

# Creating effective learning communities in TNE

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## SUMMER PROGRAMMES

**KING'S**  
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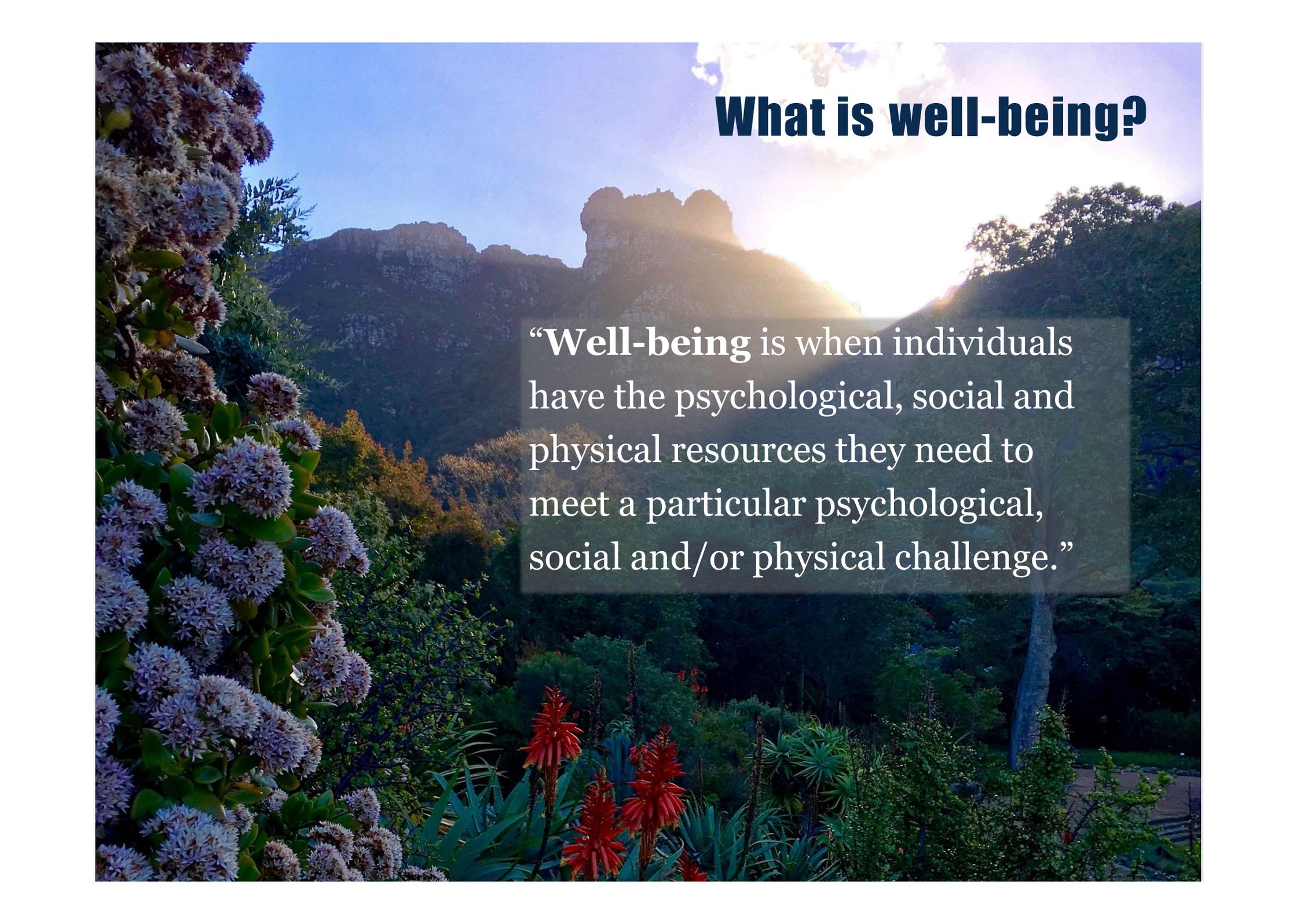
**Building community – Why?**

# Mental Health Trends in Young People

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[US Figures]

- International research estimates that 75% of mental health problems emerge before the age of 25
- Percent of college students who report experiencing overwhelming anxiety within one year
  - 2008: less than 40%
  - 2017: more than 55%

A scenic landscape featuring a sunset over a mountain range. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm glow over the scene. In the foreground, there are lush green plants, including a large cluster of white flowers on the left and several red flowers in the center. The background shows a range of mountains under a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

# What is well-being?

“**Well-being** is when individuals have the psychological, social and physical resources they need to meet a particular psychological, social and/or physical challenge.”

# Influencers on well-being

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## PROTECTIVE FACTORS

- Sense of belonging
- Positive relationships
- Engagement in learning
- Pride in identity
- Access to support services
- Required responsibility/helpfulness

# Why does it matter?

**Transnational education experiences can help close the gap between those at-risk for negative outcomes and those with protective factors for positive outcomes.**





**Building community: face to face**

# Principles of TNE short term programme teaching:

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## Seeing a fuller human being = teaching as a fuller human being

- A more holistic approach to education
  - Valuing place and time
  - Eye-to-eye relationship between representatives of both (or more) cultures
  - Using each other as a resource to grow
- > Individuality within the group

# How can these be achieved via community?

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## Examples

- Discover the international as a dimension for our future
- Personal agency: Overcoming hurdles in life
- Deconstruct preconceptions, notions of mentality, self and other
- Understand equality and inclusion in another culture

# Autobiographical and local encounters

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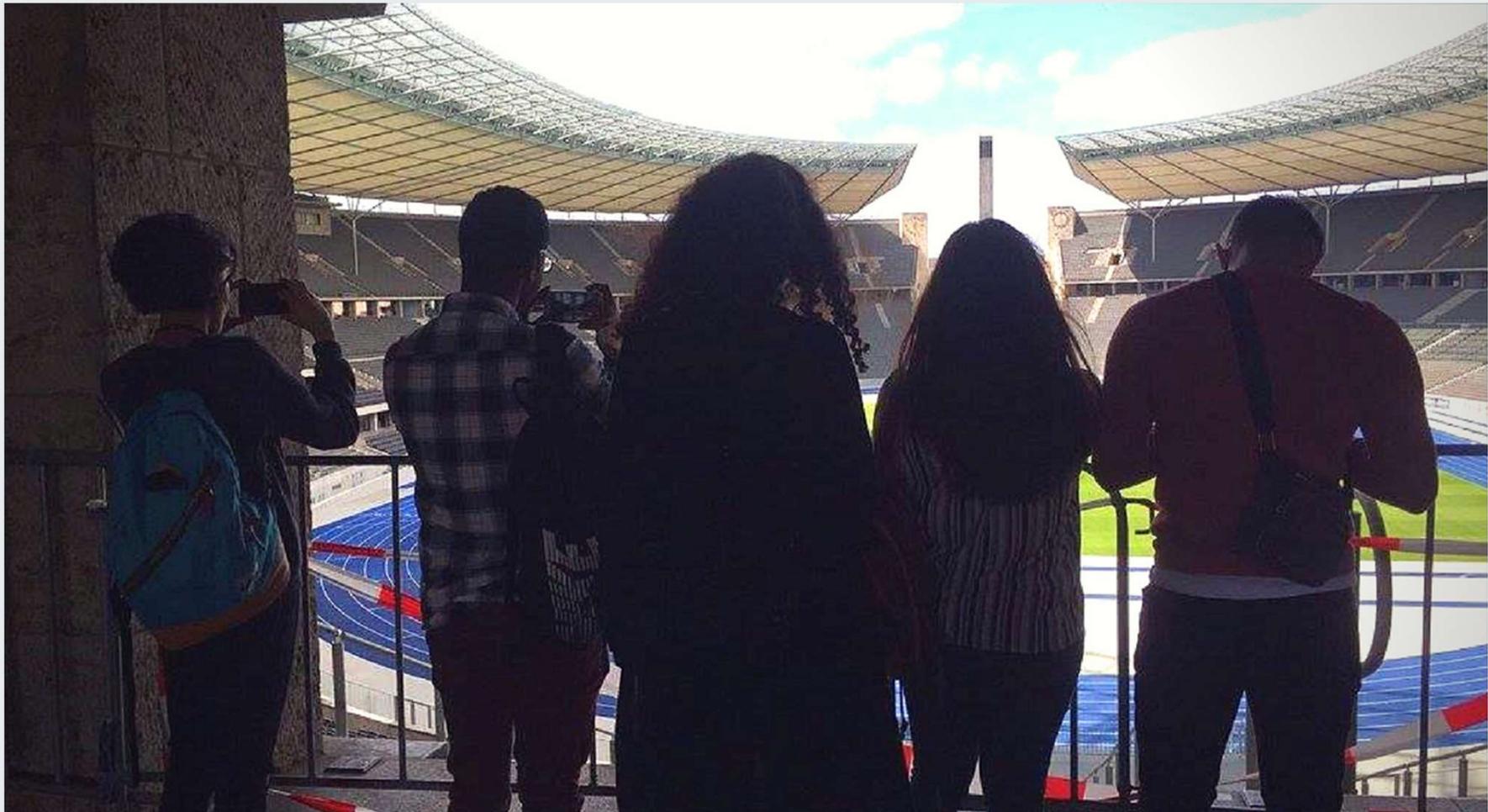
- A carefully choreographed course: a plethora of faces, foods, three hundred years of history, kings and queens, roaring twenties, crimes, wars, walls.
- Meeting eye witnesses to historical events in the place where they live is a privileged way of learning.
- Technology: The *Stolperstein* (stumbling stone) [app](#), for example, provides more background to little golden stone plaques embedded in the pavement in front of houses where victims of National Socialist terror used to live.
- The emotional tide participants, as a learning community and individuals, feel during this type of experiential learning experience is substantial.
- The learning community helps to make sense, to challenge and empower.

# Community defined by students.

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The site of the 1936 Olympic Games and an exercise in how to behave towards an impressive building built by the wrong people.

Mobile phones provide a handy 21st century coping method.



# Community with the tutor: Intellectual streaking

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“The nimble exposure of a teacher's thought processes, dilemmas, or failures - as a way of modeling both reflection-in-action and resilience... [T]aking a few risks and revealing deficits in knowledge or performance can be illuminating and valuable for all parties.”



# Intellectual streaking

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## Benefit:

- Identification with tutor and - through this - the course
- Showing relevance of topics
- Creating understanding
- Creating visibility and relatability with particular student experience

## Risk:

It needs to be contained and calculated. Class isn't teacher's therapy space.

Make it clear why teacher is saying what he\*she is saying.

It mustn't distract from the point teacher is trying to make and be about the teacher.

# Cultural exchange sessions

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## **Mexico, South Korea and Britain in dialogue**

*At the culmination of our students' learning sessions on British themes, it productively reverses the student-teacher roles and encourages them to discuss and delineate how these issues resonated at home.*

- Transferability of learning
- Creating a community amongst summer students across cultures, adding energy & excitement
- The idea of cultural exchange is central to the aims of the course and this session proved to be an invaluable venue for putting it into practice

**Building community - online**

# Online Learning Communities – why?

- Declining mental health in young people as a result of the pandemic and lockdowns
- The breakdown of formal and informal support.

*"When asked what the main pressures were during the current lockdown, respondents mostly spoke of loneliness and isolation, concerns about school, college or university work and a breakdown in routine."*

(Young Minds Autumn 2020)



Creating supportive learning communities and a sense of belonging has never been more important. **How do you do this online?**

# Challenges for online short courses

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Establishing trust and dialogue

Cultivating a sense of belonging

Peer support

How can students connect through a screen?

Interactivity

Diverse educational backgrounds

Providing a memorable 'experience'

Timezone issues for international students

Personalising content

# Some examples of best practice

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Defined cohorts – fosters a sense of belonging to a group, and provides opportunities for peer support

Ice breakers and 'getting to know each other' activities

Expectations – what do you expect of the students, and what can they expect from the course?

Class sizes – 15-25 students worked best in terms of engagement and group work. 20 an ideal number

Synchronous interactive tutorials and seminars – make the most of contact time with discussion and interaction

There is always scope to include more interactivity and group work

# Learnings from the PADILEIA project

Partnership for Digital Learning and Increased Access. A SPHEIR project, funded by UK Aid and led by King's.

The aim is to support refugee students into higher education and employment through online and blended education.



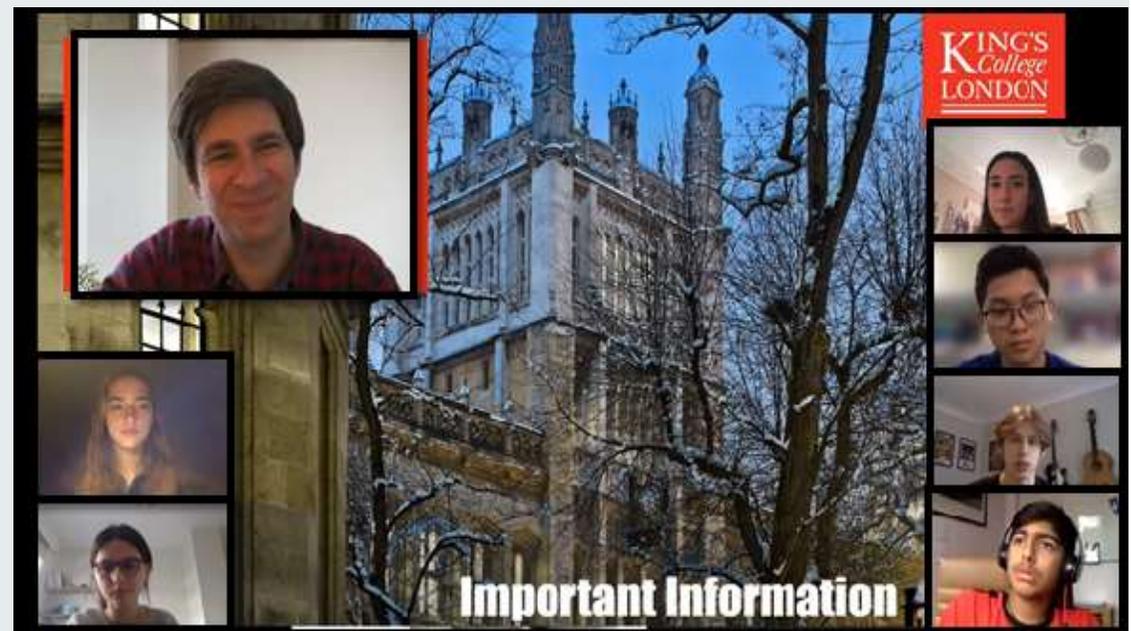
- Building confidence and resilience through community, peer support and belonging.
- Responding to students' isolation, connecting them to a global learning community
- Personalisation of learning
- Connected learning – connecting content of course with students' lives and communities.
- Providing students opportunities to tell their own stories and express themselves
- A safe online space for a defined cohort, trusted support staff, community guidelines

# Learnings: King's Summer and Winter Schools

Setting expectations – what students could expect from the course: interaction, discussion, connection. What were expected of students as **community members**?

Creating a dedicated social 'space' or virtual common room- maybe a channel, or a group chat / breakout room, where students can meet. To replace a physical meeting space.

Visual Cues: creating a sense of 'time' and 'space' to our first Winter Schools 'in London.'  
Visual design of learning platforms – personalise these for your course.



**Ideas and Questions**

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