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Relational Pedagogy in virtual learning environments: a study of online approaches to the development of Communities of Enquiry in Higher Education

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- This paper analyses the experiences of academic staff at a large Northwest institution in making the transition to fully online provision.

- Research sought to identify the limitations of a virtual environment on tutor's ability to develop and sustain learning communities with their learners.

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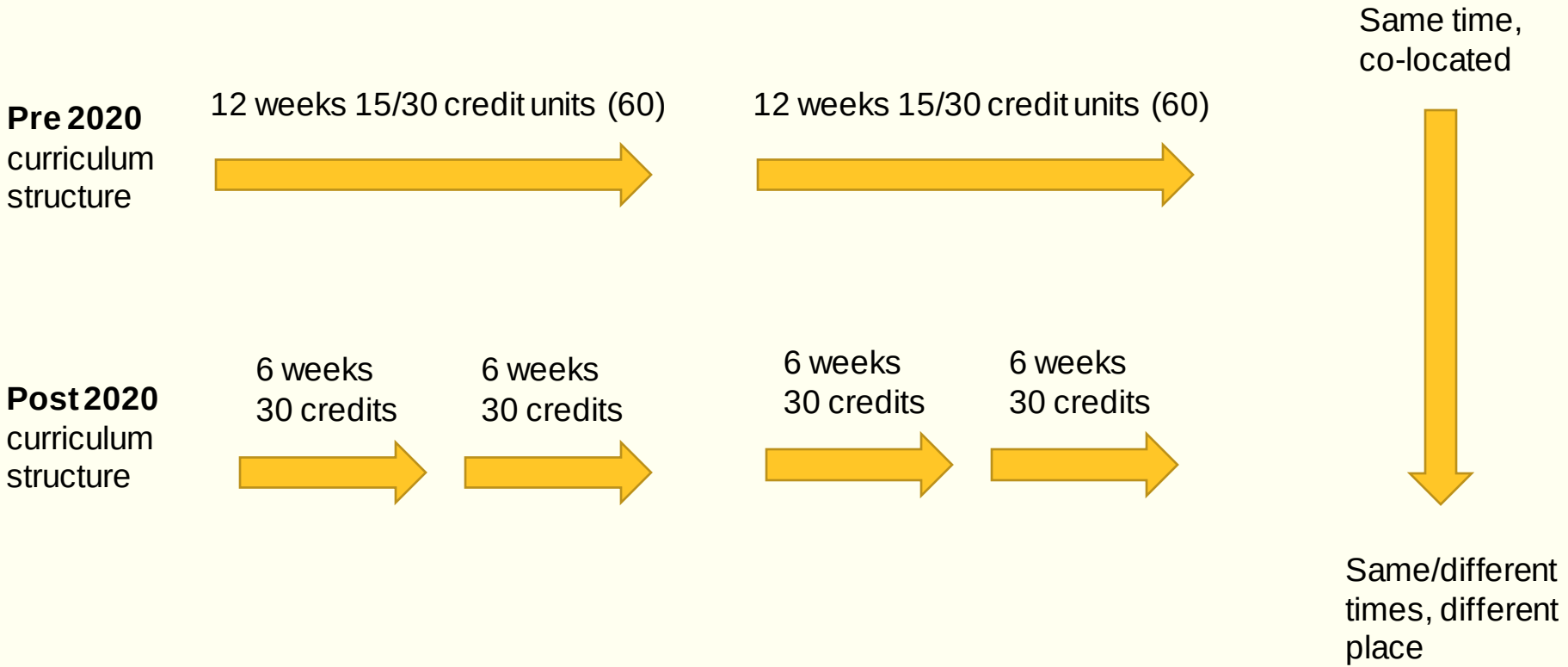
Online, Block Teaching: Design Choices



Relational Pedagogy

- Murphy and Brown (2012) suggests that '*a relationally focused approach takes seriously questions of trust, recognition and respect which lie at the heart of the students experience*'

- Relational pedagogy is broadly premised on the idea that individuals are not the superlative, unit of analysis for understanding human phenomena (Gergen, 2009).

- Relational pedagogy contests an individualised approach to knowledge acquisition, yet acknowledges the value that 'self' and 'other' recognition can have in this process.

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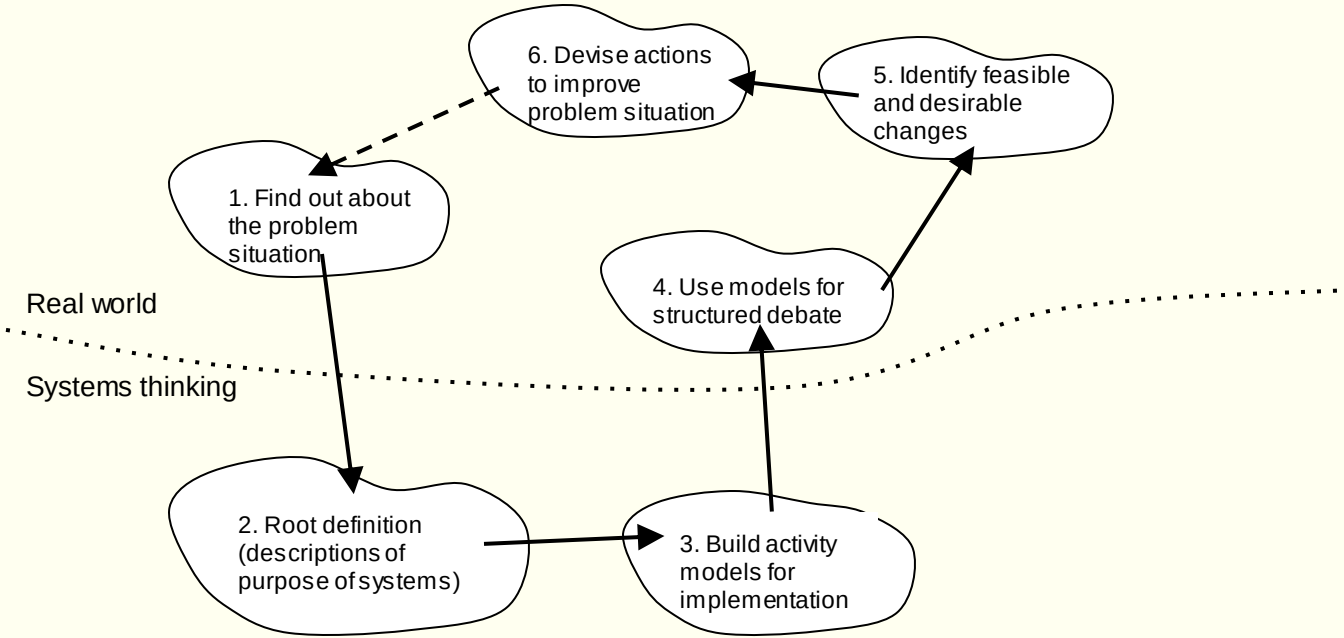
Soft Systems Methodology (purpose and effectiveness)



Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) is a method to structure complex problems and to develop desirable and feasible changes through an accommodation of views of group of people.

After Checkland, P., & Poulter, J. (2006)

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(1)

27th May: (VC) Block Teaching

7th April: Changes to Assessment Regulations

25th Mar: (PVC Education) Revised EF requirements

23rd Mar: (PVC Education) Assessment Changes
- Contextual marking
- Deadline extensions

17th Mar: Changes to Examinations

16th Mar: VC announces move online teaching

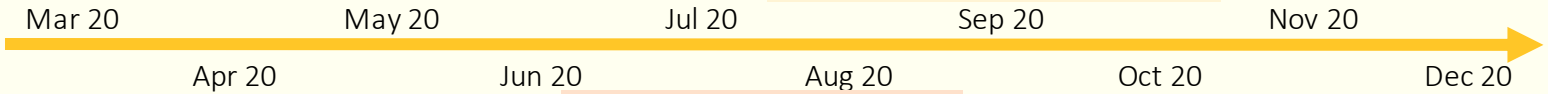
16th-23rd Nov: ISS Survey

13th-24th Nov: Academic Pulse survey

12th - 25th Oct: SU Induction Survey

5th Oct-Dec 18th: Observations of Teaching

6-20th Jul: Student Pulse Survey



10th Jun: OfS CMA Guidance

24th Apr: QAA No Detriment Guidance

17th Aug: MS Teams T&L spaces

24th Aug: Getting Ready to Learn Moodle

14th Apr: Academic Delivery 20/21 Strategic Project
1. start dates & delivery methods
2. student engagement
3. digital education strategy
4. tailor postgrad offer

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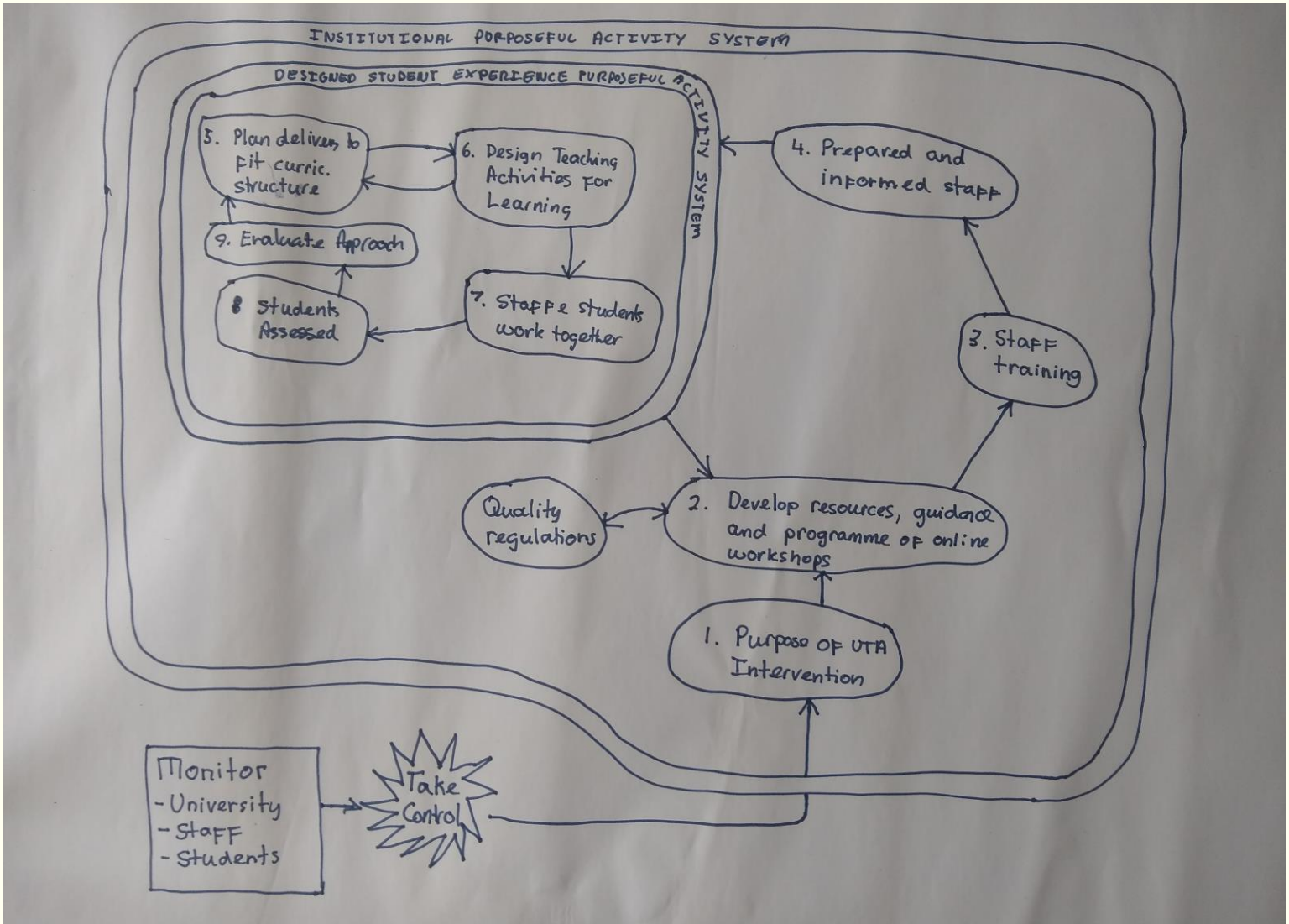
(2) Root definition (purpose of the system in focus)

P (what) – Q (how) – R (why)

Support staff to develop synchronous and asynchronous online teaching activities, which place the learning community at its centre using active learning strategies, to promote deeper learning and engagement

(3) Purposeful Activity Model



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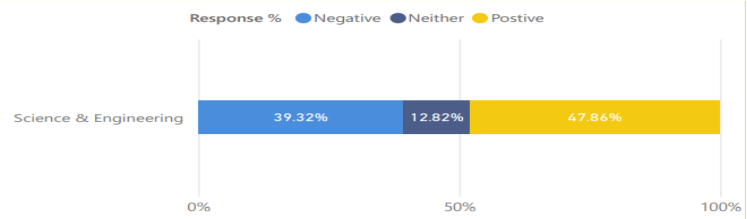
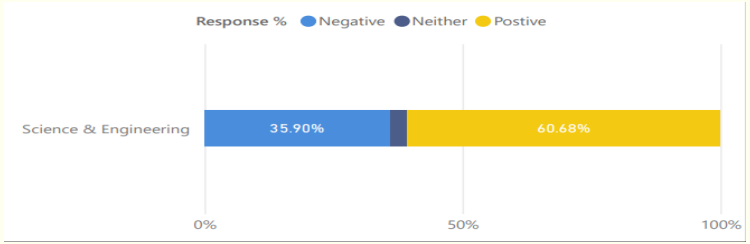
Academic Pulse Report: 13th -24th Nov

Participation rates by Faculty			
	Responses	Headcount	Responses %
Arts & Humanities	167	545	31%
Business & Law	143	380	38%
Education	39	142	27%
HPSC	36	247	15%
Science and Engineering	117	358	33%

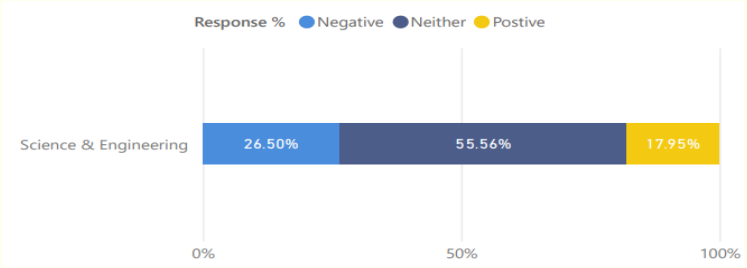
Q13: I have managed to develop a strong sense of community and positive relationships teaching student



Q06: In my subject area, block teaching: works well for students/is ineffective for students



Q10: On the whole, my students have engaged with my teaching



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The Data

- Reflections are based on the preliminary findings from a questionnaire disseminated to academic staff at a large Northwest University.

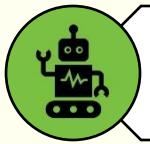
- 71% of staff said they had experienced difficulties in creating a sense of community with learners.

- Key Themes

Time Constraints

Connecting with Learners

New ways of teaching


Learning new Systems/tech

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Conclusions – We have Observed

- Innovation
- Creative Approaches
- 'Active Learning strategies'
- Empowerment and Increased confidence

- **What's Next...**

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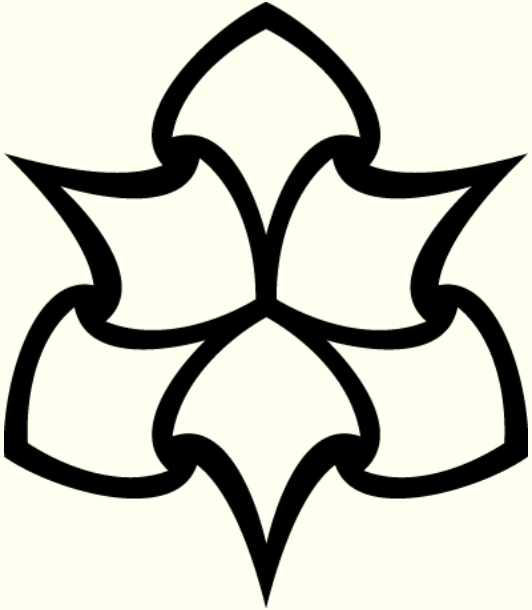

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