

Promoting well-being in the virtual learning environment

Sam Taylor, FHEA, CMALT
eLearning Consultant & MEC Facilitator

@samwisefox

Catalyst IT Europe

catalyst 
expert open source solutions



Colton Sturgeon on Unsplash

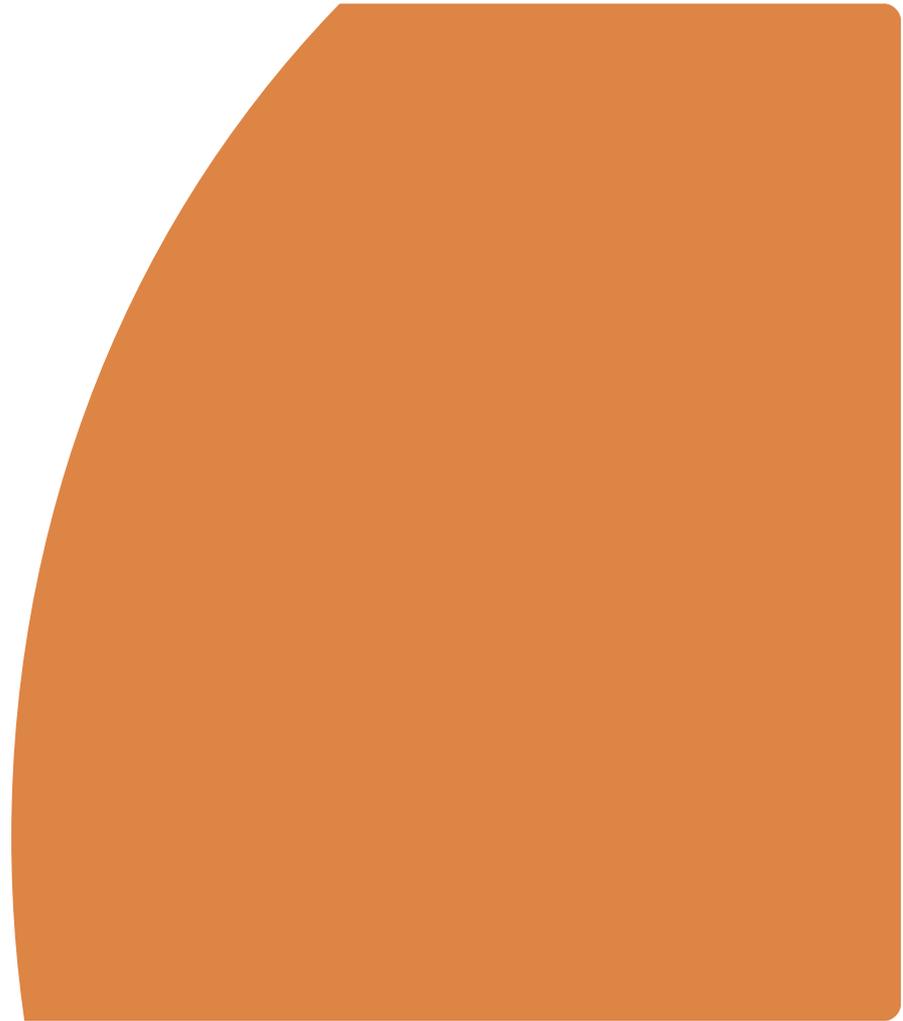
About me

- Previously a lecturer in key skills, Sports Science, and Performing Arts
 - BTEC National diplomas
 - Level 1 & 2 Apprenticeships
 - NVQ2 Exercise to Music
- Widening Participation researcher
- Learning Technologist
- eLearning Consultant



Digital Wellbeing

How to define it, and where are we currently?



How are you feeling in general?



Please know that this may all look alarming, but be assured it's very common right now to be feeling this way!

Digital wellbeing - So many definitions!

*“The **impact** of technologies and digital services on people’s **mental, physical and emotional health**”*
([JISC](#))

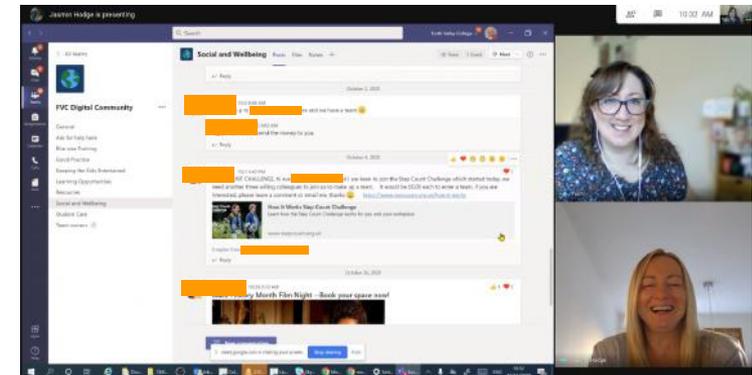
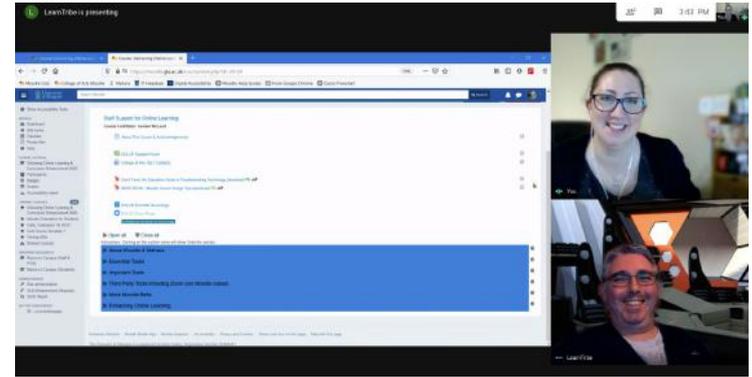
*The **enhancement and improvement** of human well-being, in the intermediate and long term, through the **use of digital media**”*
([Unesco](#))

*The **impact** of digital technologies on **health, relationships and society***
([Uni of York at FutureLearn](#))

Conversations with the Community

November 2020

- 11 x 90 min structured discussions
- ‘Moodle users’ including teachers, technologists, trainers, learning designers
- Common themes that cause concern
- Lots of ideas of how to help!



Worries about Teaching staff

Lecturers are having to **upskill quickly**, but with no time in between to **reflect**

We know we **can't** do everything, but we **must**, so how **can** we do everything?



No matter how prepared I am, I'm always having to **hit the ground running**, and that was **before covid!**

The bond between units is **stressed**

Students (and staff) were **more forgiving** during the first lockdown. Not so much now!

Common themes

- Digital fatigue and exhaustion - **'Zoom fatigue'**
- Often accidentally **increasing** workload
- Feelings of **inadequacy** and that their content isn't good enough (it often is!)
- **'Always on'** with no time to reflect and try new things
- Feeling **isolated** and that they're **not coping**
- Concerns about **'being human'** in front of students
- Irony of **needing to use tech** to promote Digital wellbeing!

Anecdotal student feedback

- **Overload**
 - Digital fatigue and exhaustion
 - Too many discussion activities across concurrent modules
- **Space**
 - Concerns about privacy of 'home'
 - Sometimes having to share study spaces with siblings, parents, etc.
 - Home-studying - the new 'third space'? (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Third_place)
- **Community/cohort**
 - Finding it hard to make friends
 - Negative spiral from unfocussed discussions
 - Communicating with others feels like a bit of a chore

So how can we help?

Site level and course level ideas that may improve wellbeing online



Site-level ideas

Bearing in mind that your VLE is now part of the Virtual Campus:

- Work with your **Students Union** and **Staff Association** and promote their initiatives:
 - Add events to VLE calendar
 - Share events in site news
 - Link to their sites where applicable
 - Campus radio/playlist?
- Create course for staff and student to go to for help and advice
- Accessibility tools





Customise this page

Dashboard

- Site home
- Calendar
- Private files
- Content bank
- My courses
- Wellbeing
- Psychology of Dance
- World dance
- Anatomy for Dance
- Multi-block
- MEC2019
- Site administration

Course overview

▼ All (except removed from view) ▾

☰ Last accessed ▾

☰ Card ▾



2020-2021 modules
Anatomy for Dance
25% complete



2021-2022 modules
Wellbeing



2021-2022 modules
Psychology of Dance



2020-2021 modules
Dance injury prevention
57% complete



2020-2021 modules
World dance



2020-2021 modules
MEC activities
0% complete

Upcoming events

Submit your Mahara page: Information and media literacy task is due
Tomorrow, 12:00 AM

Why do we need Safer Internet Day? is due
Tomorrow, 12:00 AM

Book club
Wednesday, 17 March, 8:16 PM

<https://samwisefox.moodlecloud.com>

Latest announcements

- 10 Mar, 20:38
Sam Taylor
Virtual Fashion Show 2021
- 10 Mar, 10:34
Sam Taylor
Want to join the Catalyst Academy's virtual bookclub?
Older topics ...

Look after yourself!



Sign-up

Supporting your online wellbeing

Cataclysmic



Campus Radio

Portal



- Dashboard
- Site home**
- Calendar
- Private files
- Content bank
- My courses
- Wellbeing
- Psychology of Dance
- World dance
- Anatomy for Dance
- Multi-block
- MEC2019
- Site administration



Hello, Catalyst Academy!

Please take the time to review the links in the header where you can see information about societies, events and associations to help you enjoy your time with us.

Struggling to cope with being 100% online? We have a course that could help you, your friends and colleagues adjust to the new way of being.

[Find out more](#)



Cataclysmic Radio

Tune in to our 24/7 Radio show and hear what our students have to say.

[Listen now >](#)



Could you be a buddy?

We are looking for volunteers to sign-up for our buddy scheme and support those who may need support.

[Sign-up >](#)



Mindfulness workshops

These sessions run at 8:30am and 2:30pm every day. No need to sign-up, just access the link below.

[Join session >](#)

Site announcements



Struggling?

Sometimes we all need a little help, especially now social interaction is reduced.

[Come talk to us](#)

Calendar

March 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Upcoming events

Book club
Wednesday, 17 March, 8:16 PM

Academy monthly quiz!
Friday, 26 March, 8:16 PM

[Go to calendar...](#)

[Subscribe to this forum](#)

Not a developer, but willing to play with HTML settings? <https://getbootstrap.com/docs/4.5/components/>



The World's Leading Automated Website Accessibility Solution for ADA & WCAG Compliance

- ✔ The strongest legal mitigation for ADA accessibility & compliance
- ✔ Requires only a single line of JavaScript
- ✔ Trusted by over 950,000 websites and 60 million users with disabilities

Start Free Trial

Excellent ★★★★★ ★ Trustpilot

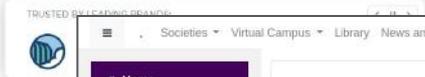


<https://userway.org/>

In Moodle 'Additional HTML':

Before BODY is closed
additionalhtml=body

```
<!-- Accessibility Widget -->
<script>(function(d) {
  var s = d.createElement("script");
  s.setAttribute("data-position", 3);
  s.setAttribute("data-color", "#20a2b7");
  s.setAttribute("src", "https://cdn.userway.org/widget.js");
  (d.body || d.head).appendChild(s);
})(document)/</script>
```



Hello, Catalyst Academy!

Please take the time to review the links in the header where you can see information about societies, events and associations to help you enjoy your time with us.

Struggling to cope with being 100% online? We have a course that could help you, your friends and colleagues adjust to the new way of being.

Find out more



Struggling?

Sometimes we all need a little help, especially now social interaction is reduced.

Come talk to us

You are currently using guest access (Log in) purposes of website accessibility</noscript>

before the body tag is closed.



Quick pause!

Stand-up if you can and do a little stretch
and boogie with Donald!



Course-level ideas

The course page is now your virtual classroom

- Layout/structure
- Learning design
- Give your student reps their own area
- More frequent virtual 'drop-ins'



Active/Engaged learning

- Produce podcasts that cover key points that can be listened to whilst **out on a walk**
- Design activities that involve some **offline reflection**/writing/doodling
- Make group work **task** orientated - 'Keep groups **together longer**'
- For live sessions (e.g.: Zoom/BigBlueButton meetings) open the room **early** to allow people to talk if they want to. Same for the end - can you stay on a little **longer** for discussion?
- Ask students to suggest **songs** that can be played during webinars.

Assessment

- Allow **flexibility** in assessment submission (UDL)
- *'But not too much flexibility'*
- Give students **choices**/options on what they want to go deeper into
- Make assessments **authentic**/meaningful to them
- Incorporate **peer** and **self assessment** opportunities
- Also, do all assessments need a **grade**? Wouldn't levels and/or feedback be just as effective? See <https://www.jessestommel.com/ungrading-an-faq/>

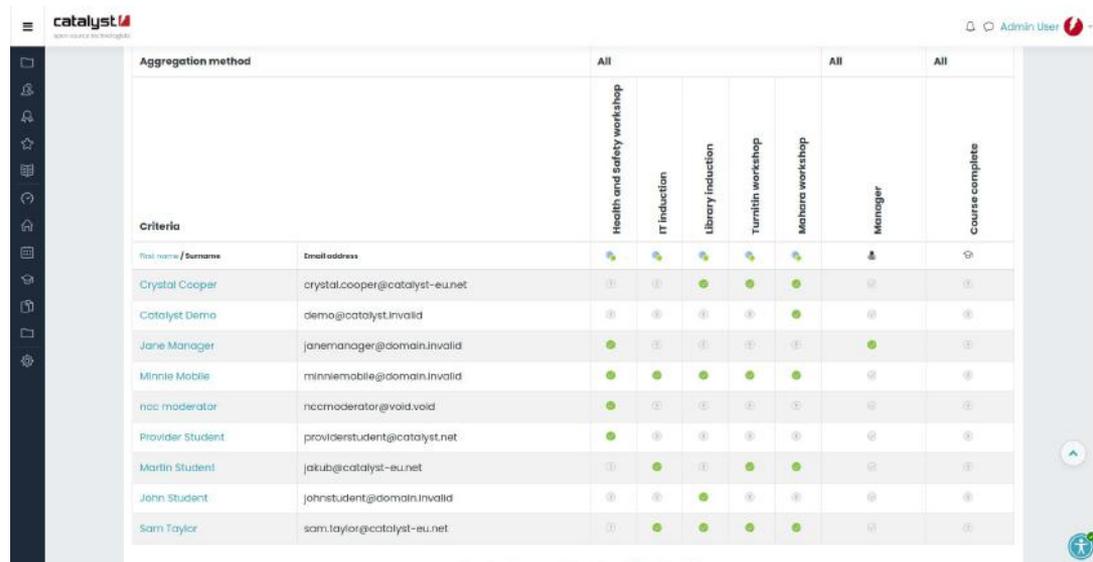
Instructional design

- **Structure** your module page so stuff is easy to locate
- Just as we do with learning design, include links back to digital wellbeing where appropriate, e.g.:
 - *'For activity X we are going to use Padlet to pool our ideas together **SO THAT** we can learn from each other by giving everyone an opportunity to participate in their own time **IN ORDER TO** foster a sense of community which is beneficial for your wellbeing'*
- **Chunk up content** so that there's a good mix of sync/async activities
- Use **colleagues** to experiment new tools with,
 - Review instructions - do they make sense?
 - Go for a low risk activity first time round with your learners (eg an ice breaker)

Monitor engagement

What tools does your VLE have that can help you?

- Site logs to see when students and staff are logging in?
- Course logs to see if students are accessing materials?
- Completion tracking?
- Forum discussions?



The screenshot shows the Catalyst VLE interface. At the top left is the Catalyst logo. On the right, there is a user profile for 'Admin User'. The main content is a table with the following structure:

Aggregation method		All	All	All	All	All	All	
Criteria		Health and safety workshop	IT Induction	Library Induction	Turnitin workshop	Mochara workshop	Manager	Course complete
First name / Surname	Email address							
Crystal Cooper	crystal.cooper@catalyst-eu.net	📄	📄	🟢	🟢	🟢	📄	📄
Catalyst Demo	demo@catalyst.invalid	📄	📄	📄	📄	🟢	📄	📄
Jane Manager	janemanager@domain.invalid	🟢	📄	📄	📄	📄	🟢	📄
Minnie Mobile	minniemobile@domain.invalid	🟢	🟢	📄	🟢	📄	📄	📄
nec moderator	necmoderator@void.void	🟢	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄
Provider Student	providerstudent@catalyst.net	🟢	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄	📄
Martin Student	jakub@catalyst-eu.net	📄	🟢	📄	🟢	🟢	📄	📄
John Student	johnstudent@domain.invalid	📄	📄	🟢	📄	📄	📄	📄
Sam Taylor	sam.taylor@catalyst-eu.net	📄	🟢	🟢	🟢	🟢	📄	📄

Gamification

Adding game elements to your course

- Levels
- Codebreaking
- Badges
- Stash/Treasure hunt*

The screenshot displays the Catalyst LMS interface for a 'Digital Forensics' course. The main content area is titled 'General' and contains a section with the text 'Are you ready to crack the case? Tick the box to start'. Below this text are five mission cards, each featuring a yellow padlock icon. The first card, 'Your mission', is highlighted with a blue border and has a small blue checkmark in its top right corner. The other four cards are 'Crime scene', 'Hardware', 'Investigation', and 'Assessment'. To the right of the main content area, there is a sidebar with several sections: 'SEARCH FORUMS' with a search input and a 'Go' button; 'UPCOMING EVENTS' with the text 'There are no upcoming events Go to calendar...'; and 'RECENT ACTIVITY' with the text 'Activity since Tuesday, 10 December 2020, 1:58 PM' and a link 'Full report of recent activity...'. Below this is a 'Course updates' section with two entries: 'Deleted Forum' and 'Deleted Forum'. In the top right corner of the interface, there are three overlapping hexagonal achievement badges: a pink one with a blue checkmark and the text 'Course Completed', a yellow one with a pink star and the text 'Star Pupil', and a green one with a red clock icon and the text '100 Hours Spent'. The Catalyst logo is visible in the top left corner of the interface.

* Can be done with hidden labels with images, that appear upon activity completion, and when clicking on them they trigger another activity completion - all tied to a badge!

“My DCU”



- Digital badges
- Quizzes
- Scavenger Hunts
- Discussion Forums
- Giveaways



Student engagement and gamification, Dr Mark Glynn, DCU

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5SwDXcpN88>



Thank you!



Sam Taylor

eLearning Consultant & MEC Facilitator

sam.taylor@catalyst-eu.net

- <https://www.catalyst-eu.net/service/training-and-consultancy>
- <https://www.catalyst-eu.net/service/moodle-educators-certificate-mec>

@samwisefox