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**The Learning Design  
Consultancy Unit (LDCU)**  
ANNUAL REPORT 2021



**WARWICK**  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

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# WELCOME



The Learning Design Consultancy Unit (LDCU) was established in June 2020, with the aim to bring together expertise from the Academic Development Centre, Academic Technology and across Warwick to support the pivot to online teaching and learning. As we learnt to navigate our way through the challenges and opportunities of the past 12 months, the LDCU has provided a space for community, collaboration and partnership. And we continue to support colleagues with designing and adapting teaching and learning for online and blended delivery. We provide a safe space for open honest discussions, workshops, experimentation and support.



Throughout the past year the LDCU has been responsive to circumstances, adapting the offerings of the unit to meet the needs of the community. We have held regular LDCU Open Discussions and a series of Talking Online Learning podcasts that have helped to build a network and share experiences, ideas and practice. We have covered a wide variety of topics from how to capture your lectures through to accessible and inclusive practices; from ABC learning design to digital wellbeing.

The LDCU has connected with colleagues from across the institution to share their practice and expertise in these areas and I hope to continue to evolve this practice as we go forward. One area that I am working to develop further is the space to bring students and staff together to discuss issues, share ideas and co-design new approaches to teaching and learning. This year, WIHEA student fellows contributed to the LDCU and provided us with an insight into their experiences of teaching and learning during the pandemic. Their honest and thought-provoking reflections resonated with colleagues and prompted interesting discussions. As a result, we increased the student voice in the sessions delivered. This included a student led session titled 'Invisible Disability' where

students from Enable and across Warwick shared authentic experiences and offered suggestions to further inclusion.

TEALfest has been another huge success this year. Over a whole week in May we hosted the second iteration of this online conference and for the first time ever we opened the event up to external colleagues. This was an opportunity to learn from each other both within Warwick and beyond. It was an inspirational week with 73 guest speakers and 293 attendees.

The community aspect of the LDCU has been invaluable. We now have nearly 600 members in the LDCU Teams space, including both staff and students. Whilst we have achieved a lot there is still a lot to be done. Going forward we have a number of initiatives under development. These include a roll out of the consultancy to reach more colleagues, more opportunities for sharing practice, increasing the profile of our asynchronous resources and the development of a Digital Pedagogy Library - a WIHEA funded project currently in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts.

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to the work of the LDCU over the past year, both presenters and participants, staff and students. We really do value your contributions and I look forward to working with you over the next year.

**Jess Humphreys**  
Learning Design Consultancy Unit (LDCU) Lead

# What is the Learning Design Consultancy Unit?

The Learning Design Consultancy Unit is here to support colleagues across Warwick with the design and adaptation of teaching and learning for blended and online delivery. Bringing together experts from the Academic Development Centre, Academic Technology and across the University - we work in partnership to support design and implementation of Technology Enhanced Active Learning.

The LDCU is also here to help you share your experiences and work with colleagues across the institution and raise your profile.

## Our Aims

The LDCU provides a coordinated and responsive support mechanism focused on the pedagogical and practical considerations for delivering online and blended learning activities.

The Unit co-designs approaches, provides advice, plans support packages, and commissions further how-to guidance and recipes.

The LDCU facilitates discussions around the pedagogic and practical co-design of online and blended learning and signposts to further resources and support that could assist departments in their development of content and resources.

## How we can help you:

- ▶ **Community of Practice**  
There is an active LDCU Teams space where you can share ideas, thoughts and questions. We also host regular opportunities to meet via our forum, open discussions and workshops.
- ▶ **Consultancy**  
The consultancy team brings together experts in Academic Development and Academic Technology to work in partnership with you to identify challenges and consider/implement possible approaches. The consultancy may take the form of:
  - ▷ Facilitated departmental discussions around a specific issue;
  - ▷ Peer dialogue - discussions around a challenge with colleagues;
  - ▷ Coaching - one to one discussion;
  - ▷ Opportunities to share practice with colleagues.
- ▶ **Workshops and events**  
This year we have hosted a number of workshops and events. Colleagues across the University are welcome to come along as a participants or lead on a session, workshop etc. We also welcome contributions from the wider community! Recordings and resources from past events can also be found on our **website**. Examples of workshops and events hosted by the LDCU include:
  - ▷ Regular LDCU Open Discussions for support and sharing of practice
  - ▷ Technology Enhanced Active Learning Festival (TEALfest)
  - ▷ The TEAL Forum (formally the Extended Classroom TEL Forum)
  - ▷ Practical workshops e.g. video capture, creating accessible documents etc.
  - ▷ Community sharing sessions e.g. Digital Arts Laboratory Assessment, Experiences of teaching online, Experiences of tools etc.
  - ▷ Experimental sessions - Escape Rooms
  - ▷ Student voice - accessibility and inclusive practice, unseen disabilities student takeover etc.
- ▶ **Resources/guidance/signposting**  
The LDCU website offers a collection of resources from past workshops and events, as well as information and links to relevant guidance and expertise. The LDCU has also developed a Podcast series capturing experiences of teaching and learning online, where colleagues come together to share practices, challenges, thoughts and ideas: <https://warwick.ac.uk/ldcupodcast>

## LDCU - Community Endorsement



**Professor Will Curtis**  
Deputy Pro Vice Chancellor,  
Education, Quality and Standards -  
Director

The LDCU has played a pivotal role in ensuring the quality and standards of our provision during the pandemic. The institution had to change considerable and very rapidly - shifting approaches to learning and teaching to blended and wholly online. The LDCU quickly became the leading central resource to support departments - running workshops, internal and guest speaker presentations, bespoke consultation, network events and publishing advice and guidance. Given its considerable success, the LDCU was extended for a further year - and continues to lead enhancement of provision across departments. It has built up extensive networks of academic staff, as well as facilitating real momentum for change. It has developed a high profile and a strong reputation - a massive success story!



**Professor David Davies**  
Science Faculty Education Chair,  
Warwick Medical School

The Learning Design Consultancy Unit was created at an unprecedented time for learning, teaching, and assessment. The required move to online learning and transition towards blended learning has challenged us all and underlined the importance of good pedagogical design. Despite our disciplinary differences, many of the challenges we have faced when flipping our lectures online, or finding ways to engage a small group of remote learners, or adapting our assessment practices, have been similar if not the same in all departments. The LDCU has brought together a consultancy service with TEALFest, the established Extended Classroom Forum, and the Talking Online Learning podcast series to create a community of practitioners that explores digital pedagogies and shares good practice.

As we look forward to being able to return to campus teaching, most of us will want to retain what has worked well with online learning and create vibrant and innovative blended learning opportunities for our students. The LDCU might have been created in response to factors beyond our control, but we need it now more than ever.



**Professor Sarah Richardson**  
Arts Faculty Education Chair, History

The formation of the Learning Design Consultancy Unit in the summer of 2020 was an important element of the successful transition to blended learning in the Faculty of Arts. Providing not just expert advice and support in a broad range of formats (webpages, workshops, drop-in advice sessions, recorded videos), but also a framework to effect change. As a result the unit has proved invaluable to staff and students across the faculty. The LDCU lead attended an early meeting of the Faculty Online Teaching group which was established around the same time, and thus was able to give timely input into faculty plans. Significantly, the LDCU has also acted as a repository to gather best practice (as well as things that do not work as well!). The Digital Pedagogy Library which is in development with the LDCU and Arts Faculty DSEP will be a welcome enhancement with authentic examples which will improve student experience across the faculty and beyond.



**Dr Naomi Waltham-Smith**  
Social Sciences Faculty Education  
Chair, Reader, Centre for  
Interdisciplinary Methods

There has been considerable appetite among FSS departments for the sharing of lessons from experiments in blended learning and of best practice. The LDCU has been an invaluable source of support and guidance for teaching staff, and those responsible for devising and implementing TLA plans, within departments at a time when collectively we have entered into a period of renewed reflection on and learning about learning. Staff have welcomed the LDCU's focus pedagogically driven design for blended learning, providing both a wealth of practically-oriented resources and the space for discussion. In these ways, the LDCU has also supported essential confidence-building among teaching staff with different prior experiences and different objectives.



**Professor Jonathan Heron**  
IATL Director

The LDCU has had an extremely positive impact in guiding and advising colleagues on the use of technology to enhance student learning. The work of the LDCU has complemented the work done on Teaching for Learning Online (ADC) by providing sustained practical support and providing space for colleagues to share their own experiences and expertise to learn from each other. Our teaching practices are changing in new and

exciting ways, and these were captured by a series of LDCU workshops and online events to bring the community together.



**Amy Stickels**  
Senior Teaching Fellow, Foundation Studies

The LDCU has had a positive impact on the IFP department and colleagues within it. As a small department with little 'in-house' support to have the LDCU there to ask questions, to exchange ideas and to seek advice has helped us to feel more supported and less isolated as a department.

The elements of LDCU that have been the most valuable have been the workshops - to hear voices from across Warwick has been inspiring e.g. those on accessibility were particularly helpful and led to some small but significant changes in the teaching materials I produce and how I understand my role in accessibility.



**Dr Bo Kelestyn**  
Director of Student Experience, Chemistry

LDCU has really brought the community together. It felt like there was always someone or something you could turn to if you needed support or an example of best practice when you needed inspiration or validation of your work. The LDCU was always there. At Chemistry, we have been particularly grateful for the support from Jim Judges.

TEALfest would have to be the most valuable aspect of LDCU. I loved the energy, the sessions, the interactivity. The way it was organised last year was one of the first example of how to run online events that many followed. I think the workshops and the podcast were also great and really reminded of the diverse ideas and strengths we have here at Warwick and within the Unit. Delighted to see colleagues leading on some of this work recognised as WIHEA Fellows and WATE winners this year



**Dr Bryan Brazeau**  
Associate Professor, Liberal Arts and Digital Pedagogy Lead, School for Cross-Faculty Studies

As Digital Pedagogy Lead in the School for Cross-Faculty Studies, the LDCU has been incredibly helpful for me and for my colleagues. Their bespoke workshops have provided us with tools and ideas for online teaching, and perhaps more importantly, have become an ideal space to share practice and learn from others as we navigated online teaching. I know that many students benefitted from the WOLF and staff found the resources in TFLO very helpful. I attended a number of LDCU workshops this year, and they

shaped not only my teaching practice, but that of my colleagues and those whom I advised in SCFS regarding effective online teaching methods. It also provided a space in which I was able to share my WIHEA-funded work with Rebecca Stone on digital assessment in the Faculty of Arts. The LDCU is perhaps one of the most helpful units that Warwick has created with regard to digital pedagogy, and I look forward to seeing it grow in future alongside the Digital Arts Lab in the Faculty of Arts.



**Eleanor Hassell**  
Former Enable President, Undergraduate Student, PAIS

Over the past year, the Learning Design Consultancy Unit has significantly enhanced the experiences of disabled students at Warwick through education and awareness. By facilitating workshops and panels that have centred the disabled student experience, the LDCU has aided in the creation of inclusive pedagogy and best practice for accessibility amongst staff. This work has been invaluable in starting vital conversations that have not only reduced the perceived stigma around discussing disability but have also led to the implementation of greater support and accessible teaching across the university.



**Graeme Knowles**  
Reader, Warwick Manufacturing Group

The LDCU has been pivotal in helping myself and colleagues at WMG respond to the recent challenges. Whether it has been thought-leadership in online pedagogies and learning design; rapidly developing excellent online resources; providing invaluable opportunities to share with, and learn from, colleagues; or creating a world-class conference like TEALfest they have been the hub of Warwick's response. The holistic nature of the support means it is hard to isolate any one element, but perhaps the most important for me has been the availability of an expert team of 'critical friends' at the heart of the University learning community.



**Marie Diebolt**  
Widening Participation Officer, SROAS

The LDCU community's support has been invaluable, especially during the pandemic. Jess Humphrey's teaching and the LDCU resources provided me with a different perspective on how we approach advice and guidance in Widening Participation. She helped me develop a pedagogy and tools to support sustained and meaningful teaching and learning. As we moved our activities online, I was able to offer our audience a coherent set of digital activities and the successful engagement we had from our already

difficult to reach groups during the pandemic is a testimony to the LDCU high-quality provision.



**Naomi De La Tour**  
Senior Teaching Fellow, IATL

The LDCU had led the way in shaping the University's digital pedagogy response to the pandemic. The pedagogy-first approach, and the commitment to supporting colleagues in engaging with technology in a way that meets them where they are, while supportively offering imaginative ways of thinking about what else might be possible where needed, has been highly successful. Under Jess's leadership the Unit has led discussions about the direction digital, blended and high bred pedagogy should be taking at an institutional level, a sector level and – importantly – within individual classrooms. It has done this in a collegiate and collaborative way. I sit on the advisory group for LDCU and it has been wonderful to see the depth of conversation as well as practical responses to needs within Warwick. I hope that going forward LDCU will be embedded and supported within Warwick. This offers a model of good practice that I would like to see more widely adopted and has real potential to continue to move Warwick forward positively in regard to its culture of digital and blended pedagogy.



**Pula Prakash**  
WIHEA Student Fellow and Undergraduate Student, Global Sustainable Development

The Learning Design Consultancy Unit is doing fantastic and crucial work through these unforeseen times as we navigate online and blended teaching and learning. Their multifaceted approach to facilitating conversation around pedagogical and practical considerations through workshops, forums, consultations etc is uniting staff and students into a community of allies as we stumble and learn from these challenges together. Personally, the opportunity to provide a student voice through the LDCU on 'my experiences of online learning' at the Extended Classroom Forum was invaluable as it provoked deeper engagement, understanding and empathy on the matter from both staff and student perspectives; enabling new relationships to be built and increased mindfulness to be carried forward. I hope to see this already wonderful work continue to develop.



**Dr Rebecca Stone,**  
Director of Student Experience (Employability and Digital Pedagogy), Faculty of Arts

I have been engaged with the Learning Design Consultancy Unit since its inception in 2020. During that time I have found the LDCU to be a fabulous resource that both supports the work of the Faculty of Arts and helps to move the whole university forward in the fields of digital pedagogy and technology enhanced learning. The benefits of the LDCU are many, but what has been especially useful is the opportunity to attend webinars run by a community of likeminded individuals across the University, and to participate by running workshops both to contribute to the learning community and get feedback on my own practice. Knowing where to direct colleagues for support has also been invaluable in this challenging year.



**Dr Steve Gascoigne**  
Senior Teaching fellow, Centre for Lifelong Learning

I have worked with LDCU in two ways, firstly, taking part in team meetings, brainstorming ideas, and suggesting initiatives. Secondly, I have also helped create podcasts and video how-to guides as well as sharing best practice at events. This experience has impacted me in two ways. Firstly, it has been invaluable in building my online teaching practice by allowing me a space to try out ideas and receive feedback. I have learned a great deal from listening and watching colleagues' best practice as well. Secondly, this has allowed me to disseminate ideas and tips to colleagues at the Centre for Lifelong Learning where I have been active in meetings and sessions focused on teaching in a blended and online environment. I have had positive feedback from colleagues about the help I have given. Overall, the most valuable aspect has been having the space to meet other curious and open-minded colleagues exploring the potential of new ways of teaching.

## LDCU



**80**  
sessions



**592**  
LDCU  
Teams space  
members



**34**  
recordings



**1724**  
registered  
attendees



**12**  
Podcasts



**4**  
Extended  
Classroom  
TEL Forums

## TEALFest



**73** speakers



**5** days



**293**  
attended including



**40**



sessions

**17**

external  
speakers



**112**  
external attendees  
from 64 institutions

## REFLECTIONS



Over the past year we have all had to adapt to new circumstances and rise to the challenge of moving teaching, learning and assessment online. The Learning Design Consultancy Unit was established back in June 2020 to support colleagues in this process and to provide a space to share expertise, ideas and experiences.

The past year has seen the unit evolve and the LDCU community grow. There have been many opportunities for discussions, workshops and celebrations including the second annual TEALfest that for the first time was open for external guests - this hugely successful event attracted 293 colleagues from 64 institutions. A key strength of the LDCU is the collaborative, supportive and safe space for honest open conversations around the role and use

of technology across all aspects of Education. As well as building a vibrant community of practice, LDCU has provided consultancy and bespoke support to a number of departments across Warwick.

As we move beyond emergency remote teaching and start to plan for the future, the LDCU provides a valuable gateway to stronger collaboration, support and guidance to help us reimagine the future of Education. I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the LDCU over the past year and look forward to more exciting developments to come.

**Professor Chris Hughes**  
Pro-Vice Chancellor (Education)

## How to get involved?

If you are interested in finding out more about LDCU, would like to get involved or share your practice then visit our [website](https://www.warwick.ac.uk/ldcu) or contact us [ldcu@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:ldcu@warwick.ac.uk)

[@ldcu](https://twitter.com/ldcu)

[ldcu@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:ldcu@warwick.ac.uk)

[www.warwick.ac.uk/ldc](https://www.warwick.ac.uk/ldc)