

Manifesto for Teaching Online * Distance is a positive principle, not a deficit. Online can be the privileged mode. * The possibility of the 'online version' is overstated. The best online courses are born digital. * By redefining connection we find we can make eye contact online. * 'Best practice' is a totalising term blind to context – there are many ways to get it right. * Every course design is philosophy and belief in action. * The aesthetics of online course design are too readily neglected: courses that are fair of (inter)face are better places to teach and learn in. * Online courses are prone to cultures of surveillance: our visibility to each other is a pedagogical and ethical issue. * Text is being toppled as the only mode that matters in academic writing. * Visual and hypertextual representations allow arguments to emerge, rather than be stated. * New forms of writing make assessors work harder: they remind us that assessment is an act of interpretation. * Feedback can be digested, worked with, created from. In the absence of this, it is just 'response'. * Assessment strategies can be designed to allow for the possibility of resistance. * A routine of plagiarism detection structures-in a relation of distrust. * Assessment is a creative crisis as much as it is a statement of knowledge. * Place is differently, not less, important online. * Closed online spaces limit the educational power of the network. * Online spaces can be permeable and flexible, letting networks and flows replace boundaries. * Course processes are held in a tension between randomness and intentionality. * Online teaching should not be downgraded into 'facilitation'. * Community and contact drive good online learning. * **Written by teachers and researchers in online education. University of Edinburgh MSc in E-learning 2011**

*** This document is intended to stimulate ideas about creative online teaching. It is written by teachers and researchers in the field of online education, and attempts to re-think some of the orthodoxies and unexamined truisms surrounding the field. The manifesto is informed by theory, research and practice, but positions itself deliberately outside the writing genres associated with these. It is the result of a research project but in its form attempts an alternative version of how we might understand research output. Each point is deliberately interpretable – the manifesto is both a contingent statement of intent and a starting point for (re)thinking what online education might be. * For more about the project which generated the manifesto, please see: www.education.ed.ac.uk/swop/**