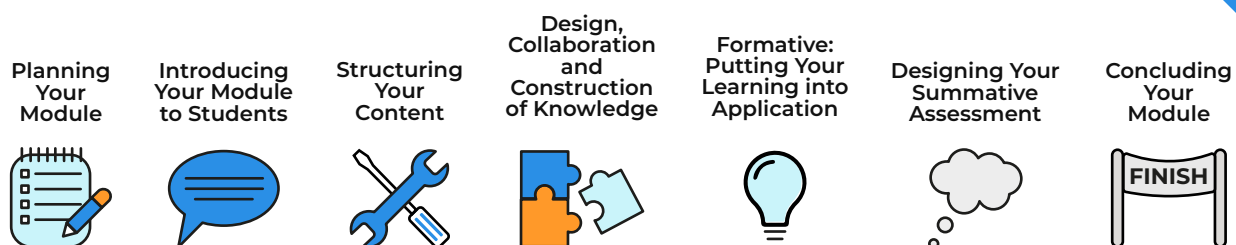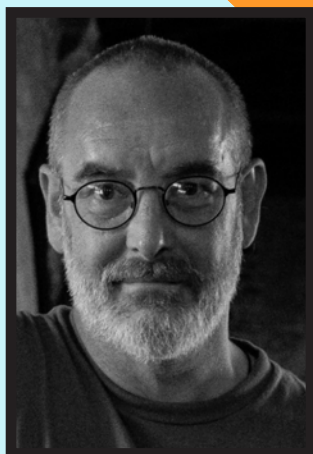# Digital Excellence Impact Case Studies

2021/2022

Delivering Creative Writing Workshops via Online Platforms

by Bob Beagrie

Planning Your Module

Introducing Your Module to Students

Structuring Your Content

Design, Collaboration and Construction of Knowledge

Formative: Putting Your Learning into Application

Designing Your Summative Assessment

Concluding Your Module

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Bob Beagrie
Senior Lecturer in
Creative Writing
SSSHL
B.Beagrie@tees.ac.uk

> " The experience of delivering modules remotely throughout the pandemic has incresed my general teaching skills
>
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Throughout 2020 I delivered a range of Creative Writing modules for the University that varied from Level 4 to Level 7. Each module has similar learning aims and objectives, with a somewhat differing emphasis on theme and topic, but each involved a weekly seminar or workshop with one-to-one tutorial support.

These sessions were delivered via Teams, with supportive materials, resources, PowerPoint slides showing example texts, short introductory videos and written step by step workshop instructions uploaded onto Blackboard. This allowed students unable to attend scheduled sessions to work through the workshop activities and materials in their own time. During the online sessions I guided those present through the materials and practical activities, and invited discussion and sharing of responses and work in progress. I also used the discussion board for students to share their work in progress and offer one another constructive feedback. During the online sessions I would often share my screen to allow the class to see materials synchronically, and this allowed us the opportunity to focus on a given text and highlight points of discussion and interest. On occasions, particularly on the Masters modules and with permission from the author, I would share a piece of student work in progress which they had sent me prior to the session. This allowed the group to discus some aspects of the writing in close detail and to make editorial suggestions, which I would make to the text to see the effects of said suggested changes, making it a live group editorial session. This proved particularly effective for those students willing to present their work. However, it did require the group to be comfortable and confident and even some of the MA students were unwilling to place their work under such peer group scrutiny.

The way this activity was carried out could be equally applied to in-class sessions with work presented on the digital whiteboard. The group could make editorial suggestions and changes live in class to test out and compare the results.

One of the main difficulties of online delivery was overcoming the reticence of some students to engage verbally. A proportion of the students were content to join a session with their mic and camera off and passively view the session, following activities but without actively contributing to discussion or sharing work. To overcome this, in Creative Writing Lab: Writing for Social Change, I split the class into small working groups and assigned each group a novel which they had to read and collaboratively prepare and deliver a presentation on after a four week preparation period. This proved particularly useful in engaging students, helping them overcome shyness and reticence and encouraging their active contributions to online sessions. Those workshops which followed the presentation week were far more reciprocal in terms of sharing ideas and creative work. As such students demonstrated a greater ownership over their learning. This is a great way to encourage future readiness in students, as they now have the confidence to work within a group to share ideas, a skill that is highly valued in the workplace.

Digital excellence, to me, means utilising a variety of digital platforms to enhance the teaching and learning experience both within the classroom and distance learning environments. The experience of delivering modules remotely throughout the pandemic has incresed my general teaching skills and provided me with a more versatile approach toward student interactions and workshop planning.