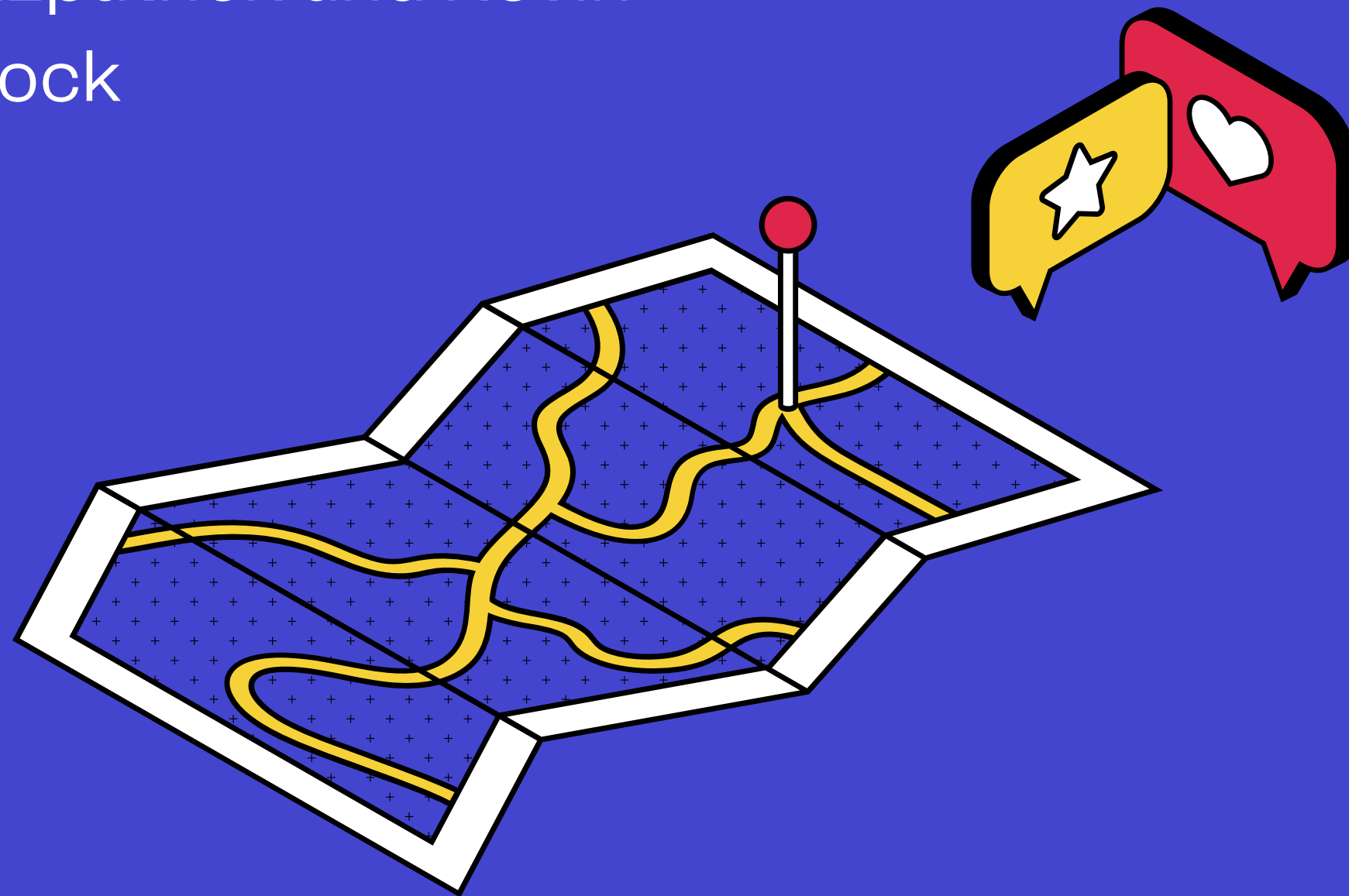


# SHAPING THE FUTURE WITH STUDENTS AS PARTNERS

Lorna Fitzpatrick and Kevin  
McStravock



**Union of Students in Ireland**  
*Aontas na Mac Léinn in Éirinn*

# STUDENT REPRESENTATION DURING COVID-19

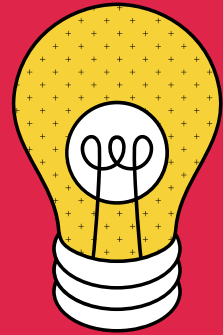
## **National:**

- COVID-19 TES Steering Group
- Student & Learner Wellbeing and Engagement Working Group

## **Institutional:**

- Institutional Committees
- COVID-19 Specific Committees





# KEY LEARNINGS FROM COVID-19

## **Important to include the student perspective in all decision-making**

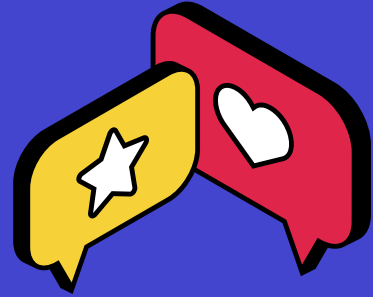
Where decisions are made in a vacuum, this will inevitably cause frustration for students.

## **Effective representation structures are key**

Important to consider how students are represented at every level of decision-making right down to course level.

## **Consider mechanisms for inclusivity**

Retaining some element of online going forward for meetings and training may facilitate participation of wider cohorts.



## The virtual pivot

Created challenges for everybody.

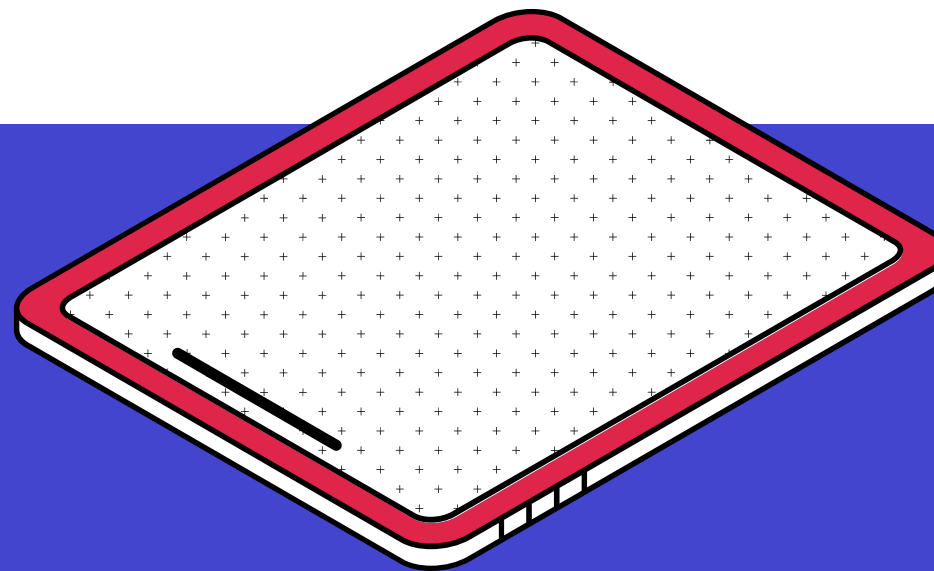
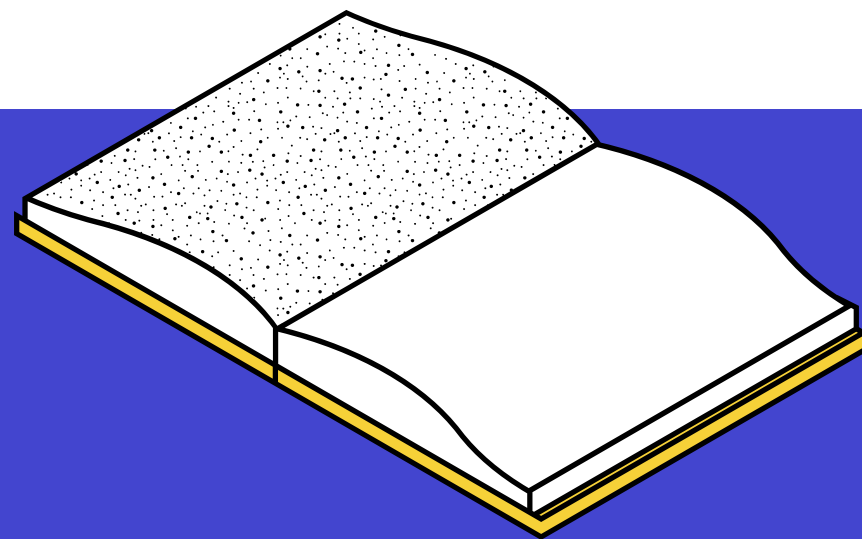
Also created opportunities to reflect on traditional approaches to engagement pre-COVID.

Lots of feedback to work with.



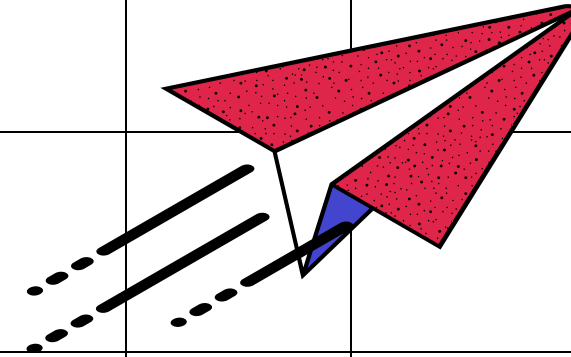
# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT

- Less conducive to informal interactions, which are highly valued and sought after by learners (MSU, 2020; USI, 2020; UCCSU, 2020)
- Particularly challenging for new students with no prior experience on campus.
- Pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities: need to consider how they can be addressed in the post COVID-19 learning environment.
- Not about returning to the status quo.

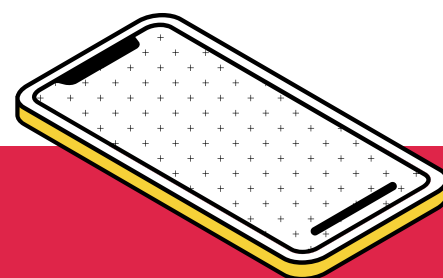


# SLWE CONSIDERATIONS

- **Need to focus on second year experience next year also: reorientation programmes.**
- **Peer Supports highly valuable and should be resourced going forward.**
- **Informal student activity highly importance for sense of belonging – need to support Students' Unions and clubs/societies.**
- **Support for Student Engagement initiatives, developed between staff and students.**



# STUDENT ENGAGEMENT GOING FORWARD



## **Engage with existing data**

Consider the outputs from Student Survey.ie, institutional surveys, existing datasets (USI COVID-19 Survey, 2020), in partnership.

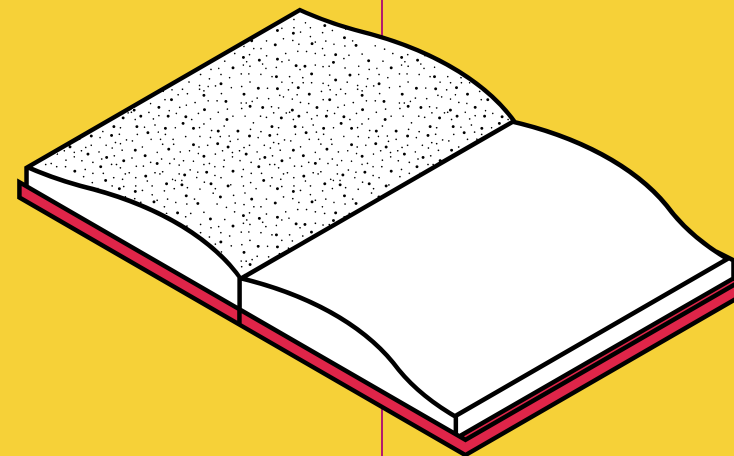
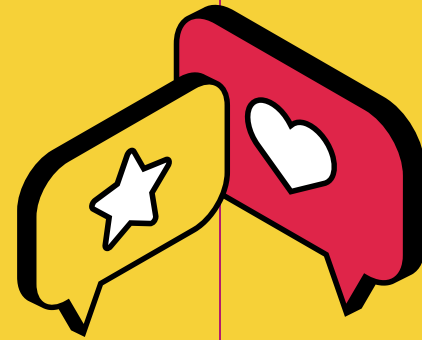
## **Review QA structures**

Review representation structures and aim to address gaps. Are students involved in Internal QA panels? If not, why not?

## **How can you support student representation?**

Representation needs to be institutionally supported and student led – partnership is core to this.

**QUESTIONS?  
COMMENTS?**



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