I just use it to give them main thoughts. I would put the main thoughts on the on the screen on the PowerPoint. I used to when I started off to put lots of stuff on but now there's almost nothing but key thoughts, key diagrams, key visuals, and then it's about the discussion. It's about drawing the attention to a concept and then talking through it. But also while I present there’s a lot of drawing. So I would literally draw a quick arrow to that point or underline it quickly so they can follow where am I in the sequence of whatever's on the slide.

Do you also use the slides or presentations in your offline face to face classes for the same reason?

Yes, it just gives them a kind of a reference point when we talk, when we say sir what you said there when you mean you know that diagram second point, what was that? So it's a reference point for further discussion also.

We're going to go to face to face now. And so you mentioned three things. I want to start with this diagram, you said you put a diagram on the screen. What do you mean with that?

Okay, so in the numericals, in the class specific like business management, a lot of diagrams or processes or strategies and it looks all clever. And so it's on my laptop on a PowerPoint, which then gets projected through a data projector onto the screen, which is in front of them in class. So they can see the diagram, there are holes in the diagram or blocked out some of the content. If this was a flow kind of diagram, then I tell them guys, and I usually do this in the flip environment, I would tell them this diagram, if it’s maybe 10 blocks, I would, I would block out seven of them. So they only see three, three, the blocks of content on the side of the diagram, you've got seven ideas or concepts to go in somewhere between a group and say, figured out, where do they fit, and then they score themselves. So they sit at their desks in groups, look at the screen, figure out where the missing pieces are, oh, yeah, and they discuss it. Because they reason about, why wouldn't it fit in there? Why would this fit in there?

So what, what's the aim of using a diagram like this? What do you what do you want the students to get out of it?

Number one, it's part of the content to get their head around the content. I didn't decide and choose the diagram. It's part of what they have to learn. But I love diagrams, because it's visual. It's not boring. It's not monotonous text. It's not the four steps of the four P's of marketing. Step two, sequentially figure out why would number two, be after number one?

Yeah. So is it sort of making them think through the content?

Yeah. Yeah, I'm just I'm a very, very strong believer about figure it out yourself. Think about it, reasons through it. And the logic behind it for me is, I want them to kind of own the solution. I want to, I want them to own the concept behind the theory, because theory is theory. But the concept behind the theory, there's a reason why you work with a macro environment, and why Porter's five forces would be relevant. It's only theory, but once you understand understood it in terms of application, where does it fit into the day to day lives of the manager? Then it adds value. I think, by just talking about it, they've learned nothing. They must own it and figure it out.

Then the last question is, you mentioned that you previously used sticky notes in your class. So explain to me, so everyone got a pack of sticky notes? And then what did they do with the sticky notes?

Okay, so similar to what we've been speaking, there's always a scenario, or just a quick way to summarise. What do you think about inter relational communication or communication between a company and stakeholder give me two thoughts or two benefits. So two options, I can either do it individually or in groups, but I like the groups because then they can discuss it, they make a choice. So all of that would bring maybe 10 thoughts to the idea, but that was three, so in the case study and then they would write it on the sticky note, the leader, the group leader, put it up on the board. So the reasoning is multifaceted. Number one, you work with a group dynamic. Number two, your leaders get a chance to step forward. They also have to condense their thoughts, a sticky note a small key thoughts, one word, a sticky note, because they tend to think like this wide and a lot and just lots of stuff; not needed information. Because the world out there, the business world needs us to convince them of the key idea and key thought. Cut through complexity, and then present that as my thought. And it's written in their own handwriting. It's original, it sounds silly, but there’s psychological things, my identity, it's my handwriting. Digital kills that unfortunately, online. It's like your voice, it's your identity to hear yourself. That's why I’m trying to get them to talk in class. And online is is worth so much. So I give it to a group, the pack and then have to share and then I assign somebody as the leader and then they start writing up on the ticket. If there are groups I would write on the whiteboard, we want to see their names with tickets underneath the actual group.

Well, we have gone through all of my questions; you have added a few that I have never heard of and none of the other lecturers spoke of. So, thank you so much you've you've really added value to my study.