

Barriers: Representative Quotes

Across All Levels	<p>“The main thing is time. Most people are working over and above their hours anyway and, you know, it's full time just running your course as you've run it for the last 15 years... When {academics} do have spare time, they put it into writing a paper or flossing up a lecture...”</p> <p>“There's a lot of time pressure, there's a lot of teaching pressure, we're not highly staffed, we have quite high teaching loads. That physical day-to-day grind of doing all the teaching and all the marking, takes away any enthusiasm you may have for building {resilience} skills, building your creative thinking and building your problem solving...”</p> <p>“{We are} increasingly in this kind of a rapid cycle where the next deadline is next week, ‘I must do that’. And then next deadline is the week after that, ‘Must do that’. So, we need to have time to reflect and to identify long-term objectives, and then restructure and plan. We basically always fall victim to short-term {thinking}. There's always something on the go.”</p> <p>“I think there would need to be virtually universal uptake by everybody within the school saying ‘Yeah this is a good idea’ ... So we must have three or four senior people in various positions, so they’re connected to the university and there's a very strong commitment to try and be on the same page with the university, and it with us... If you don't have a {Vice Chancellor} that's interested in this, it's not going to go anywhere”</p> <p>“We don't do a very good job of really looking after our students. That small group experience is not an expectation, and so, we kind of lose touch. And then all of a sudden if we end up in a situation such as an earthquake, how do we know who these students even are half the time? I mean I'm only dealing with 250, not the thousand that others are dealing with.”</p>
Individual-level	<p>“The last thing you want is somebody who is inflexible, prone to panic at the slightest change, because that also spreads through the rest of the organisation, and it's not conducive to coming up with practical, even if it's just practical in the short-term, solutions.”</p> <p>“Universities seem to attract a type of person who is absolutely determined to succeed on their own without any help from anybody else. If there's anything that threatens this self-image, it's shunned, and even if it isn't, a person who's succeeded that far and passed that many barriers and gotten this many degrees, and, you know, and beat a hundred other competitors for a tenure tracked job or whatever, they don't know how to ask for help... They don't see themselves as people who need it. And if they admit to themselves they need help, they probably don't know how to get it very effectively.”</p> <p>“It's actually quite difficult for the School to set a policy on how we will deliver a course, because then everyone will get up in arms about academic freedom. And there's good reasons for academic freedom, but there are certain ways in which the phrase ‘academic freedom’ is used which have got absolutely nothing to do with academic freedom. Because academic freedom does tend to be, ‘I want to do something this way’ - academic freedom. When that's not actually the point of academic freedom ... when in fact academic freedom was developed for other reasons than ‘I don't want to record my lecture’.”</p> <p>“You have to be motivated enough to want to get out of your house ... It's not just ‘Here's {points to the table} a disaster’; your disaster's happening at home too. It's everyone around you, so you have to have enough commitment to the institution to want to get out of your own disaster and come and deal with their disaster... That would be the difference between you actually coming in here and doing something, and doing the pastoral care stuff and seeing the students ... compared to sitting at home and talking to a webcam for five minutes and then ‘checking out’ because that's a very different sort of approach.”</p> <p>“Thinking about how am I going to use digital technology to enhance my teaching feels like yet another sort of burden to get on top of. And, you know, it can be quite time consuming, though actually in the end most of the time it's not very time consuming at all, but it seems like it in advance, you think ‘Oh my God I've got to go to a 2-hour training session on this new system and I'd rather not do that’.”</p> <p>“{I think} having a checklist of ‘Have you thought about this?’, ‘How you would respond to this?’, ‘Have you considered this?’. So that at any point the academic could be questioned... and that response can be different from School to School or course to course. But, at least mandating the fact that they have thought about it and they've got a response.”</p>
School-level	<p>“I think an important part comes out of the sharing of resources, the bringing together of what we're doing and saying ‘We're in this together’ in a shared common activity of teaching within our programme, as opposed to me just teaching my course... Of course, it varies from individual to individual and some people kind of wholeheartedly see it as a collaborative activity whereas others will say, ‘Well, I want to teach this course’ and ‘I want to teach it this way’ and ‘I don't really care what you’re telling me, because that's what I think a good academic is.’ I’m doing it like this.’ ... and in fact, what you’re doing is part of a greater collective effort...”</p> <p>“I think it's really just the lack of a plan... Honestly, if it all happened tomorrow I don't think that -- I don't feel that confident. I mean I wouldn't know what to do at this point, and like I've got 800 people in my class.”</p> <p>“I could be okay to make myself completely resilient and be able to do my job anywhere depending on the situation, but my role is so interdependent on others. In fact, you know, everyone from up to the senior leadership team through to the students. And to be fully resilient then that resilience needs to be spread across to our collaborators we work with as well... You have co-teaching across programmes and courses, and if one person changes their teaching to be a resilient style of teaching, the next week the students might be in the case where they're in the opposite situation... But it's only some of the people's priority, not everyone.”</p> <p>“I think one thing I thought about with this is just the sheer number of staff and the students in the ‘chain’. We've got a very much -- I was going to say rotating door policy, but our teaching assistants, for example, they have an awful lot of responsibility for the teaching. I don't think we've thought about, for those people, what would it mean in an emergency? Because we sort of have this idea, you know, there'll be the academic, and the course coordinator will be able to sit down and rethink about some way of doing these things, but actually, those teaching assistants are the ones who actually run everything, in terms of the lab teaching... It means that the skills that the teaching assistants, tutors, coordinators, and other people involved in that course have, are completely different from {the lecturers}, and the way that's run is really different, so it could be very hard for someone to pick up some of those courses and be able to actually implement them.”</p> <p>“Depending on the school that you're in, all your colleagues could be teaching in the same way... There's a whole range of teaching within the Schools which means that you don't necessarily know what teaching methods are appropriate or inappropriate for your colleagues. And there needs to be recognition that there's not a one-size-fits-all approach.”</p> <p>“I did a massive overhaul of {my course}, the whole learning design, and it was a lot of work. And you get zero credit or recognition for it as far as the university is concerned your course is running... I was less stressed and the students were happier but it doesn't earn you anything.”</p>

Institutional-level

“You need to have informed, persuasive leadership that identifies preparedness as a very important goal and then enlists academic staff and support staff in the task of figuring out the best ways to be resilient and then getting on with it... The chief barrier is if you don't have enlightened, persuasive leadership, if you don't have that at a department or school level, if you don't have it at the higher university level then it's not going to go anywhere because it's not a priority”

“I realised that all my stuff's online, but if the quake hits and the infrastructure goes down, all my videos are who knows where and everyone is going to be wanting to access them. We need a way to somehow automate {this process} so that all of those lectures got automatically downloaded and put on a hard drive... every single academic's going to want to get access to {their videos} but {our technology staff} doesn't have the capacity yet to help everyone.”

“There's a high expectation that staff-to-staff and staff-to student interaction takes place in a physical space during office hours on campus. And so, we have that kind of pressure to use the physical space as our core -- and there's a culture of it, as a core -- as an individual as how we work at {our institution}.”

“So, implicitly for every lecture you give there is some nominal and implied administrative and redevelopment 'load' that goes with that... If you give people 'buy-out' then the first thing they're want to going to do is catch up with their research. I mean it's really hard to put people onto that task, because they're not just teaching staff so they -- so I would think actually some of it would be nice if there was dedicated -- more obvious dedicated support, teaching support.”

“I think one of the barriers is not having extrinsic motivation to make {resilience} higher up the list. Like there's no reward for developing the skills that make you resilient. There's no incentives other than you probably should do it.”

“I feel like there is a huge lack of a collective community, a sense of cohesion in the University, as a whole. I feel like a sense of community in a crisis situation would be essential. So, we would need, not only clear communication from upper administration, but they need to begin fostering a sense of community so that we are actually open to receiving their communication. ”

“It's just so easy for people to get lost in this place. And if we had a better sense of community then when something like this happens... You know, making sure that {students aren't} lost. The problem is that we do everything course by course. We all do our own bit with our students. There's not a lot of sort of degree-level community building or even programme-level, it's all you know 'These are my students. I will do this.' And then somebody else is doing the same thing trying to keep in touch with them. So there needs to be a better framework, I suppose, for the way that students are incorporated into community.”

“I think we are generally very bad at communication with our students... it says that the academic will be responsible for communicating with all of their students, fine. But how are we saying they're going to do that? What have we put in place such that that's possible or easy? Or do we just expect the academics to have thought about that themselves?... That would vary from course to course which is hard on the students ... We've talked about you know, email blurts or Facebook pages, but I don't know that there's necessarily any one channel because different students will engage with different tools. But, whether we need to create a one channel that everybody is aware of, or designate two or three to say these are the options you've got... Whatever the tools selected are, it's just someone needs to make that decision to say these are our channels. 'This is our approach'”