

# Enhancing Innovations through Distance-Learning Studio: The Sociological Institutionalism Perspective

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## Abstract

Amidst the COVID-19 outbreak and its mobility restrictions around the Globe, academic institutions have been seeking innovations to organise distance learning activities. Distance-learning studio emerges as an alternative that offers a project and teamwork-based method to learn specific courses using online platforms. Its flexibility and borderless characteristics have promoted various academic collaborations beyond any geographical boundaries, which encourage mutual learning process and knowledge enrichment. This article discusses the innovation brought by distance-learning studio through the case of “the Inclusive City Planning”, a pilot studio initiated by the collaboration between University of College London, in the United Kingdom, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, and Kotakita, in Indonesia. Drawing upon the sociological institutionalism viewpoint, we assessed various activities through which different values, cultures, and practices of the participating students were consolidated and transformed into useful knowledge and skills. We applied the institutional capacity framework to highlight some key achievements gained by the students, whereby data were collected through observations and assessments of the students’ outputs, discussions, and course journals. Our findings showed that the project has proven to be a reliable distance-learning platform, which helped students in gaining broader contextual knowledge as well as teamwork skills within cross-boundary culture and ethics.

## Keywords

Innovation, Distance-Learning Studio, Collaborative Planning, Sociological Institutionalism

## 1. Introduction

Amidst the COVID-19 outbreak around the Globe, educational services in many cities have been affected by temporary closures and service limitations. Academic institutions are developing various distance learning methods as a counter-solution. Distance-learning studio emerges as an alternative that offers a project and teamwork-based method to learn specific courses using online platforms. This method offers a more comprehensive lesson for the students, including cognitive, social, verbal, and solitary skills (Ekblaw, 2016).

The attempts of academic institutions to apply distance-learning studio are challenged by financial and technical constraints. Academic institutions are required to have large investments towards updated-technology computers, stable internet connections, as well as reliable software licenses and capacity building programmes for the tutors and students. Nevertheless, all of these requirements have to be provided by many academic institutions during their difficult periods, following the reduction of new enrolled students, delay in existing student payments, and suspension of financial supports from the government in this pandemic situation (Ahlburg, 2020).

Many universities engaged their partner universities to organise distance-learning studio through collaborative efforts. Collaborative, in this regard, refers to sharing resources to run programmes or activities, which include financial, technical, and human resources, proportionally, between two or more agencies (Ekblaw, 2016; Hinkelman & Gruba, 2012; Watson, 2014). Collaborations in educational services provide benefits in terms of cost reduction, technical innovation, and knowledge enrichment for the member universities. It also offers learning activities with no-boundary, seamless, and flexibility (Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000). All of these ensure innovative learning activities, which

emphasise the quality of knowledge production and sharing based upon the interactions of multiple actors and their culture, values, and practices, and finally contribute to the promotion of broader and more innovative knowledge development (Brookfield, 2017; Hinkelman & Gruba, 2012).

This article discusses the case of “the Inclusive City Planning”, a pilot project studio initiated by the University of College London, in the United Kingdom, in collaboration with its foreign partners, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, and Kotakita, in Indonesia. The studio was held in January-Juni 2021 and was fully organised through distance-learning method due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Amidst the time, culture, language, and contextual differences, we discussed the quality and benefits of the collaborative distance-learning studio. Drawing upon the sociological institutionalism viewpoint, we assessed various activities through which different values, cultures, and practices of the participating students were consolidated and transformed into useful knowledge and skills. We applied the institutional capacity framework to highlight some key achievements gained by the students, whereby data and information were collected through observations and assessments of the students’ outputs, discussions, and course journals. Our findings showed that the project has proven to be a reliable distance-learning platform, which helped students in gaining broader contextual knowledge as well as teamwork skills within cross-boundary culture and ethics.

## 2. Literature Review

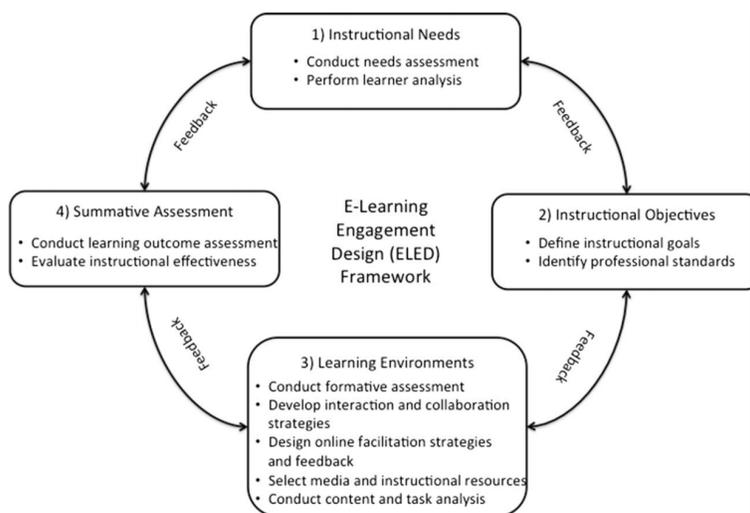
Distance-learning is a remote technique to engage students from different location to study together using online platforms (Azhari & Fajri, 2021; Czerkowski & Lyman, 2016). This approach requires stable internet and software advancement. Its characteristics offer no-boundary, seamless, efficiency, and flexibility (Maznevski & Chudoba, 2000). Distance learning allows multiple actors that are previously limited to join, meet, and engage in studying circumstances to be able to gather and build learning cooperation and connection beyond any geographical and time limitations, and this results broader knowledge, more updated information, and a great variety of lesson learned (Brookfield, 2017; Hinkelman & Gruba, 2012).

Apart from its flexibility and efficiency, distance-learning method has been concerned due to a number of reasons, including less interactive, difficult to control, and monotone (Ojetunde, Bamigbala, & Oyegoke, 2020). Literature explained that distance learning would not be equally ideal in all places, especially without sufficient training, infrastructure, and regulatory framework (Azhari & Fajri, 2021). Some believe that the immediate uses of distance learning will result in poor outcomes (Li & Lalani, 2020). Low quality distance learning activities could potentially leave millions of students facing academic and mental quality concerns, including psychological, behavioral, and disciplinary decreases (Ojetunde et al., 2020). Nevertheless, the attempts to explore innovations in distance learning are challenged by financial and technical constraints, following the reduction of new enrolled students, delay in existing student payments, and suspension of financial supports from the government, especially during this pandemic situation (Ahlburg, 2020).

Distance-learning studio is an expansion of traditional distance-learning method, which focuses on project and teamwork activities. Its main learning features include problem solving, methodological practicality, and theoretical examination, conducted together within a group (see **Figure 1**). In comparison to traditional online-class activities, distance-learning studio provides stronger problem based learning, which encourages students to be interactive, focused, experimental, critical, and constructive in creating solutions (Burroughs, Brocato, & Franz, 2009). Its approaches encourage students to improve both cognitive, social, verbal, and solitary skills (Ekblaw, 2016).

Considering its complex elements and comprehensive approaches, many undergraduate programmes in universities apply distance-learning studio with a large academic credit compensation and to be presented within final four semesters (Bender & Vredevoogd, 2006). In urban planning or architecture programmes, for instance, distance-learning studio may be fitted to engage students in advance courses, such as urban design and plan making courses, which envisage the role of teamwork in theoretical examination, problem identification, data collection, analytical methods (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001). However, the key challenges of distance-learning studio are conflicts, language and communication barriers, as well as knowledge and skills, culture, values, and ethics inequality and differences, which may be occurred during the learning interactions (Burroughs et al., 2009).

Collaborative distance-learning studio combines collaborative and distance learning approaches as the core of innovation (Burroughs et al., 2009). Collaborative approach refers to various attempts to work together in solving issues or achieving specific targets, which are conducted through negotiations, consensus-making, risk-sharing, and mutual learning processes (Innes, 2016). Adopting collaborative approaches in learning activities promotes student's soft-skills that are unable to be offered by mainstream in-class learning, including negotiation, consensus-making, respecting and learning from others, commitment, and responsibility skills (Healey, 1997; Possebom, 2019; Purcell, 2009). Through collaborative approach, students engaged in distance-learning studio will learn towards interactive mutual-learning processes that relies upon all class members and their opinions, thoughts, and preferences, based on their individual culture, values, and practices (Blanchet-Cohen, 2015; Burroughs et al., 2009). Collaborative distance-learning studio applies similar instruments that are usually adopted in basic collaborative practices, such as dialogues, round-table, focus group discussions, and interactive meetings (Innes & Booher, 2010).



**Figure 1.** The E-Learning Engagement Design (ELED) as the Principle of Collaborative Distance Learning Studio (Czerkowski & Lyman, 2016, p.3)

### 3. Methods

Sociological institutionalism was used as the theoretical underpinning to guide our analytical framework for the assessment of quality and benefits of distance-learning studio. Sociological institutionalism is a branch of the institutionalism theories that focuses on explaining a phenomenon based on its transformations, which are reshaped through the interactions of various internal and external as well as formal and informal driving factors (Rahayu, Woltjer, & Firman, 2019). Amongst those play an important role are actors and their political and power dynamics (Andini & Djunaedi, 2019) and socio-cultural levels (Harsanto & Permana, 2020).

Through the mindset of sociological institutionalism, the success and fail of a collaborative distance-learning studio, as the main object of this paper, is assessed from two sides, an internal institution and its formal rules and procedures that provide frameworks and contexts for students' behaviours, and at the same time, external institutions which provide influences through informal norms, values, and culture that indirectly drive students to act in accordance with the common rules of the game (Lowndes, 2009).

This paper applies an analytical framework that is largely influenced by the sociological institutionalism viewpoint, namely, the institutional capacity framework. The framework was originally proposed by De Magalhaes et al (2002) as a critical thinking to assess the institutional capacity improvement of a collaborative work to manage urban regeneration projects around the abandoned Newcastle's Grainger Town (De Magalhaes, Healey, & Madanipour, 2002). However, not only for urban projects, the applicability of this framework has been recently explored to examine the quality of sustainable development and climate change actions (Cuevas, Peterson, Robinson, & Morrison, 2016;

Isaksson & Hagbert, 2020), rural and community programme (Harsanto & Permana, 2020), agricultural innovations (Peng, Kuki, Hashimoto, & Hsieh, 2014), as well as infrastructure service provision and management (Davoudi & Evans, 2005; Rahayu et al., 2019). Knowing that this framework can be flexibly modified to examine various phenomena by bringing its key dimensions (knowledge, relations and mobilization capacity) to be contextually defined (Cars, Healey, Madanipour, & De Magalhaes, 2002; Isaksson & Hagbert, 2020), we applied this method to discuss our case study, which is a theme around academic learning innovations.

Using this framework, the quality of collaborative distance-learning studio is examined based upon the improvement within three areas: knowledge, relational, and mobilisation capacity. Knowledge, in this paper, refers to the improvement of students’ theoretical coverage, interpretation, knowledge understanding, and contextual familiarities. Meanwhile, relational capacity is beyond substantial matters. It can be traced from the improvement of students’ range of relations, networks, as well as power to contribute in a group learning. It is also about students’ capacity to communicate, negotiate, and resolve conflicts amongst them. Finally, mobilisation capacity is seen from the improvement of students’ ability to work with and learn from each other, envisaging their capacity to deal with different rules, norms, culture, values, practices and ethics. The overall quality improvement of the students in collaborative distance-learning studio can be justified from the ability to extend theoretical knowledge, maintain mutual learning and sharing with equal power and positioning, and produce new innovative practices to work together in addressing the subject matters set by the course. The following **Table 1** provides the illustration of the framework.

**Table 1.** The Institutional Capacity Framework to Assess Collaborative Distance Learning Studio

Dimension	Aspect
Knowledge	Learning new theories
	Interpreting theories into real-life cases and problems
	Absorbing and understanding knowledge and information
	Coping with contextual issues
Relations	Engaging in a diverse range of relations
	Building important networks to consolidate power and interests
	Enhancing communication and negotiation skills within a great variety of actors
	Resolving conflicts and differences
Mobilisation	Maintaining mutual learning and sharing
	Adapting into different rules, norms, culture, values, practices, and ethics
	Learning and demonstrating new capacities gained from cross-cultural learning

**Source:** Authors translated from De Magalhaes (2002)

#### 4. Data Collection

In this paper, we assessed various activities in the case studio, which include identifying key activities and analysing the interactions of different values, cultures, and practices of the participating students. We focus our assessment to the quality provided by the students during the classroom action to discuss the theme of Inclusive City Planning. This assessment includes how students learned the theories, and developed an action research method to explore the theories learned within the study context of disable groups in Surakarta and Banjarmasin, Indonesia. The classroom action research method is a combination of learning process, practitioner inquiry, and teacher’s research to refine the learning process during the course (Vogelzang & Admiraal, 2017). Classroom action research, in the case study, was focused on the development of digital ethnography as the method to learn the applicability of inclusive planning theories in the case context. Digital ethnography is a relatively new method in learning that is introduced through the context of multi-actors and cross-cultural online course. Observations were made during the course and focused on two aspects, which are the dynamics of learning process, learning outputs, and the impact of each stage in the course to students’ knowledge and skills. Data was compiled in the form of students’ outputs, discussion records, and course journals.

## 5. Results and Discussion

### 5.1 Overview of the Studio Project

The University College London (UCL) engagement is conducted worldwide to build global partnerships. Such partnerships cover potential counterparts and partner institutions in the Global North and the Global South. One of the partnerships, the Global Disability Innovation (GDI) leads the Assistive Technology 2030 Programme, which focused on an innovative technology to help disable communities to have more ability to access their environment so they are expected to enjoy a better quality of life, especially in urban areas. As one of the realisations from the partnership, the UCL in collaboration with the GDI Hub established a new postgraduate programme, the MSc in Disability, Design, and Innovation, which was launched in September 2019. The programme also brought Loughborough University and London College of Fashion into the board. This programme emphasises multidisciplinary insights and blending engineering studies with global policy and societal contexts of the so-called “disability”.

Our case study, the collaborative distance-learning studio is a part of the MSc in Disability, Design, and Innovation study programme. The full title of the Indonesian case study is “Advancing inclusive design and planning in Indonesian cities through a process of remote knowledge co-production: Learning from (and contributing to) Indonesian Organizations of People with Disabilities and low-income neighborhoods in Banjarmasin and Solo”. The program has been started in 2019 in Banjarmasin. Surakarta is suggested by the GDI Hub to become a part of the program based on the abovementioned reasoning. During the 2019 research project, the program was conducted online and offline. The program was started by engagement online between students of the Social Development Practices DPU with the NGO (Kota Kita), local university academics (Universitas Sebelas Maret-UNS and Universitas Lambung Mangkurat-ULM), and students from the two local university to start discussing the goal, objective, and being provided with shared materials related to disability and the inclusive design. Furthermore, the master students of SDP, DPU of University College London came to visit the city for data collection and direct observation to the selected case study. However, for the 2020 program, due to the covid-19 pandemic, all the activities were conducted online, which imply that no field visit for the UCL students to Surakarta and Banjarmasin and vice versa. This is a challenging context for all the stakeholders because there was a difference in time zone, culture, languages. The UCL students should be able to comprehend the case through entirely indirect observation methods from their local student’s counterpart, the UNS and ULM students. In reverse, the UNS and ULM students should be able to agree upon the common or major objective of the program as well as the minor target assigned to every small group, by doing the completely online discussions and connect those goals with different types of data collection, analysis, and dissemination. The main method used in the program is digital ethnography.

### 5.2. Learning Process and Key Activities

Generally, the case study of distance-learning studio comprises of three main stages (see: **Figure 2**). Preparatory stage was the first stage which consists of three activities, ordinary teaching sessions, tutorials, and independent group works. The focus of this session was to introduce students, from both the UCL and partner universities about the project, key aims to be addressed, theoretical coverage, and scheduling as well as class-regulations. Practice engagement was the second stage, which began to encourage students to participate in more interactive works. They were divided into six groups comprising of nine students, and were assigned to focus on specific theme within disability groups and community areas. After that, students were facilitated to explore data and information, to design their fieldworks, and to determine their research boundary, objectives, and outputs.

Three key activities were held in both plenary session and internal small-group activities, which include producing research design, discussing advocacy and participatory approaches, and interactive learning and discussions to decide and set the final drafts of research design as well as to prepare strategies for fieldwork executions. The last stage was post-practice engagement. It was focused on conducting data and information synthesis as well as management and disseminations. In this stage, students were encouraged to be participated in an in-depth brainstorming and discussion to reflect achievements and failure of their works and daily activities. Such brainstorming and discussions were organised through their groups as well as larger forum of the study course. There was also a number of reflections based upon the students’ interactions with the counterparts and interviewees during the fieldworks.



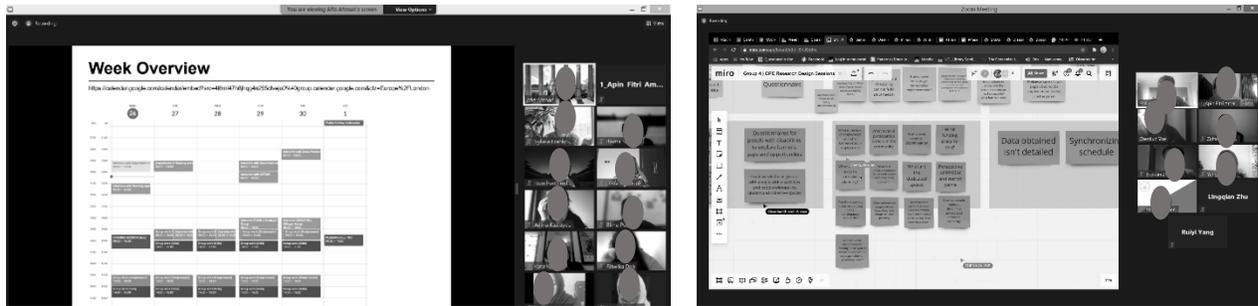
**Figure 2.** Core Activities of the UCL-UCA Collaborative Distance-Learning Studio  
**Source:** Presentation of the DPU-UCL 26 February 2021

Within the preparatory stage, the studio began with consolidation activities and teaching activities. During consolidation activities, students were divided based on their original institutions and were gathered online to meet and know each other in two weeks. Students from UCL conducted their consolidation activities online and based in London, facilitated by the UCL lecturer group, and so did the students from UNS and ULM which were based in Surakarta and Banjarmasin, and facilitated by their own lecturers. This consolidation emphasised the introduction of their own rules of the game to work together in the studio, amongst which are communication, in-class learning, software and instrument uses procedures, as well as reporting standards.

The interaction of internal rules, procedures, and external norms, values, and practices actually began in small attempts when the lecturers provided brief introductions about the partner students and their academic institutions. UCL students, for example, were taught by their lectures regarding the initial characteristics of the course. Students were mixed of British and non-British origins, including Chinese, Azerbaijan, France, and Russia, and they began to adapt towards the UCL core learning rules, procedures, and values. In additions, lecturers in both universities also explained a brief introduction about their Indonesian counterparts as well as their culture. Here, the students began to explore Indonesian context, as an entry point to build good communications and cooperation despite of certain limitations and differences, including language, time, culture, and interactive practices.

During the teaching activities, as a second part of the preparatory stage, students began to be gathered in a plenary event – bringing all students into an online class together and consolidating time differences by selecting a morning UK time and late afternoon Indonesia time (see **Figure 3**). Similar to consolidation activities, the teaching activities were also divided into a number of learning series within three weeks period. Lecturers from UCL, UNS, ULM, and Kota Kita were scheduled to deliver a lecture every week. UCL lecturers, for instance, were given a role to teach the main and general literature theme of Urban Morphology and Inclusive City, whilst the counterpart lecturers were assigned to give the supplementary and subject specific themes, such as Indonesian Planning context (UNS and ULM), City for All, and Disable Group and Urban Development (Kota Kita). Both activities were organized online assisted by online meeting platform such as Zoom and Microsoft Team. During consolidation activities, students and lecturers were also facilitated to establish Whatsapp group to connect their discussions and information sharing on a daily basis.

The interaction of internal rules, procedures, and external norms, values, and practices occurred through the theoretical exchanges. UCL students, for example, were taught by Kotakita facilitators regarding the overview of disable groups in Indonesia, including their characteristics, concentrations, and daily life challenges. They were also taught by UNS lectures regarding the Indonesian Planning context, including planning system, institutional settings, key agencies, and planning documents that relevant for learning disable groups within urban areas of Indonesia. On the other hands, UNS and ULM students were given more detailed and updated theories regarding the Inclusive City Planning from the UCL lecturers. Whilst the UCL students began to familiarise themselves with Indonesian planning and disable group issues, the UNS and ULM students were prepared to understand inclusive planning theories and to master survey methods, one of which was the digital ethnography.



**Figure 3.** Consolidation using Online Platforms: UCL students and UNS & ULM students worked together to develop communication platform, set internal schedule, assisted by interactive platform called Miro  
**Source:** Documentation of the UCL-UCA Inclusive City Studio, 2021

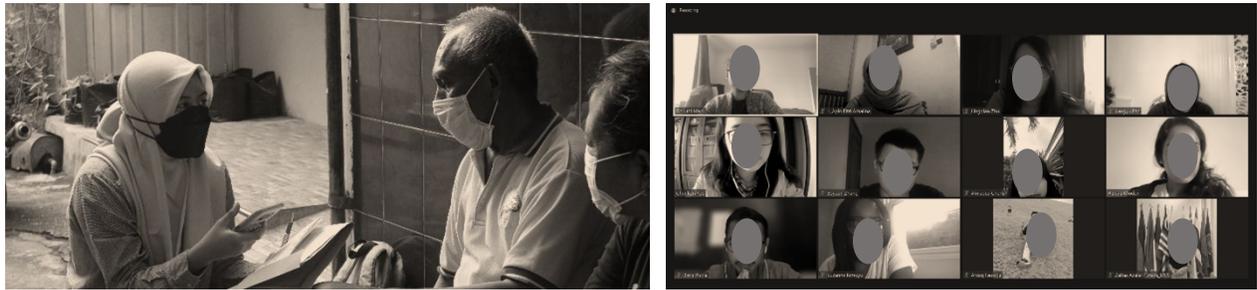
The practice engagement stage was the core of interactive and collaborative distance-learning studio as it began to bring all students from different universities to work together closely within online platforms. They also began to engage in more intensive discussions and negotiations towards specific tasks, including research and fieldwork design, advocacy and participatory methods as well as theoretical implementation learning. Research and fieldwork design guided students to build small groups and conducted their research activities within those small groups. Their interactions were supported by Zoom, WhatsApp, Google Drive, and Miro, four generic but reliable distance-learning platforms. Although they were scheduled to present their progress every week, they were free to organise internal meetings within their own small groups to make extra works on defining research theme, objectives, as well as listing data and information required for the analysis and fieldwork and analysis methods.

In practice engagement stage, the interaction of formal and informal as well as internal and external rules, norms, values, culture, and practices was even more intensive and productive. During the weekly class, for instance, representatives from each group presented their progresses and consulted their actual difficulties, challenges, and achievements, seeking advises from all lecturers, both from the UCL, UNS, ULM and Kotakita. Different opinions and understanding about certain topics and information were clearly shown in the minutes of meeting, voice records, and videos, which provide evidences for the lecturers regarding individual student's engagement and active contribution in a group as well as the main class forum.

Special assessment was addressed to the process of students in developing their digital ethnography method, adopting from the literature and best practice papers given during the in-class sessions. For instance, UCL students once struggled to understand the function of development plan and spatial plan documents as well as misunderstood the position of city government and *kelurahan* (neighbourhood) government. In reverse, a number of UNS and ULM students were caught in uncertainty and difficulties to follow the learning process of digital ethnography and interviews, which were considered as new methods for them. They were, for instance, unsure about the relationships between data that was planned for collections and its contribution for the analysis stage. Such disputes were solved through the assignment of daily facilitators from the lecturer team, putting two lecturers from UCL and UNS or ULM to be in WhatsApp group to help students.

At the end of this stage, students with final research designs were then left to decide their fieldwork schedule and execute their survey works, including interviews with disable groups, local government officials, academics, and community leaders, and observations with strict and limited interactions. During fieldwork activities, one of the most interesting and innovative works where rules and norms as well as values and practices were intensively exchanged can be seen from the interview and data collection stages. UCL students with their methodological comprehensions, research ethical familiarities, and project management skills helped UNS and ULM students to conduct fieldworks with discipline, effective time management, and carefully in terms of managing privacy of the interviewees. Meanwhile, UNS and ULM students with their contextual knowledge, survey practical skills, and understanding towards local culture, manners, and way of communicating provided advises and feedbacks to UCL students on how to build communications and dig more detailed information with the interviewees. After all, amongst the most interesting innovation produced by their interactions was the implementation of two-stages interviews, where by the

UNS and ULM students based in Indonesia conducted interviews and provided daily feedbacks from the processes whilst the UCL students guided the topics and revised points of discussions remotely in their home-based based upon the feedbacks given by UNS and UCL students (see **Figure 4** below).



**Figure 4.** Two-stage Interviews: UCL students guiding remotely whilst representatives of UCA students conducted the actual interviews with the interviewees with strict protocols assisted by online platforms  
**Source:** Documentation of the UCL-UCA Inclusive City Studio, 2021

In the final stage of the studio, students, were once again, encouraged to be working in their group to compile all data and information obtained from the fieldwork. They were also encouraged to conduct cross-checking and finally disseminate the produced findings into reports, posters, and videos (see: **Figure 5**). The most important lessons to be presented were the actual findings of the situation around disability and accessibility to public facilities in the case studies that are still far from ideal. Students also learned that the actual facilities were also lagging behind, leaving the familiarities to disability issues and small community efforts to provide small-scale and neighborhood-based facilities as promising embryonic actions. The second important lessons to be disseminated as a reflective lesson was regarding the reliability of digital ethnography and distance-learning studio as means of studying across geographical and time boundaries. All materials were aimed to be distributed for larger audiences, not only for students and lecturers in the studio, but also public audiences interested in the themes of inclusive city in the Global South, especially Indonesia. Students, assisted by the lecturers and facilitators, uploaded and distributed the documents in social media, including Instagram and website of the UCL and partner universities.

In the final stage, students were encouraged to conduct reflections towards the overall works. Interestingly, students from both groups have expressed their satisfactions to participate in the course. Amongst those considered as key achievements in terms of their non-substantial capacities were the ability to conduct mutual-learning without significant problems. Students, for example, were able to decide role and responsibility sharing. According to interviews and discussion records, we understood that the majority of studio group assigned one person as the leader, two persons as interpreter and script maker, one person as video and graphic designer, whilst the rest contributed their thoughts for the content or material for dissemination. The role sharing process was conducted in friendly, open, and democratic ambiances without any dissenting voices or individual taking over-dominating roles and power. Students also expressed their familiarities to respect other students' busy time, cultural and language barriers. They respected and trusted each other, so the overall discussions and learning were held in conductivity and harmony.



**Figure 5.** Samples of Posters produced as the dissemination material for UCL-UCA studio findings  
**Source:** Documentation of the UCL-UCA Inclusive City Studio, 2021

## 5.2 Learning Achievements: Sociological Institutionalism Perspective

In this paper, our focus is to discuss learning innovations provided by the collaborative distance-learning studio. We examined how the learning method make benefits for students in terms of knowledge enrichment and capacity improvement. Using the institutional capacity framework, the quality of collaborative distance-learning studio is examined based upon the improvement within three areas: knowledge, relational, and mobilisation capacity. Knowledge discussed new and important theories explored and learned by students, focusing on contributions from each side, UCL and UNS, ULM, and Kota Kita. Relational capacity identified the capacity of both UCL, UNS, and ULM students to build, maintain, and work through internal groups, internal country fellows, as well as external groups such as the course group and larger audiences involving disable groups, government officials, and community leaders. As for mobilisation capacity emphasized the capacity of both UCL, UNS, and ULM students to learn new rules, norms, culture, values, and practices, which originally brought by each actor and transferred during the course and interactive practices. Special examination was addressed to the discussions, observations, and group-works during the course. We focused on two aspects, which are the dynamics of learning process and the impact of each stage in the course to students' knowledge and skills. Overall, the findings of the institutional capacity framework to examine the process and benefits of the distance-learning studio are presented in the following **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Capacity Improvement Obtained from the Collaborative Distance Learning Studio

Dimension	Aspect	Achievements	
		UCL Students	UNS-ULM Students
Knowledge	Learning new theories	Indonesian Planning System, Policies, and Institutions	Inclusive City Planning in the Global North
	Interpreting theories into real-life cases	Inductive: testing theory in the case study	Deductive: connecting surrounding urban issues into planning theories
	Absorbing and understanding knowledge	New knowledge on defining issues, key actors, and characteristics of the studied objects and their context	New knowledge in terms of working with participatory planning approaches
	Coping with contextual issues		
Relations	Engaging in a diverse range of relations	New relations with Indonesian academics, students, counterparts, and interviewees	New relations with UK-based academics, students, and Indonesian counterparts and interviewees
	Building important networks to consolidate power and interests	Networking and coalition through internal studio groups	Networking and coalition through country-fellow and internal studio groups
	Enhancing communication and negotiation skills within a great variety of actors	Discussions with open, democratic, and equally distributed power	Discussions with open, democratic, and equally distributed power
	Resolving conflicts and differences	A few conflicts emerged but easily resolved	A few conflicts emerged but easily resolved
Mobilisation	Maintaining mutual learning and sharing	New practical skills in terms of conducting interviews, preparing survey instruments based on specific context	New practical skills in terms of applying software and application for team works, project management, and presentations
	Adapting into different rules, norms, culture, values, practices, and ethics	Learning towards local culture (friendly, commitment, working and prayers time, social interaction norms, and ways of communication)	Learning towards local culture (appreciation, hard-working, discipline, ethics, commitment)
	Learning and demonstrating new capacities gained from cross-cultural learning	Decision-making and role sharing within a mixed of culture	Decision-making and role sharing within a mixed of culture

Source: Authors (2021)

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to assess the quality and benefits of the distance-learning studio reflected from the case study. Applying the institutional capacity framework built through the sociological institutionalism viewpoint, we assessed various activities in the studio project, to see how different values, cultures, and practices of the participating students were reproduced and maintained into lessons useful for all parties. Overall, the distance-learning studio was able to deliver its benefits, allowing students from different culture to enrich their theoretical knowledge, relational building, and mobilisation capacity. In terms of theoretical knowledge, for instance, the UCL students learned planning policies and context, whilst the UNS and ULM students learned more updated and detailed planning theories and research methods. Meanwhile, in terms of methodological skill, the interactions of students have successfully introduced an innovative approach in through the so-called “two-stages interviews” (a mixed of direct but limited interviews and digital ethnography conducted by two different groups in different based areas). There was also a number of new skills for students from both sides to use online platforms such as Zoom, WhatsApp, and Miro for interactive discussions and project management. Finally, the mobilisation of rules, norms, and practices transferred during the course were successfully transmitted and absorbed by all students, which envisaged their capacity to work with people from different culture, norms, and practices in the future with strong awareness and respect. Our findings have finally showed that the project has proven to be a reliable distance-learning platform, which helped students in gaining broader contextual knowledge as well as teamwork skills within cross-boundary culture and ethics.

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