

Coronavirus - A Personal Message

April 6, 2020

Last Thursday we sent you our action plan for continuing your education. I hope it provided clear and concise answers to most of the questions you had.

Today I am sending a follow on communication which focuses on the human side of what we are living through together.

You won't be surprised to hear that the fast moving situation we were presented with just 3 short weeks ago, meant we did not have a concrete plan for moving forward. We had of course started discussing some 'what if' scenarios but the speed of those 'what ifs' turning into a new reality took most of the world by surprise and sadly that also included us.

Our first response was to simply wait for the lockdown to end in order to resume our normal mode of operation (apart from 3rd year and MA students for whom we could quickly see a new way forward). Once it became apparent that many of our students had relocated back to their home countries we quickly moved to a new position. This position now seems to be common across all university education including institutions delivering the same creative subject areas that are our primary focus.

I would like to be completely transparent with you at this point. Some of our team were very sensitive to the situation and in the early part of this crisis saw not only how things might evolve but also how capable we might be of dealing with that evolution. Others including myself were initially a little more resistant to that idea. Like all of you who are with us, I and the whole team are passionate about our 'real world' approach to learning. We love our creative community and we love seeing students benefiting from the extensive facilities that we have.

However we have simply had to recognise (along with the rest of the world's educational institutions) that for the time being we face a new reality. The only sensible way forward is one which means delivering our courses in a way appropriate to that new reality. At dBs we are hoping to use this not just to complete your semesters and provide you with your qualifications but also to discover new ways of working which allow us to open up your learning in ways we may not have otherwise encountered. I fully expect we will choose to keep many of these new processes in our learning toolkit long after this crisis is over.

I have to let you know that the whole team have been beyond magnificent in their response to this new paradigm. They are all working very hard to ensure that we are prepared for this new type of delivery when we reopen after the Easter break. It has been deeply heartwarming for me to see just how strong this team is, how good they are

at pulling together in an adverse situation and how well equipped they are to deal with that situation and make it into something positive.

I have also been absolutely moved by you, our courageous students, who have quickly moved to an inclusive and mature understanding of the predicament that we all find ourselves in. Thank you for this understanding from which we will all benefit. At the same time I totally understand those of you who are finding this change more difficult to adapt to. We all move through these processes in different ways and the most important thing is that we all respect the fact that we process things differently in order to move forward.

Some of you will still have unanswered questions about the new proposals whilst others may still be searching for greater clarity concerning their own situations. Please submit them on the form we sent to you and we will reply as soon as possible. Most of them will be relevant to everyone in the community so this will be published in the form of an FAQ.

Lastly, I'd like you to know that although we are having to make some changes to deal with the new world we temporarily find ourselves in, we remain committed to the same values, the same human approach and the same passion for building an international creative learning community that we always have.

We look forward to welcoming you all back into the wonderful physicality of our real world space at the Fhaus as soon as we are able. In advance of that I hope to see some of you at our next meet up after Easter.

Thank you again for the understanding and patience you have shown during these challenging times.

David Louis Puttick
Catalyst Founder