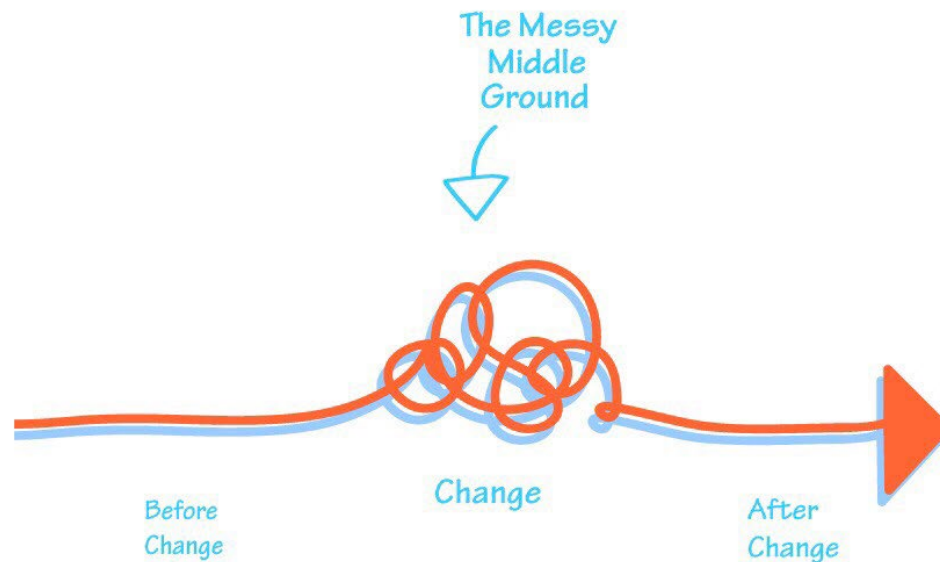


‘There is nothing so stable as change’: learning in and from the COVID pandemic



- In a ‘messy’ moment – and we may be for some time
- We are still negotiating what this will mean. Has the ‘product’ essentially changed? Are old models obsolete or resilient?
- It’s not like we haven’t been asking these questions for a while – COVID has sharpened our focus
- And it’s not linear - a moment before, during and after
- Language of disruption not nuanced enough – emphasises the dramatic moment

Change was already in formation



Our Vision

Changing lives and our world for a better tomorrow:
USW will be a leading UK university, maximising positive impact for our students, partners, and communities.

Our Purpose

- **Ambitious** for our students and staff, and dedicated to making a positive impact
- **Focused** on inclusion, enterprise and growth
- A **trusted** partner for long-term mutual benefit and success
- An **innovative** creator of knowledge and solutions for the future
- **Proud** to be anchored in south Wales with global reach

Our Values

Professional | Responsive | Creative | Inspiring | Collaborative

Building the capacity, capability and impact of our students

- Will previous modes of curriculum design and delivery would deliver the best graduate outcomes
- We discussed the relationship between content of courses and graduate attributes
- We discussed lower intensity models of campus delivery with more time in our communities solving real challenges (why are they in here so much?)
- How would digital technology enable us to do all of this (the purpose needed to come first – the learning environment review second)?
- We were asking **does this need radical or incremental change**

GRADUATE SUCCESS & OPPORTUNITIES

We will deliver:

- A distinctive and relevant academic portfolio focused on student & employer needs
- A challenge-based learning & teaching experience that transforms students' professional identity and ambition
- Workplace & lifelong learning that is flexible, innovative and accessible



So plenty happens before a volcano erupts

- Minor tremors
- Rise and fall of ground, often over numbers of years
- Universities had plenty going on 'beneath the ground' before COVID
- Investment in digital learning environments, VR, remote laboratory facilities, simulation technologies
- TEL teams to drive practice
- New dispersed modes of delivery that are based on digital content
- We weren't monoliths, wedded to the past
- We found the pivot to digital music easier than schools – we completed awards, no teacher assessed grades

But what was far on the horizon, has come closer

- We anticipated blended and digitally enabled learning and set our strategic horizon at 10 years
- Covid sped up our requirement for serious CPD (ongoing, as practice has changed, pedagogy maybe less so)
- New ways of working, learning and knowing
- New ways of engaging and leading (Town Hall!)

‘When I looked at the strategy I thought you will never deliver that in 10 years. I realise now that was Old Testament thinking and we need New Testament Thinking’

- **Challenge based learning**
- Using ‘real world’ challenges to frame and ground learning experiences
- Digital skills plus skills of collaboration, interaction and team working (and team management) will be critical
- More time with students working with partners to build networks and social capital



Assumptions about what will remain: it's not all change

CONNECT PEOPLE,
CREATE IDEAS,
COLLABORATE
TO EMPOWER.

- Many students want social interaction and a physical feeling of togetherness /community
- Many need the social capital that comes from being on campus with others (never been just about learning)
- Other students less so... and some may have found blended learning a much better fit
- Our campuses will need vibrancy
- We are not a place without places



The feeling of it all

- This is also in formation
- 'Ambiguous loss'
- Can I have my office back?
- Some have internalised change and seek more, others feel a sense of loss – what the University used to be like, of routine, the place that used to be psychologically and physically, an expectation/hope that this will all end
- If people feel unmoored ... the language of disruption (no going back) needs to be carefully handled
- Careful that the enthusiasm to change doesn't rub away people as well as infrastructure

Leading in the messiness

- Acknowledge reality. Things are different and will likely remain so. We don't know for sure how this will settle
- Be rally clear to people about what is changing and what is not. Or we leave them behind psychologically... people are still going to be in physical classrooms and labs. Students will still come to university.
- We don't yet know what people want... and maybe nor do they (the substantial meal v the coffee, what is that telling us?)
- This is a process not an event, so figure it out piece by piece – trial and error is ok
- From a teachers blog: 'We try new things as teachers, and we're open about that with families. We tinker, we test, we assess, we improve. For me it's not about major initiatives, although those are sometimes necessary, but rather about the constant process, as individuals and as an institution, of asking ourselves, "How did that go? How can I do better next time? Is this getting me closer to where I want to end up?"'

