



APT 2021

19th Academic Practice and Technology Conference (APT2021)
Co-hosted online by the London School of Economics & Political Science,
Imperial College London and University College London.
Friday 2nd July 2021

Session Start Time	11:40
Breakout Room	1
Title of Abstract:	Learning from Each Other in Disruptive Times through Design Thinking
Presenters (lead & co-presenters)	Bo Kelestyn Rebecca Freeman Johannes Pittgens, Luke Netherclift
Institution	University of Warwick
Format	Workshop
Abstract	In this session we will reflect on and share our learnings from applying design thinking methodologies and mindset to co-creation at the University of Warwick. This new to HE way of thinking and co-creating innovation brings staff and students together to tackle challenges in disruptive and imaginative ways. Our unique methodology called the Warwick Secret Challenge has allowed us to develop a number of previously invisible insights, engage the student body in an authentic dialogue, and even collaborate with the wider University ecosystem during the pandemic. Having nurtured and refined the Secret Challenge over the last four years, we will reveal what we learnt during this time and how we adapted the methodology during the disruptive times of the pandemic. We will engage the audience in a design thinking experience with a hope to open up a wider national dialogue on applying design thinking in order to create better student and staff experience.
Session Description	A recent Wonkhe article highlights the value students place on universities being able to identify and solve problems that are 'felt viscerally' by the student body (Dickinson, 2020). It illustrates how the dynamic of student engagement with their education and University is transforming, not least due to increased diversification of student cohorts (Mercer-Mapstone and Bovill, 2019), demanding more

participatory approaches where all parties can be equal partners in engaged learning (Healey et al., 2014). New tools for decision making, problem solving, and ideation have been created in the business and digital realms to reflect the complexity and uncertainty brought about by the accelerated levels of innovation and change, which old management tools could no longer speak to (Ries, 2011). These tools are also relevant to the higher education context. Applying Design Thinking, one of these new tools, to student engagement proposes new and exciting areas of student experience innovation and research (Dunne, 2016). Used for student engagement, design thinking allows to create a new space outside of the formal structures of the University and the Students' Union, and tensions associated with these structures. This session will focus on the Warwick Secret Challenge (WSC), a model based on design thinking principles, which reimagines student engagement and creates a number of distinct affordances including increased diversity, student engagement in innovation and research, active creativity around policy and experience design and skills development. Through this workshop we hope to put design thinking on the map from which new ideas and insights are developed to innovate higher education. During the workshop we will reflect on the initial and emergent design of the WSC and its impact, including how it has been adapted to run online during the pandemic, reveal and share elements of the WSC that participants can take away with them and apply in their home institutions.