

Block Teaching Activities

This resource describes a set of activities that can be used in either an online or a face-to-face teaching context. They include a short description of the activity and some notes to help you start to think about how to use them in a classroom where physical distancing is required.

You will certainly think of many more ideas, and better ones, as you plan; the resource is intended to provide a stimulus for developing ideas about teaching under circumstances which most of us haven't experienced before.

The activities are based on seminar-type activities and would be tutor-facilitated. Ideas for managing facilitation either online or on-campus, for individual, small group, or large group, are included here. They could be carried out in timetabled sessions, or as independent study.

Using this resource

Description

This section has a short description of the activity, explaining what students could do. It may include some variations on the theme, and ideas for adapting the activity depending on whether it is being done by individuals, pairs, or groups.



Keywords

A list of keywords is provided to help with identifying suitable tasks using the search facility. The next slide has a list of these.

This box indicates for whom the task is suitable and whether it can be completed on campus or online.

Resources

This boxes lists resources which may be needed, and which technological tools are suitable. For more information about using different tools, see the [Technology-Enhanced Learning](#) pages on the intranet.

On campus notes

In this part of the page, we make suggestions for adapting the activity to accommodate physical distancing requirements.

Keywords for searching

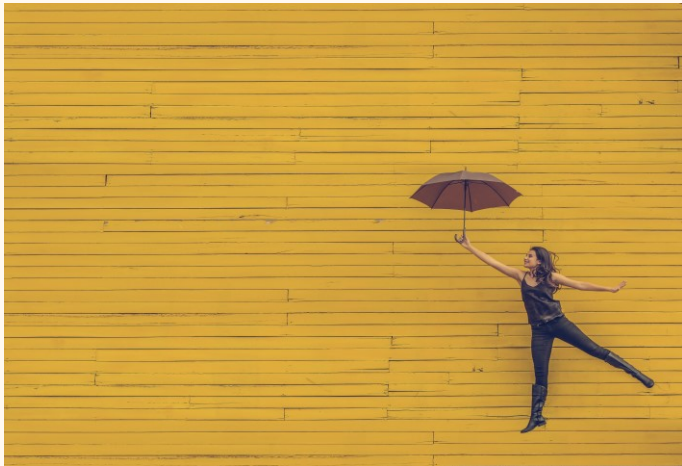
analysis	critical	inquiry	project	skills
annotated	discussion	peer learning	project-based	development
bibliography	critical review	peer review	learning	socialisation
argument	discussion	podcast	questioning	summarising
assessment	editing	political	reading	synthesis
checking	evaluation	practice	research	technology
understanding	exploration	presentation	review	writing
collaboration	ideas	problem solving	revision	
community	ideas generation	problem-based	self-evaluation	
context	identity	learning	sharing	

**Quick to prepare
on-campus activities**

Who are you?

Description

In order to get to know each other, you could create a collage of yourself using everyday objects. Have a look at [Giuseppe Arcimboldo's](#) art and then create a picture of yourself using everyday objects. Take a picture of your creation and share. Remember to give your artwork a title.



Keywords

- socialisation
- presentation
- identity



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (X) Groups (X)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Objects, digital networked device, Moodle discussion, social media.

On campus notes

Can be used on campus if students prepare the picture in advance and bring it with them or bring with them, or use low tech resources and objects and create it during class.

Interviews

Description

Create opportunities for pairs to interview each other. This could help introduce the other person as a change from self-biography and shared with the whole group. Can be online for more substantial interviews, or on-campus, just a few key points.



Keywords

- socialisation
- community



- Individually (X)
Pairs (✓) Groups (X)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Starting questions; Mobile device, laptop, Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

This activity could also be done on campus, using digital devices to share information and then a poster or a summary in another format could be created of the other person and shared.

Listen to a podcast

Description

After listening to a short podcast students are invited to share their top three or five most important/contentious points regarding this followed by a live or self-paced discussion. Students could also be asked to listen the podcasts being in a specific role. Would what they notice then change? And how?



Keywords

- critical discussion
- analysis
- synthesis



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (X) Groups (X)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Mobile device, laptop, Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

After listening to the podcasts online or at the beginning of the class/activity, students can share their thoughts and discuss/debate. They could also create their own podcast responses and share back via Moodle.

Worked examples

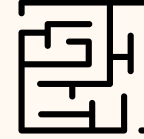
Description

Worked examples are a useful way of showing students how to solve a problem. Students can be asked to explain how the solution was arrived at or use it as a way of tackling other similar problems. In groups, individuals can be asked to post one thing they've learned from solving problems as a prelude to a group discussion that may be led by the tutor.



Keywords

- problem solving



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Moodle formative assignment submission (set up by tutor) or summary in Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

When students can't work closely together, focussing on a teacher led discussion around problems encountered/ key points of learning may work best with initial problem solving work done individually or in small groups online.

Thematic stories

Description

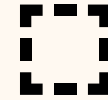
Use three pictures to tell a story about you or a key theory/concept/idea. It could also be about you, your past, present and future. You can use <https://graphite-shot.now.sh/> to put it together and share with the group.

Stories can also be useful to summarise a paper, a concept, a project etc.



Keywords

- socialisation
- summarising
- project



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (X) Groups (X)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Photographs, digital networked device, Moodle discussion, social media.

On campus notes

This activity would work well on campus as students share pictures and stories to illustrate ideas or to build community.

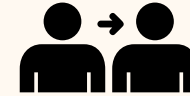
Create your own alphabet of words

Description

Invite your students to come up with an alphabet of words linked to something specific: who they are, a topic, a concept or theory or what something means to them. This activity is best prepared in advance by students and can be shared in a face-to-face and online classroom in the form of a list, a poem, a poster or any other format including visuals. This activity helps students get to know each other especially at the beginning of a module/programme and express their thoughts linked to a specific topic. This activity could also work for ideas generation, recap/review of literature for example or a story, character etc. and can be done individually, in small groups or in pairs. The alphabet could be reviewed at the end of a topic/module/programme to reflect on what has changed.

Keywords

- socialisation
- ideas generation
- peer review



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Pen, paper, digital networked device, Moodle discussion, social media.

On campus notes

Can be a good word game for a group to produce a list of key terms together. Allow students to 'pass' if they cannot think of a word or skip a letter (X, Y, Z).

Becoming political

Description

This task will introduce students to the role of parliament in the UK and provide an opportunity for them to construct a letter to an MP to request further attention is given to a pertinent social and political issue related to your course (contributed by Kerry Moakes).



Keywords

- political
- argument
- writing



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (X) Groups (X)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Moodle formative assignment submission (set up by tutor) or summary in Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

Face-to-face discussion focussed on process of 'lobbying' and structure of letter to consolidate learning.

Identify key points from a session

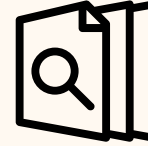
Description

A great way to recap learning as students identify key points and any gaps in understanding.



Keywords

- review



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files. Padlet would work well for this as well.

On campus notes

The activity could be easily adapted for on campus delivery e.g. a verbal activity (for very small groups) or by asking students to share their reflections, individually, or following a paired discussion.

One minute paper

Description

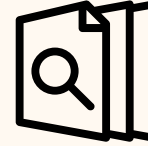
Ask questions to find out how things are going, to check understanding, or to suggest topics for future discussion. For ideas, see

www.celt.mmu.ac.uk/lectures/try_oneminute.php



Keywords

- review



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Prompt question; Moodle quiz tool or Microsoft forms; online tool such as [Kahoot!](#)

On campus notes

This activity would work well on campus as students feedback on the questions posed. This can be captured verbally or digitally.

Short multiple choice test

Description

Multiple test can be used in combination with the flipped or peer assisted learning approach to check understanding and surface any difficulties that need to be addressed. Such tests could also be generated by students individually or in pairs/small groups.



Keywords

- revision
- checking understanding



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Question sets, low tech answer cards with different colours for each response (A, B, C etc), mobile device, laptop, Moodle quiz tool, online quiz tool such as [Kahoot!](#)

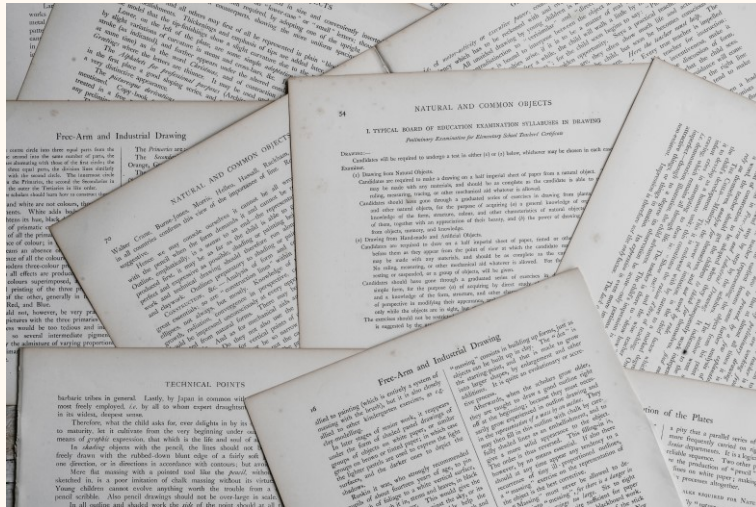
On campus notes

Students could be asked to respond to multiple choice questions and/or discuss the results of this with others in class. Students will also learn a lot through making such a test. Consider this also as a valuable activity for students to do individually or with peers.

Key points of a paper/article

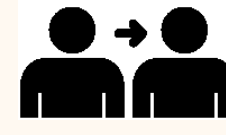
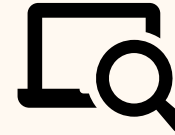
Description

Identify main points of a paper and produce bullet points. Small groups/individuals - Write a paragraph on the most important / contentious point. This can be done using flipped learning. The paragraph can be discussed in class or submitted for discussion.



Keywords

- inquiry
- peer review



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Selection of paper (students could locate their own); Moodle formative assignment submission (set up by tutor) or summary in Moodle Forums or Shared Word document Teams.

On campus notes

An activity that can also work on campus using flipped learning. After students have read the paper/article, they could write and share the key points and share using a digital device and upload their response to Moodle or a social media platform.

Critique a paper

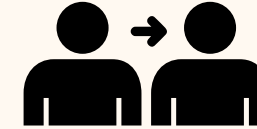
Description

Post two paragraphs on strengths and weaknesses which can be posted online or discussed in class.



Keywords

- analysis
- peer review



- Individually (X)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Paper (students could choose their own); Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

An activity that can also work on campus using flipped learning. After students have read the paper/article, they could write and share the key points and share using a digital device and upload their response to Moodle or a social media platform, or present to the rest of the class in person.

Peer reviewing of draft paragraphs

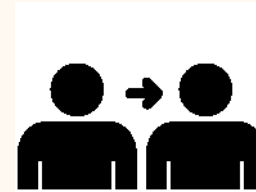
Description

Draft sections of an assignment could be shared online for review by their peers. This could be really useful for block teaching where assignments are being written in a shorter, more concentrated period.



Keywords

- peer review



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Mobile device, laptop, Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

The draft assignments shared online could be accessed on Moodle and discussed in class, in pairs. Alternatively the draft assignments could be annotated by peers using a shared document via Teams for example.

Activities to build on online work

Wallpapering

Description

Make your own digital wallpaper/backdrop for your very first live session with your peers. What does it say about you? You can use your own picture, or a creative commons-licensed masterpiece for example from the [Rijks Museum](#) in Amsterdam, or maybe something from the [Disney Channel](#) or the [BBC](#). Themed wallpapers can also be used for specific activities, to add theatre and context.



Keywords

- socialisation
- presentation
- project
- context



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (X) Groups (X)
- Online (✓)
On campus (X)

Resources

Own photograph(s) or image made available under a creative commons license; digital networked device; Teams.

On campus notes

This activity is intended for online use, but could be carried into or adapted for an on campus session if students discuss their choices, or they could prepare a backdrop, or poster using low tech resources.

Complete set reading

Description

Give students set readings and ask them to write a paragraph on the most important/contentious point. This can be the same or different readings if you want to get students exposed to a wider set of texts and ideas. These can be shared easily online for students to read and comment on or discuss in small groups.



Keywords

- synthesis
- reading
- ideas
- sharing



- Individually (X)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

This can work as a Q and A session face-to-face, where each student is asked to volunteer their important/contentious points for the study group and tutor to lead a discussion on.

Peer feedback

Description

Review another group or individual output against a set of criteria (given or group generated) and provide constructive feedback. This is best connected to another group activity (eg abstract writing, summary of a paper) that requires something to be created.



Keywords

- peer review
- assessment
- evaluation



- Individually (X)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

A paired activity with preparatory reading and note taking done prior to face-to-face session or using devices.

Create and agree questions

Description

Get your students to develop questions for the next whole class session. This can be an open activity with a wide choice of topics, or you can constrain it to focus on something they have just learned or are about to learn. The activity can be varied with the tutor answering questions, or the students can pose the questions for each other, with the tutor addressing any misconceptions or amplifying the answers of the students. The questions can be posted online and answered at the next session.



Keywords

- questioning
- collaboration



- Individually (X)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

Students can discuss questions in pairs before being asked to volunteer an answer. It can also be good fun to vote on questions to generate a list of which ones are the most interesting or most important to answer. At its simplest, one vote each hand up works.

Find one or more references you can use

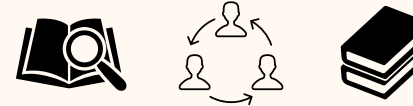
Description

Students post details of reference and explain briefly why it may be useful for the topic/assignment – an approach to building an annotated bibliography collaboratively.



Keywords

- research
- sharing
- annotated bibliography



- Individually (X)
Pairs (X) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (X)

Resources

Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

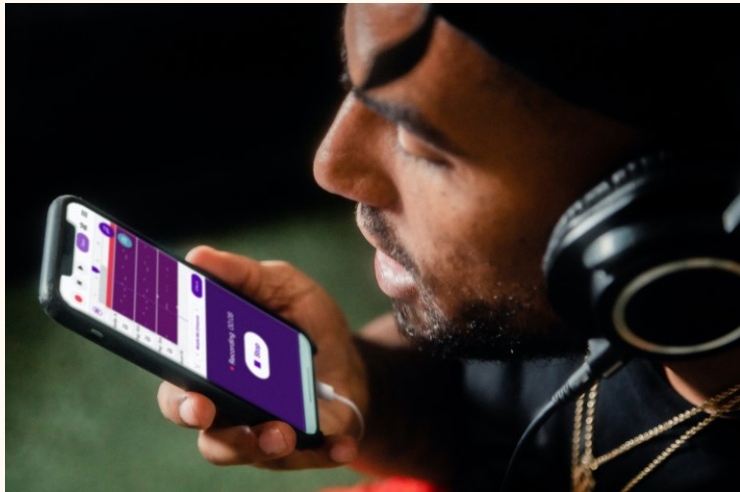
On campus notes

A good online activity that can be used as pre-session for a face-to-face discussion led by the tutor where students volunteer references and explain their value to each other.

Record and edit a short audio package

Description

Students record and edit a short (60 sec duration) audio "package", which includes a clip from an interview done by phone/Zoom/Skype etc. Groups then select a couple of outputs from across the group, with reasons for selection, to share with the whole class (contributed by Peter Murray).



Keywords

- editing
- technology
- podcast



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (X) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Moodle formative assignment submission (set up by tutor) or summary in Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

Face-to-face discussion focused on selected outputs and process of making audio/video to consolidate learning.

Repetition of procedures

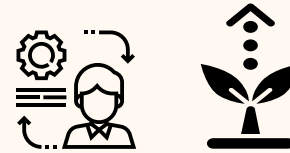
Description

Practising procedures so that students become proficient at them is very important to some subjects and disciplines. Outputs such as worksheets or summaries, and reflections on the skills developed can be shared with tutors and fellow students as basis for discussion.



Keywords

- practice
- skills development



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (X) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Worksheets or instructions; Moodle formative assignment submission (set up by tutor) or summary in Moodle Forums or Shared Word or Excel document in Teams Files.

On campus notes

If using specialist equipment on campus, the practice is done there. Face-to-face discussion in groups can be focused on outcomes and process, to consolidate learning.

Collage

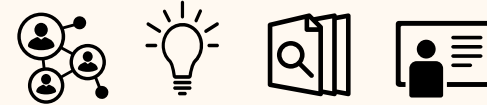
Description

Use scraps of paper, packaging, make patterns and create a collage to introduce yourself, your idea, a project, findings etc. A really fun and creative way to focus and express your thoughts using something you made. Can be used fully online and on campus. See video from [Illustrating a picture book by James Meyhew](#).



Keywords

- socialisation
- ideas generation
- review
- presentation



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Pen, paper, magazines, glue, scissors, markers, crayons, digital networked device, Moodle discussion, social media.

On campus notes

Can be used on campus if prepared by students in advance, or if students bring with them the resources needed and create in class.

Scavenger Hunt

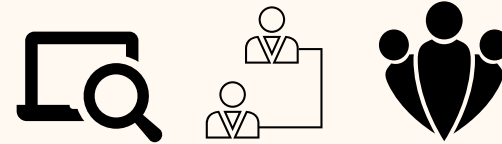
Description

Students are invited to take part in an adventure to solve specific tasks linked to a topic and collect the responses within a specific time and then share and discuss with the group via a forum or response platform or a classroom setting. The answers could be online or in physical locations which students could visit individually or in groups, taking into account physical distancing.



Keywords

- inquiry
- peer learning
- community



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Plan for the hunt, Digital networked device, Moodle discussion, Teams live meeting/chat, social media.

On campus notes

This activity can be done in a blended way but also work on campus if students have networked devices. Otherwise the tasks could relate to answers that can be found in physical locations across the campus. Keep in mind social distancing restrictions. Students could engage in the scavenger hunt in advance of the campus-based session and then responses could be discussed in class.

**More substantial
blended activities**

Story making

Description

Stories are powerful tools for learning. Can students create a picture book story linked to an academic paper, a project, their ideas, reflecting on their learning? The opportunities are endless. Consider using the [Storyweaver](#) platform with many illustrations. All available under a creative commons license. Try it!



Keywords

- socialisation
- ideas generation
- review



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Pen, paper, markers, notebook, digital networked device, Moodle discussion, social media.

On campus notes

This activity can be used in class as a response to a reading task for example. The book can be created using low-tech resources or a networked device if available.

Inquiry using FISH (Focus, Investigate, Share)

Description

Use a simple model to enable and foster individual and collective inquiry. This model can be used for Problem-Based Learning, Project-Based Learning and other active learning approaches. See fdol.wordpress.com.



Keywords

- problem-based learning
- project-based learning
- inquiry



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Pen, paper, digital networked device, Moodle discussion.

On campus notes

Can be used on campus as part of an individual or collaborative inquiry. Access to the digital image of the model will be useful or a print out.

Mini briefs, cases, scenarios and stories

Description

Materials are provided to students as learning triggers to stimulate discussion, debate and peer review. The materials can come from many sources and be authentic or constructed.



Keywords

- context
- exploration
- socialisation



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

The materials for selection and method to collate feedback (teams or Moodle).

On campus notes

An activity that can also work on campus using flipped learning. After students have read the materials, they could write and share the key points and share using a digital device and upload their response to Moodle or a social media platform.

Role play

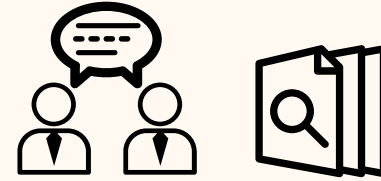
Description

Role play could be used to share positions in a contentious subject or discipline related issue. Specific roles could be shared and students invited to role play in small groups or pairs. It may be useful to appoint an observer as well to provide constructive feedback.



Keywords

- discussion
- critical review



- Individually (X)
Pairs (✓) Groups (✓)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Ideas for the role play; Mobile device, costume and accessories could be used, laptop, Live Teams or NewRow meeting with live discussion and use of chat channel.

On campus notes

This activity can bring a difficult topic alive by allowing a certain detachment from the personal. A combination of low and digital media could be used to facilitate the role play. Photos or videos could be taken also and then uploaded to Moodle or another platform to continue or conclude the role play online and reflect on what has been learnt.

Review progress against personal study plan

Description

Students are invited to review their personal study plans and send two paragraphs to the tutor saying what's going well and what you will work on.



Keywords

- self-evaluation



- Individually (✓)
Pairs (X) Groups (X)
- Online (✓)
On campus (✓)

Resources

Notebook, mobile device, email or individual Teams chat.

On campus notes

Students will be invited to reflect on and review their progress and discuss this with their tutor. It could also be a peer-to-peer discussion and the review could also be done as a podcast for example.