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From "top tips" to "transformation"

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From "Top Tips" to "Transformation": (re)constructing harmonious relationships with digital pedagogies

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As academic developers with extensive experience teaching in multiple modes, we feel our relationships with our pedagogies and the tools we employ are healthy and productive. Since the start of the crisis, our focus has been to support the immediate transition to emergency remote teaching and then the transition to a 'hybrid' default. We have seen remarkable, need-driven engagement with large numbers of colleagues accessing self-directed resources and live workshops.

However, colleague preoccupations will be familiar:

"I want to replicate face-to-face teaching online."

"We need top tips for using X platform! "

"My students refuse to turn on their cameras."

"What's wrong with hour-long live lectures or recordings?"

The desire to recreate the pedagogy of the campus-based environment in digital modes rather than reconstructing pedagogy in more transformational ways is our enduring challenge. This is the context for the focus of this proposal, in which we want to explore the anxieties evident in the statements above. We see these as proxies for what is really troubling: that these expressed anxieties cut across commitments to inclusion, accessibility, wellbeing and kindness (Denial, 2020). We have therefore striven to centre transformations in mindset via opportunities for critical discussion, application and experimentation (Kennedy, 2005) around this most disorienting of dilemmas (Mezirow, 2000). We will argue that colleagues need to think beyond 'pedagogy before technology' and focus on care; not as something that should be "in the mix" but as forming the basis of pedagogy and the tech choices made (Stommel, Friend and Morris, 2020). This foregrounding, emphasis and push for discussion on the preeminence of compassion and care is linked to our argument that colleagues should be more overt about exploring their pedagogy with their students, especially that which challenges – their own and their students – expectations and assumptions (Bjork and Bjork, 2011).