

Cultivating Student Led Tutorials

The effects of a flipped online classroom

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Objective:

To create an **online, tutor free, active learning** environment where students feel at ease to discuss and work on skill-based problems together.

Background:

Open University tutorials are built on the premise that students need a space to discuss and clarify module content. Therefore within these online tutorials it is important to create opportunities for active peer learning. However our main caveat is that despite tutors' best efforts tutorials often regress into didactic lectures with little student input (Butler et al, 2018).


Methodology:

Our attention was focused on creating a comfortable tutor free place in an online breakout out room that allowed students to interact. In a flipped classroom model, we used **elements of fun** and then **challenging tasks** to hone module skills, prepare students for their assignments, and encourage greater student engagement.

Introductory activities – to create a relaxed space conducive to learning

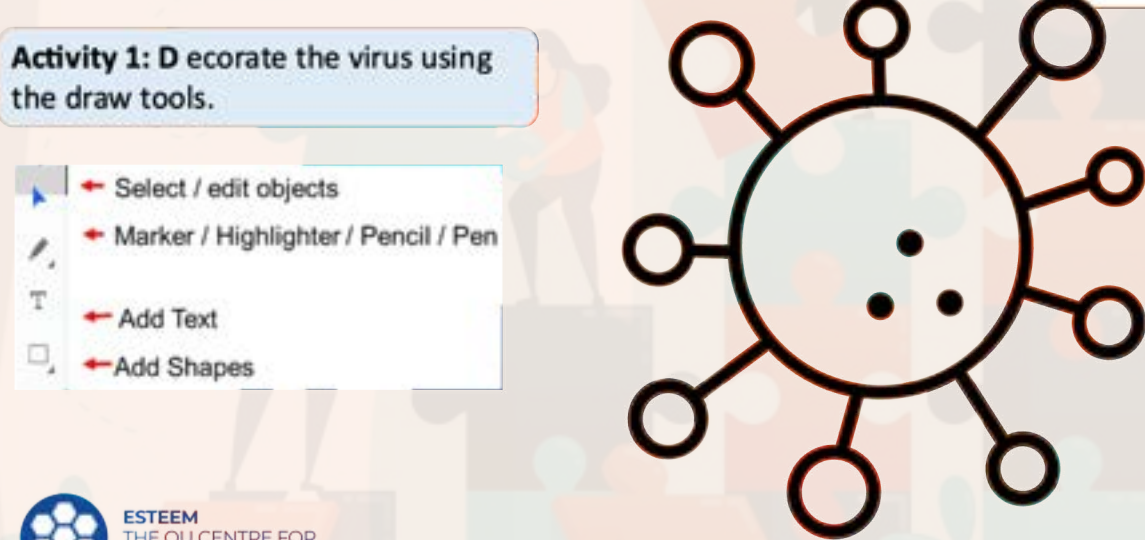
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Activity 3: Dingbats - chemical elements



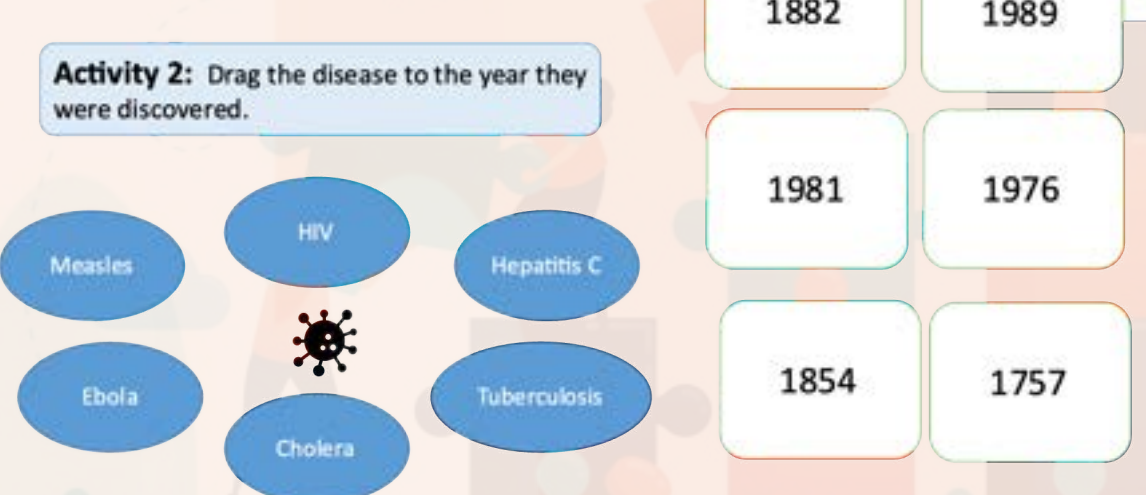
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Activity 1: Decorate the virus using the draw tools.



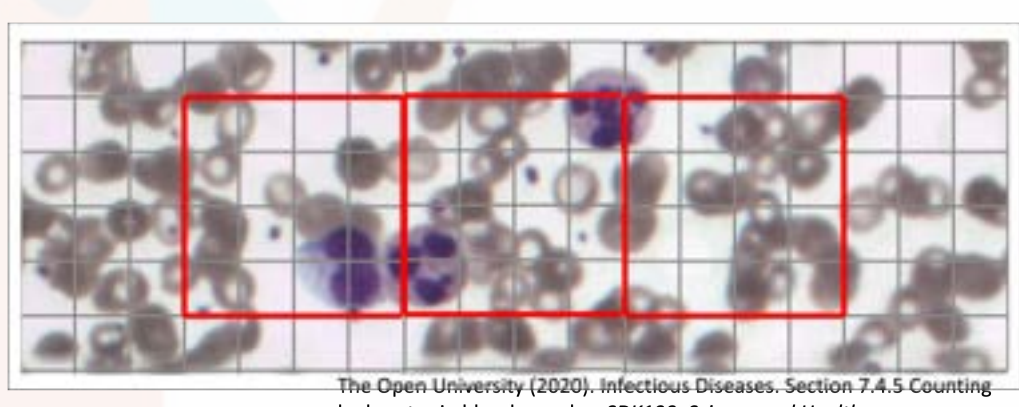
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Activity 2: Drag the disease to the year they were discovered.

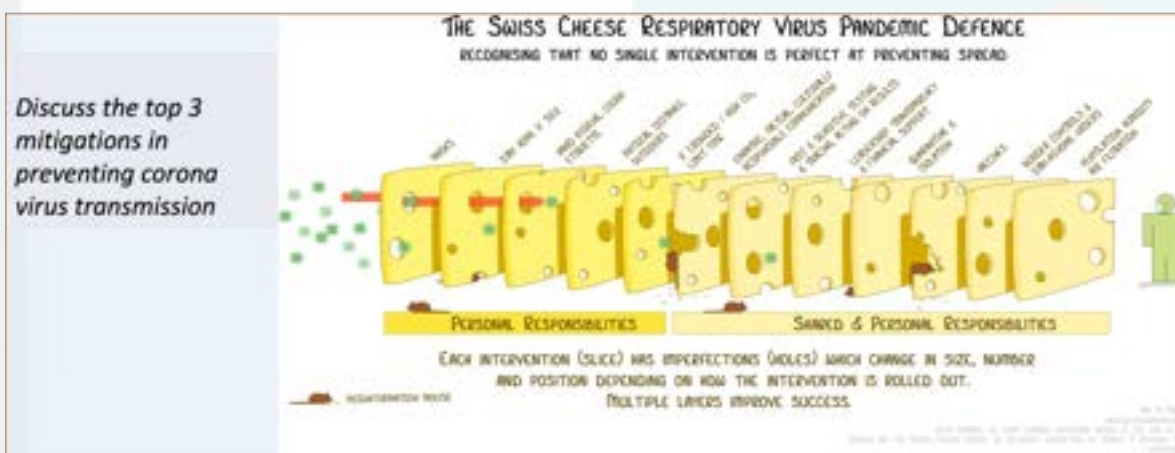


Interactive tasks – to stimulate effective learning

Question on the Digital Microscope. Count the number of leukocytes in each red square.




Question on essay writing. Plan an essay with an introduction, 3 paragraphs and a conclusion.



Question on Investigations: Identify the independent variable and then the dependent variable. Write a hypothesis for the following research question.

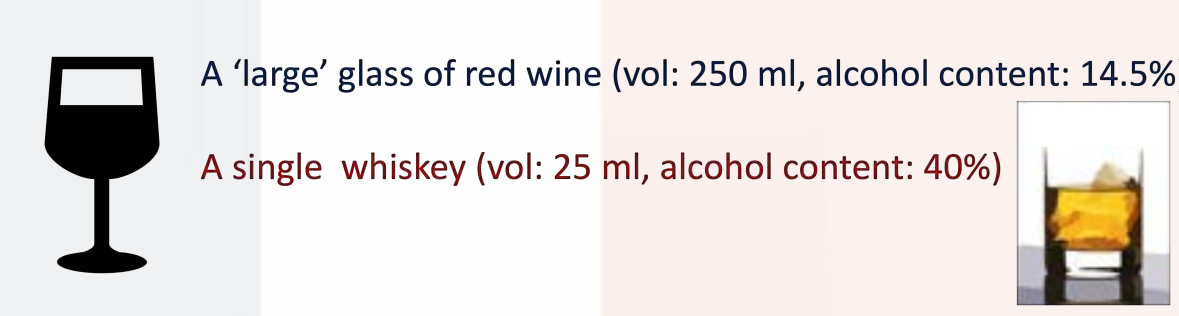
Does day length affect the number of eggs laid by a chicken?



Data Collection:

1. A post tutorial online survey
2. One to one interviews
3. An end of module survey

Question on % alcohol calculation
Calculate how many units of alcohol each drink contains (express answer to the nearest whole number).



Question on Table Design. Does this table answer the question set? Use the draw tools to show any improvements.

QUESTION Record the distance you walked your dog over a 3 day period. Record the total number of km walked per day and the overall total.

	Distance walked	Off lead or on lead	Footpath or across
Wed 9am 7pm	3km 1km	on lead	footpath
Thurs 9am 8pm	1km 5km 1km	Off lead	Grass
Friday		Off and on lead	Grass & footpath
Total distance	11km		

Findings:

1. **86%** rated student led breakout rooms as beneficial in developing skills.
2. The majority of students enjoyed the peer led tasks.
3. The task design needed to be relevant to their study.
4. A good tutor-student relationship was essential.
5. Fun and enjoyment was highly rated.

Recommendations:

1. Invest **time** in building a good tutor group community.
2. Provide some tutor free space (breakout rooms) with **relevant activities** in your tutorials.
3. Integrate **fun** into the tutorial, so learning is perceived as enjoyable.
4. Avoid packing everything into a tutorial and **allow** wriggle room for questions, learning from mistakes etc.
5. Appreciate how students perceive their tutor is important to their progress – be **supportive and encouraging**.
6. Know tutor free spaces have potential across **all disciplines**.

Student quotes

'With the tutor you might be worried about looking foolish but because you're just among other students it's okay.'

'When another student explains, it offers new insight.'

'I think what really surprises me is how quickly complete strangers can actually work together constructively to arrive at answers.'

'The breakout rooms helped by practising the technique and then comparing with the rest.'

'I came into the course not very confident...and by the end I was getting 96% in my TMAs (assignments).'

'If we got it wrong... we would help each other out.'

'In small breakout room groups (we shared) calculations which was highly participative and engaging.'

Impact:

Developing a friendly, non-threatening, online community where students are confident and comfortable to answer questions and solve problems will lay the foundation for:

- **Increased engagement,**
- **Enhanced confidence,**
- **Improved performance.**