Emerging from the Pandemic:
Lessons Learned

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USI COVID-19 Survey

- Rolled out 2nd - 15th June. Over 1,200 responses received.
- Divided into three sections: Teaching, Learning and Assessment; Finance and Accommodation; Mental Health & Wellbeing

Who did we hear from?

- Types of Institution : **49.63%**- Institute of Technology; **41.31%**- University; **6.69%**- Technological University, **2%-** Teaching College/Other HE Providers, Small FET representation.
- Level Of Study:**90%**- Undergraduate,**5%**- Postgraduate Taught, **3%**- FET,**2%**- Postgraduate Research (including PhD).
- Year Group:**43.63%-** Years 2 & 3 Continuing, **29.31%-** First Year, **25.64%**- Final Year.

Student Experience during the pandemic

Key Themes:

- **Not What We Expected:** COVID-19 necessitated the use of 'emergency remote teaching' - sense of 'not what we signed up for' coming through in many answers.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** Staff and students were thrown in at the deep end, lots of students talked about experiencing a feeling of 'get to safety'.
- **Making the Best of a Bad Situation:** Over half (51.55%) believe the online learning content was of good quality.
- **Disconnection:** Almost 80% of students reported issues with motivation, just under 1/3rd had issues with internet connection.
- **Communication is Key:** Nearly a third (32.3%) of students felt that their college didn't provide them with effective and timely communication.

What Students Thought

Worked Well

- Time Allowed: 33.43%
- Exam Format (Open Book): 25.84%
- Use of Continuous Assessment: 18.24%
- Studying At Home: 7.29%
- Nothing: 6.99%
- Support from Lecturers: 4.71%

Also Listed: Online Group Work, Zoom Breakout Rooms.

Could Be Improved

- Time/Notice Given: 49.76%
- Communication: 20.31%
- Method of Assessment: 12.44%
- Nothing: 11.81%
- Flexibility: 6.14%

Also Listed: Exam Platforms, Less Strict Word Counts for Open Book Assessment, Adaptation of Practically Based Assessment.

Lessons Learned For The Term Ahead

- **Structured Learning is Essential -** Over half (51.12%) of students talked about more structured forms on online content when asked about how the college could improve their online learning experience.
- **Allow for every student -** Online content should be delivered in a flexible manner.
- **Blended Learning is important -** A strong need for face-to-face contact was highlighted through the survey
- **Create Communities -** Over a third (35.84%) of students reported having no opportunities to engage with other students through their learning, yet 77.6% listed Peer Support as one of the main sources of support for them during the Pandemic.
- **Digital Divide -** Institutions should work to mitigate against the impact of 'digital poverty' amongst their students.
- **Online Resources -** E-books, software packages and other learning resources are essential components of the learning experience for students.
- **Training and Support -** There are varying degrees of digital confidence amongst both staff and students, professional development opportunities are essential.

Next Steps

- Full survey released early July
- Upcoming NStEP Webinar- Mid July (Date TBC)
- QQI Teaching, Learning and Assessment Evaluation

Thanks for your attention and please feel free to ask questions!