

# Deploying practice-based remote and blended learning communities in a pandemic

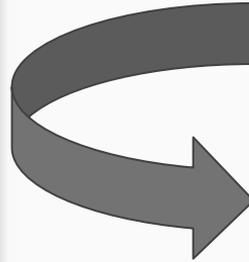
Alison Hawkings and Sarah Lewthwaite



# The landscape

- Both pathways deliver modules on campus, which are student led live broadcasting events using in person collaboration, specialist rooms and equipment mirroring pre-Covid TV and Radio News practices.
- The pandemic blocked and/or reduced our ability to deliver our curriculum in its current form.
- At the same time, our sector was facing the same issues.
- Our response was to review as “reflective practitioners” (Schön 1983) by adopting emerging industry solutions whilst making sure learning outcomes and communities were protected.

On campus



To blended, to remote, back to blended



## Byte News

News stories by Broadcast and Digital Journalism students at the University of West London

About

Other posts

### Body found in Epping Forest identified as Richard Okorogheye

Posted on April 8, 2021 by Mimi Delaney

Rhea Delaney,  
On Line Blogger

A body found in a lake in Epping Forest has been formally identified as missing 19-year-old Richard Okorogheye, the Metropolitan police has said. Officers from Essex police made the discovery on Monday. The Met said the student's death is being treated as unexplained and they do not believe at this stage there was any third-party involvement.

Recent Posts

Body found in Epping Forest identified as Richard Okorogheye  
Actor food charity expanding during lockdown  
Oxfam raises funding over sexual misconduct  
How AIDS profited from the lockdown  
Buckingham Palace gardens opens up for summer visitors

Categories

# The Framework

Planning, Research and Evaluation

**Accept that this environment is dynamic and not static (Hod et al 2018)**

**Assess your kit, accessibility and your students remote kit and accessibility (carry out a student technology survey)**

**Assess your human resources**

**Work in partnership with students**

**Test the systems**

**Think about induction and the first week of Sem 2 to present and instruct on new platforms**

**Why do it?**



**Open Broadcaster Software (OBS) is free software which allows for live broadcast**

**For Radio, we used CleanFeed, this acts an online Radio Studio**

**RunDown Creator is an online tool for real time scripting**

**Smartphones are used for video and audio recording outside of interviews on Teams/Zoom**

**All students have remote access to Adobe Suite**

**Student/Staff Collaboration Learning Communities**

**Microsoft Teams and BB Collaborate anchor our learning communities (Bielaczyc & Collins 1999, 2003)**

**These provide real time student led activities in one or more communal spaces (Watkins & Marsick, (1993, 2006)**

**Provides universal accessibility**

**Provides students with a community outside their everyday cohorts**

**Tools used: Microsoft Teams, Collaborate, Dropbox, OneDrive**

# Example 1: TV and Online Newsdays in Broadcast and Digital Journalism

L5 and L6 work together to produce live Video News Bulletin, an online news website and social media, from scratch every week.

All students work in communities on Microsoft Teams and are assigned roles and responsibilities which change weekly

In this blended example we had 5 students and 2 staff on campus with 17 students remote

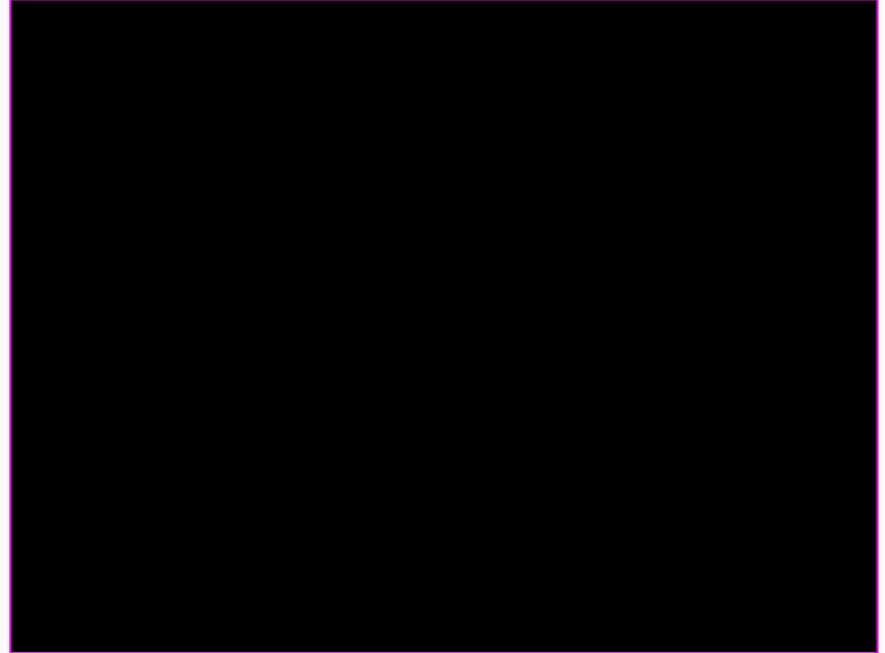
18 people can simultaneously and in real time, write scripts

Video and interviews are produced/recorded by the students from their location

Two presenters deliver the news from 2 different locations, to their screen using autocue from their smartphones/ipads. The Vision Mixer, in real time, cuts between screens and clips

Students took part from Italy, Poland, Qatar and in the UK.

This delivery mirrors current industry broadcasts



## Example 2: Live Radio and Outside Broadcast in Media and Communications

First 2 programmes made entirely remotely through Cleanfeed, instead of being presented from radio studio, - students took part from USA and Portugal.

When moved to blended approach with some students working on campus, others still contributing remotely -- including live OB from Portugal.

Students working in communities through Collaborate, Teams and WhatsApp to produce programmes.

Directly mirrored the changes broadcasters were having to make in response to pandemic.



# The results and feeding forward

- What is the student experience like?  
**What the students say about blended and remote learning:**  
**“Doing newdays is not the easiest thing but working hard is improving my skills..”**
- Will we return to an in person experience only?  
**“In all news sessions, the support and the spirit of working together is great.”**  
**“Being Editor, I feel like my skill set has improved.. I feel a lot more confident fulfilling this role.”**
- What do employers want from graduates?  
**“I felt very disappointed that it was the last Newsday of the semester, that's for sure! I just really enjoy these days as it pushes us to be active and find stories. I believe today was one of the best...”**  
**“The work we’ve done really reflects the current position of live radio broadcasting, especially in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.”**
- What impact has this implementation had on learning?  
**“it was a very enriching semester and we have all made the most of it”**  
**“Having this live radio experience was great, it made me know how to work in various circumstances beyond my control and that is a useful skill for my future.”**  
**“This module had such an influence on my radio skills that now I feel truly confident to finally start applying for radio internships, and hopefully, one day become a presenter.”**
- Is it perfect?

# References and Resource Links

Bielaczyc, K., & Collins, A. (1999). *Learning communities in classrooms: A reconceptualization of educational practice*

<https://obsproject.com>

Hod, Y., Bielaczyc, K., & Ben-Zvi, D. (2018). *Revisiting learning communities: Innovations in theory and practice. Instructional Science, 46(4), 489–506.*

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Watkins, K., & Marsick, V. (1993, 2006). *Sculpting the learning organization: Consulting using action technologies. New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education.*

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