

MAINTAINING CONNECTION DURING COVID-19 REMOTE DELIVERY OF TEACHING BY USING A LEARNING JOURNAL

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Hallmarks of earth sciences courses include a strong cohort experience and strong connections between students and staff; both are often developed and enhanced by field work and generally smaller class groups. Student engagement and connection was one of many issues that I was concerned about as our teaching and learning changed so dramatically in response to COVID-19 restrictions. Given the importance of reflection for both learning and wellbeing, I wanted to provide a structure and some quiet moments for students. I developed a weekly learning journal to provide a place for students to document their process, their challenges and their successes. The journal included course-related questions for reflection on learning and to encourage the making of connections as the course progressed. There was also at least one wellbeing question, and one light-hearted question (e.g., translate "*I am a geologist*" into three different languages). To incentivise submission, the exercise was 10% of the subject mark. I completed the same journal questions and posted my journals for students to read. The completion rate across two subjects (n = 39, total possible submissions = 429) was 94%. Feedback was very positive and I will retain the learning journal when face-to-face classes return.

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