What a good place to be!

LAUTERBACH, T.

2022

"What a good place to be!"
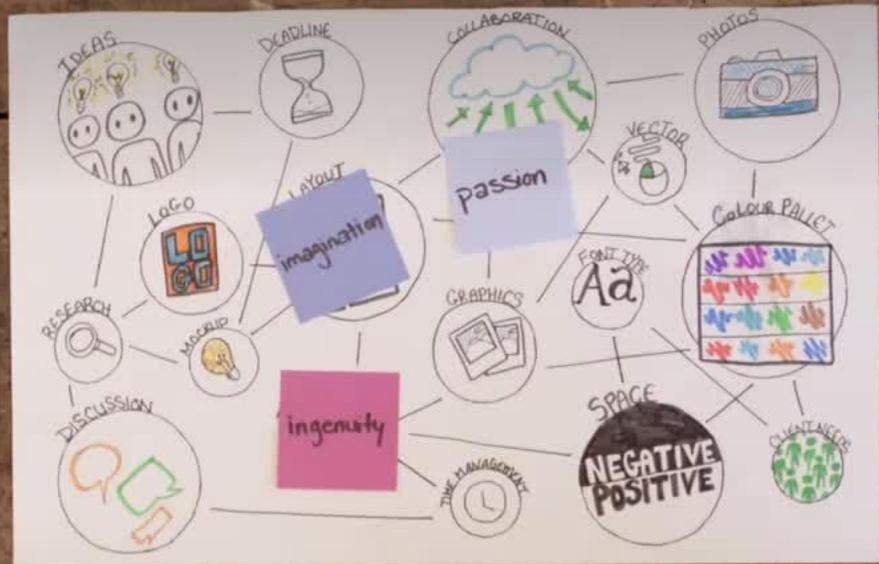
Thorsten Lauterbach

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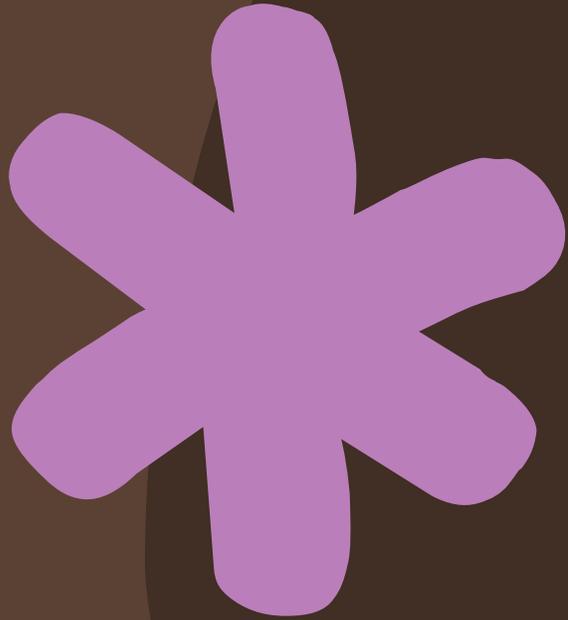
Agenda

- Looking back: class contact during Covid-19 and social health

- What do the experts say?

- Virtual Happy Hour: more than a webinar

- Online courses and VHHs

- Impact & Conclusions

"X" marks the spot

- Students signed up to an in-person experience

- … received recorded lectures, some in-person tutorials (tiny groups, socially distanced)

- Concern re monitoring progress; retention

- How to build trust and develop rapport?

- Concern re social & mental well-being

Experts on well-being and social health of online students

Focus less on the practical, more on learning journey and developing a vibrant online student community (Jones, 2020)

Blending online and physical space; digital well-being; sense of belonging (Garcia, 2020)

Developing staff and student digital competencies (Martzoukou and Elliot, 2016)

Reduce student stress by structured online skills development programme integrated with and contextualised by courses (Hewitt and Stubbs, 2017)

On student stress: interaction and collaborative networks sparser and more students were studying alone; students' levels of stress, anxiety, loneliness, and depressive symptoms got worse; Stress factors included worries about health, family, friends, and their future; COVID-19 specific worries: isolation in social networks, lack of interaction and emotional support, physical isolation (Elmer et al, 2020)

Virtual Happy Hours

- An opportunity for the whole class to meet online
- Timetabled slots to ensure regularity and consistency
  - Looking back and feeding forward
  - Trouble-shooting
  - Guest speakers
  - … and some light relief (the infamous quizzes)

Impact on "in-person" students moved to blended/online learning

- Students bought into an informal, casual catch-up with their teacher and peers

- Guest speakers added real value

- Class reps feeding into trouble-shooting and Q&A

- Reassurance

- "We're getting through this together"

What did students get out of it?

- Confidence boost for students (and staff)

- Consolidation of learning

- Peer-to-peer learning and support, especially in the run up to assessments

- Developing a learning community

Post-Covid: lonely journeys of online students

ONLINE LLB
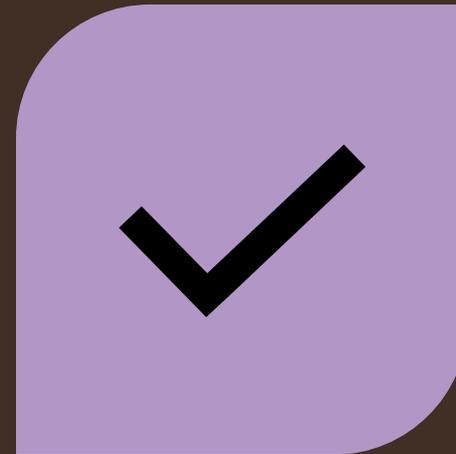
UPSKILLING SHORT COURSES

Time, please, ladies and gentlemen!

- VHH add value to online students post-Covid

- Mutual reassurance - and a spark!

- Developing a sense of belonging and a learning community

- Informal and social – but a timetabled space

- Fostering bonds to peer-to-peer support mental well-being and social health – incl. staff
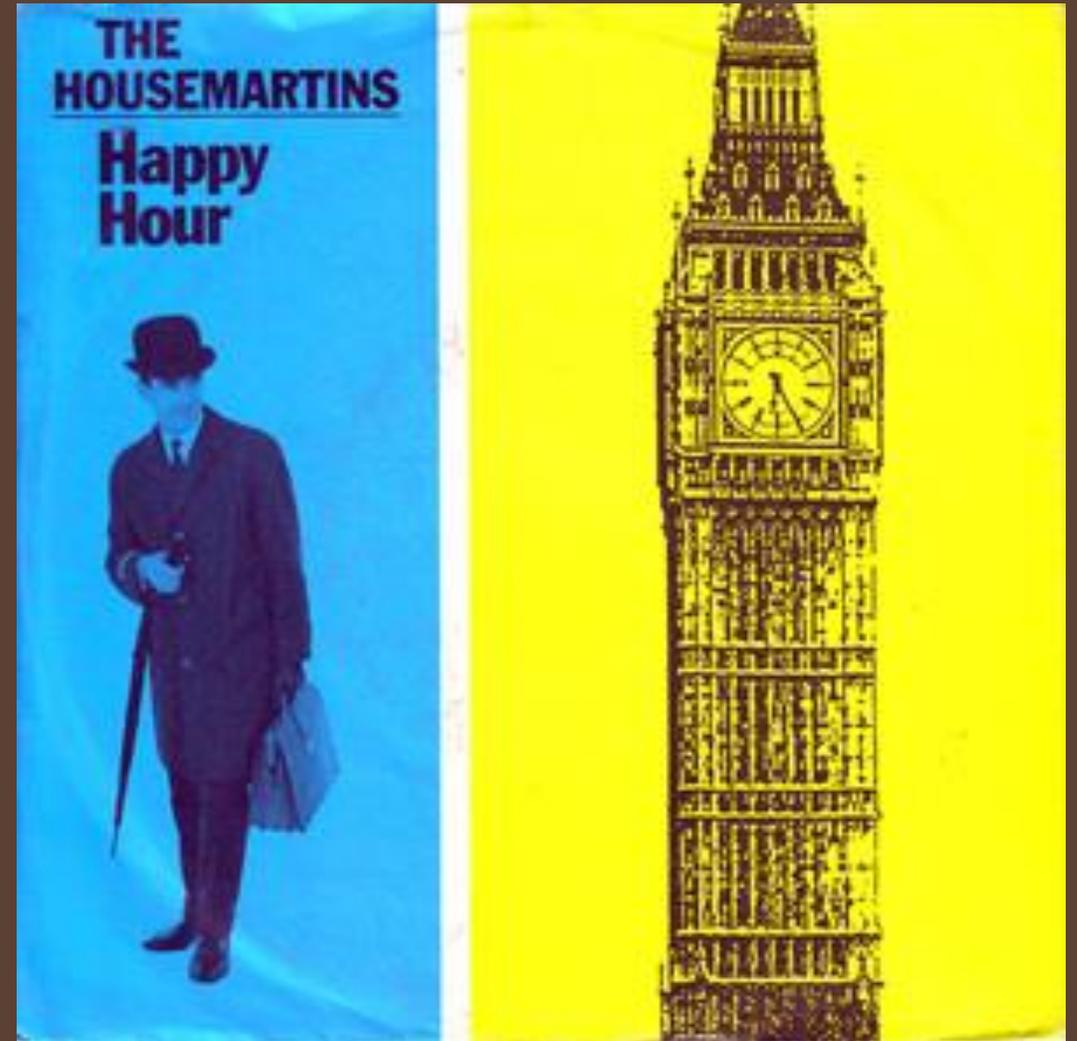
Thank you for listening! Any views, observations, questions ...