Learning Innovation Festival 2020
Compilate of Q&A Responses

Assistant Professor Tracy Zou
Professor Gina Marchetti

1. **What is the motivation for embarking on your work to incorporate inclusivity and compassion in your course?**
   One more point: it is really important and crucial in the challenging times. Addressing wellbeing is at the core of any learning. The motivation is really from the strong need we see among students and teachers.

2. **What advice would you give to instructors who are new to incorporating inclusivity and compassion in their online teaching?**
   We suggest that they might be able to read some guidelines, e.g. Universal Design for Learning. We also compile some useful links on inclusive practices. Please see here:
   https://www.cetl.hku.hk/designolc/links/#inclusive-teaching-practices

3. **How can other institutions help one another in promoting inclusivity in the education sector?**
   I guess this has already been a shared issue across many institutions. So many of them are very willing to address this. One useful way is to share best practices through forums like this one.

4. **How do you cater to students with disabilities? ie. blind, deaf etc**
   We have institutional guideline on this:
   http://www.handbook.hku.hk/ug/full-time-2016-17/student-services/assistance-to-students-with-a-disability-or-special-educational-needs
   In addition, making the course materials accessible in different forms also help.

5. **How are accessibility resources extended to students in need during COVID? (e.g. student note-taking/one to one tutoring)**
   We share the resources through teachers to their students and in some recent cases, we work with students on developing the resources together.

6. **Any pro tips on creating an online community for undergraduate students who are mostly doing online learning after the COVID-19 outbreak?**

Using some platforms for students to post things in their lives, e.g. cooking challenges, help bound students together. We might also encourage students to support one another by giving feedback to other students' posts or work.

7. **Do you have any resources to share with the students on how to do well in online learning? There are many online teaching guides for teachers, but not many online learning guides for students**
   We have some info and guides for students:
   https://tl.hku.hk/teachonline/information-for-students-coming-to-hong-kong/
   but you are right. More online learning guides might be helpful.

8. **If a student finds it difficult to join synchronous sessions, would that not cause stress on the student?**
   That is an issue, since so much of the learning process in many of our courses involves real-time give and take. In fact, that's what distinguishes most online distance programs from campus courses. Typically, students gravitate to online degree programs in order to take advantage of disciplines unavailable locally or because they need to have a very flexible schedule for study. When they enter the program, they know that they will not have synchronous interactions with their teachers and fellow students. Those programs are specifically designed to overcome that disadvantage by providing additional support for peer interaction and engagement with the instructor for students working in very different time zones.

   Going online within the same time zone allows for more spontaneous communication, facilitates group work, and makes interactive activities much easier. Most instructors accommodate students unable to attend synchronous lessons by providing recordings. These students can still engage with the asynchronous discussion boards, readings, videos, and other online materials; however, you are correct, those students may be "stressed," since peer-to-peer interaction and synchronous interaction with the instructor may be more effective for many students.

   The lack of that interaction could cause some problems--particularly since most courses at most of our institutions are not designed for asynchronous online delivery. So, these students may struggle to engage in the same way F2F and synchronous online students do. If your institution has a fully remote program, you may want to chat with instructors there to see how they keep their student fully engaged. As a MOOC instructor, I know it is not always easy to accommodate the needs of students on different schedules, in different time zones, working on materials at their own pace.