MaCE Online Course Session One

In this introductory session to the MaCE course, the intention was to create a virtual environment that embodied the collaborative nature of the wider MaCE philosopy and course aims and outcomes.

Strategic facilitation techniques were used to engage students and deliver in a relatively informal way to offer inclusivity and to welcome each person to the virtual space. The informal delivery method enabled students to consider the academic level and raise and share their personal questions and concerns. The aim to gain an immediate response as we learn more about one another and our experiences, backgrounds and perspectives on education was included to offer cohesion and initiate a relational element to the international cohort.

This session also gave the student a good introduction to the tools used in Canvas (our online web resource and virtual learning environment) and all participants participated in a range of virtual icebreaker activities. The questionnaire icebreaker begins with some questions about self and then requires students to engage with others in the forum to find out interesting things about the one another. The use of a Padlet gave an ongoing reference point for each student in relation to one another, this portal was used to create connection and awareness of the broad base of learners and tutors on the course.

Canvas offered opportunity to use a virtual whiteboard and give ownership and control to the student group to complete snapshot responses to questions around the course and the delivery. The intention in this instance developed an instant recognition of similar expectations and challenges that may be consistent in terms of a response from the teaching team and adds value in relation to student confidence. The teaching team were able to respond live to questions posed and alleviate any potential concerns.

Together we co-created based upon our earlier activity an understanding of how the research will take place in a practical sense over the year. The tutor provided an input around the principles upon which the course has been built together so far and how the participative nature of our research aims to establish and meet the needs of participants and potential impact on practice and knowledge base.

To do this we discuss our/your:

- Student Expectations
- Raising Views On Challenges or Concerns
- The Online Platform, Using Canvas and Omnijoin
- Course Overview and Q&A Session
- The Research and Data Collection

- or Anything else you can come up with?

To promote the best possible starting place in terms of the "what we will do" and "how we will do it" over the coming months.

A valuable input from the IT team on using Canvas and Omnijoin allowed awareness of the virtual learning environment and secured opportunity for technical questions and with some exploration of the main areas that the MaCe course would utilise during the coming months.

The chat facility within Omnijoin was for some students a comfortable space to communicate as oppose to using video/audio. The potential of two tutors during delivery to take on these tasks would reduce the distraction. Equally, planned and timed responses to the chat forum may also address the complication.

The session pitch and time allowed inclusive of breaks was used well and engaged the student group as facilitators alongside passive participant and was a useful introduction to one another and the course.