

Abstract for the Enhancing Student Learning Through Innovative Scholarship Conference, September 2021 (ESLTIS21).

Creating an oasis of calm from a sea of chaos: looking back on lessons learned to support students to thrive

Dr Kelly Edmunds (BIO) and Dr Bethan Gulliver (BIO)
University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK

The 2020-21 academic year was a year like no other. Many students beginning university in September 2020 found themselves moving away from the support of their friends and family and starting their degree under challenging circumstances. In September 2021 we will be welcoming students to our institutions with a whole new suite of known unknowns and unknown unknowns for both them and us. But now we have the lessons learned from 2020/21 to build on. Here we explore some of the techniques that we developed during 2020/21 as we strove to build a supportive and nurturing virtual learning space for >200 students from across our Biology modules and reflect on which of these may be beneficial going forwards. By reimagining our role, listening to the students and being responsive to student feedback, we have found new ways to help our students to thrive and learnt that we were able to hear our students in ways we were not experiencing when teaching was primarily face-to-face.