UHI
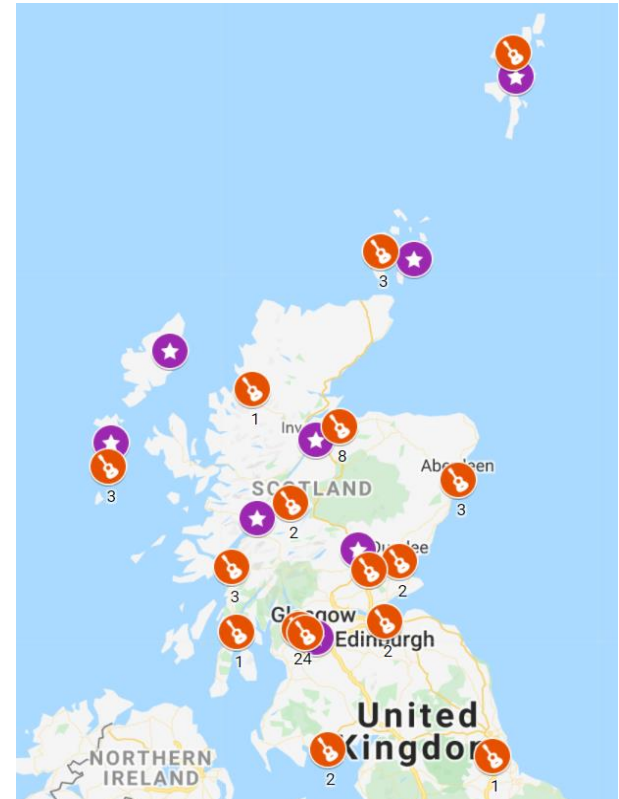
Building Effective Learning communities

BA (Hons) Applied Music case study

"From the very first day, I have felt like I had a place within the uni group and, along with learning about the course content, came an immense sense of belonging"

OpenLearn create

Definitions

Effective: successful in producing desired or intended result

Learning communities: – a cohort of students who share common academic goals.

Challenges

What are the challenges to consider when delivering to and supporting a cohort of students in the UHI context?

Distributed, online, face to face

- Isolation – physical, social – Scottish Rural context

- Social cohesion and sense of community within the course

- Engagement – including the use of technology

- Wellbeing – mental (stressors include employment uncertainty, academic stress, family, finance)

- Nurturing a 'student experience' in a distributed online environment

NSS

In the National Student Survey students are asked to rate their experience of

- Teaching on course
- Learning opportunities
- Assessment and feedback
- Academic support
- Organisation and management
- Learning resources
- Learning community
- Student voice

These are all interconnected

Promoting Connection
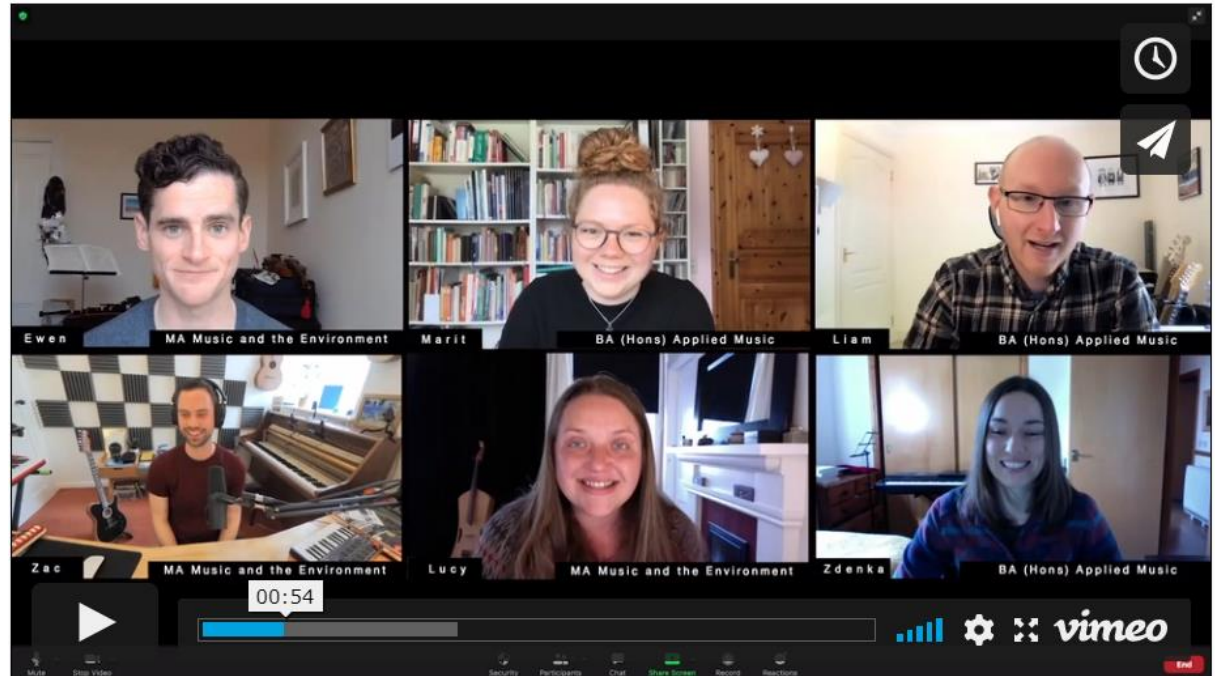
Curriculum design

Engagement with wider UHI initiatives

Socially
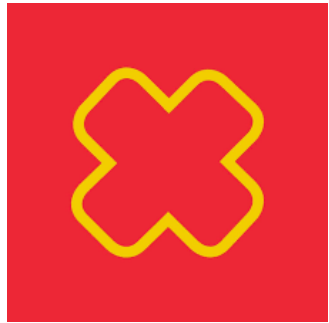
Strengthening communication, support and reflection

Academic: Curriculum Design

Collaboration

Partnerships

Connecting to Wider UHI initiatives

Social Connections

Desert Island Discs

Connecting by strengthening communication, support and reflection

Five Ways to Wellbeing

Connect...
Be active...
Take notice...
Keep learning...
Give...

Student Voice

- "I felt part of a community in which I was encouraged to keep challenging myself and my peers so that we improved together"

- "The community of this course has felt like a family and especially during the pandemic, this was essential to get through it"

- "The staff have really made the course an incredible experience - becoming friends and peers as well as academic mentors".

- "I really struggled last year; however, all the staff were there for me when I needed them the most. I felt accepted and cared for personally and academically which has really shaped who I am today"

- "the students and staff have adapted to the impact of the global pandemic almost seamlessly. Missing the creative inspiration generated when musicians congregate in person, but, learning new skills in performing, recording and collaborating to reach similar goals".

.

Outcomes and Impact

- Retention rates and progression rates at their highest on programme
- Attainment –over 90% of students achieved a 1st or upper 2nd class awards
- Development of leadership and collaboration skills
- Confidence and connectedness – employer engagement and new placements
- 100% in the National Student Survey – 3 consecutive years
- Collaborative Award in Teaching Excellence 2021
- Case study used by the Open University in training materials <u>OLCreate: University of the Highlands and Islands: About this programme (open.edu)</u>

UHI

anna.stevenson@uhi.ac.uk

Thanks
Mòran-taing