Reflections on adaptable education in Economics - lessons learned for in-person teaching and learning

Prof Parama Chaudhury, Nadeer Hanfi (3rd year BSc Economics), Prof Cloda Jenkins, Tasnim Nodee (3rd year BSc Economics)
April/May 2020: shift from emergency planning to a new education model for 2020/21

UCL Connected Learning, 2020-21

Connected Learning is UCL’s distinctive approach to online, socially distanced or blended teaching, learning support and assessment during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moving to Adaptable Learning Design in Economics
Cross-programme structured approach for lecturers and students

1. Lecturer communication about week ahead
2. Pre-live session self-directed async materials
3. Live interactive session with lecturer
4. Formative async self-directed activities to check learned embedded
5. Formative assignments for feedback
6. Live interactive small group session with teaching assistant
7. Online office hours (group and individual)
8. Assessments through term
Cross-programme structured approach for lecturers and students
Welcome to Econometrics: Economics

The module covers key topics in microeconomics, including supply and demand, market structures, and welfare economics. Throughout the module, we will explore the principles of microeconomics and their applications in real-world scenarios.

Materials and activities

- Week 1: Before you begin
  - Welcome and introduction: Watch the introductory video
  - Assessment
  - Have your say

- Week 2: What is Economics?
  - Available from 23 September 2021, 239 PM

- Week 2: Technology, Population and Economic Growth
  - Available from 5 October 2021, 3:30 PM

- Week 3: Macroeconomics
  - Available from 12 October 2021, 8:37 PM

- Week 4: Macroeconomics: Open Market Operations
  - Available from 19 October 2021, 4:14 PM

- Week 5: Discuss and learn
  - Available from 26 October 2021, 3:30 PM

- Week 6: Review and feedback
  - Available from 2 November 2021, 3:30 PM

Resources

- Lecture notes
- Course materials
- Assessment
- Discussion forum

Feedback

Please provide feedback on your experience and suggestions for improvement.

Assignment

- Assignment 1
  - Due: 23 November 2021

- Assignment 2
  - Due: 30 November 2021

Contact

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the module coordinator.
Advice on the Moodle page and underlying technologies

• Ensure structure and visual appeal of the various materials on course page
• Moodle page cannot work in isolation – students need instructions and communication on relevance of activities

• Insights on value of asynchronous activities such as quizzes and discussion forums
• Tested different poll software options and summarized pros and cons of options
Advice on learning design and student engagement

- Emphasised value of flexible and accessible learning from asynchronous materials
- Suggested optimal duration and interactive structure for synchronous sessions
- Provided practical tips on how to engage students online in live sessions
- Suggested creation of study groups to encourage peer interaction and collaboration.
What did CL interns do to inform design of Moodle page and to check technology works

Test drive different technologies around the world

- Testing of various online platforms
  - Microsoft Teams
  - Zoom
  - Blackboard Collaborator

- Comparative analysis of the usefulness of each platform in terms of:
  - Availability of Whiteboard
  - Breakout Rooms
  - Ease of connecting and video quality
  - Chatting feature and exchange of files
  - In-built polling options

- Survey for all Economics students to collect information on:
  - Accessibility to the online platforms from country of residence
  - Student preference for online platforms based on past experience
  - Internet connectivity and speed
  - Quality of study environment

- Narrowing down to feasible platforms for:
  - Live sessions
  - Tutorials
January 2021 – Connected Learning Leads and Connected Learning Interns
Review of Term 1

• Student Focus Groups (all years)
• Student module feedback: mid-term and end-of-term
• Engagement data – Moodle views and ECHO360
• Student reflection blogs (April/May)
• Lecturer feedback
Lecturers adapted really well, but it was a LOT to learn and a LOT of effort

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technologies</th>
<th>Echo360 ALP, Zoom, Teams, Mentimeter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning Design</td>
<td>The first 20-30 minutes of the live sessions are a mentimeter poll on the pre-recorded video material. For the remainder I solve exercises that use student data I collected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>I used the possibility of presenting recorded class-material as means to reduce the length of the class sessions and used that to offer that class-time multiple times over to smaller group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLLs set up and moderated the MS teams connected learning group which I found very valuable when I started teaching last term, and they always had the answer to all my questions.</td>
<td>CLLs ran a programme of online demonstrations introducing colleagues to the various platforms and technologies available for online teaching and assessment. A well balanced mix of technical guidance and pedagogical advice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student feedback on Moodle, async materials, activities and assessments

- Appreciated flexibility—watch video length
- Discussion forums great
- Positive response—consistency across modules?
- Support group working
- Low completion rate for formative
- Formative async self-directed activities to check learned embedded
- Pre-live session self-directed async materials
- Lecturer communication about week ahead
- Assessments through term
- Online office hours (group and individual)
- Live interactive small group session with teaching assistant
- Formative assignments for feedback

Diversification preferable to high stakes at end of year
- coordinate timing
- explain rationale
- assessment weeks?
Student feedback on live sessions, staff interaction and workload

- Higher workload compared to previous years?
  - More opportunity for interactions with upper years

- Lecturer communication about week ahead

- Pre-live session self-directed async materials
  - Like polls, interactivity, application of content, complement but don’t replicate async materials
  - Best if smaller cohort
  - Best if confident with tech

- Live interactive session with lecturer

- Live interactive small group session with teaching assistant
  - Prefer F2F. Prefer cameras on. TA needs confidence with tech.

- Formative assignments for feedback
  - Don’t need to find the room
  - Works well

- Assessments through term
  - Online office hours (group and individual)

- Structure and support helpful – recognise staff effort

- Formative async self-directed activities to check learned embedded

- Centre for Teaching & Learning Economics

Economics CLB template 20/21
Students mainly engaged with quizzes, assignments and asynch linked to live sessions.

Making it count for assessment helps engagement.
Engagement varied by year group and fell over the term.
Positives

• Organisation of content
• Greater flexibility from recorded materials
• Encouraged to ask questions during live sessions and tutorials
• Lively discussion forums
• Good use of visualisers/tablets
What was the experience like as a final year student?

**Positives**
- Organisation of content
- Greater flexibility from recorded materials
- Encouraged to ask questions during live sessions and tutorials
- Lively discussion forums
- Good use of visualisers/tablets

**Challenges**
- Difficult to communicate and interact with peers through video
- Difficult to stay motivated at home with the same schedule everyday
- Working long hours across two time zones
Moving forward with Adaptable Learning
Moving forward with Adaptable Learning: retaining the best of the model

- Lecturer communication about week ahead
- Assessments through term
- Pre-live session self-directed async materials
- Online office hours (group and individual)
- Live interactive session with lecturer
- Live interactive small group session with teaching assistant
- Formative async self-directed activities to check learned embedded
- Formative assignments for feedback
Moving forward with Adaptable Learning – learning from student partners

UCL Connected Learning Internships

UCL Connected Learning Internships are fully funded full and part-time opportunities working with UCL departments.

ChangeMakers Projects

Apply for either £450 or £700 in funding for staff and students to work in partnership on a project to enhance the student learning experience at UCL.

New BAME Awarding Gap funding for students

We are pleased to announce a new collaboration between ChangeMakers, the BAME Awarding Gap project and Students’ Union UCL to offer specific funding and support for student projects that address the disparities in outcomes and experience of undergraduate Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) and white students at UCL.

- Find out more and how to apply

Student Academic Representatives

Student Academic Representatives are appointed or elected in programmes, departments and faculties across UCL as the voice of their fellow students. They have the power to influence decisions at UCL.

Summer RA positions with CTaLE

Posted: Feb 16th 2021
Deadline: March 1st

We have been awarded a number of grants by the SSH Dean for education related research projects. As a result we are in a position to hire a number of RAs this summer. Please read all the information about the projects and the instructions on how to apply in this form. You apply for one project and can indicate a second preference.
Get in touch if you want to discuss

cloda.Jenkins@ucl.ac.uk  @UCLEconCareersT
p.chaudhury@ucl.ac.uk   @ParamaChaudhury
@CTaLE_UCL