OVPLT eNewsletter

Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching

February 2022

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

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SUPPORTING OUR DIGITAL FUTURE

TEACHING TODAY IN UCC AND ONLINE EXAMS

VALUING IRELAND'S TEACHING & LEARNING VIT&L WEEK)
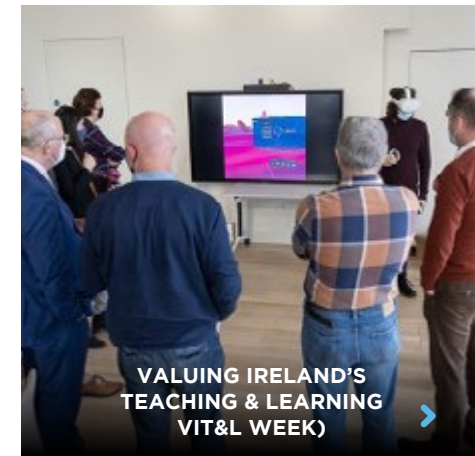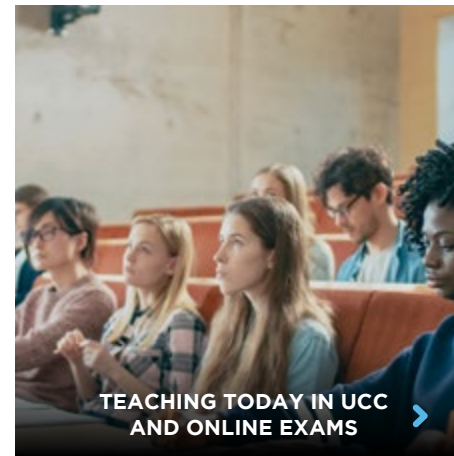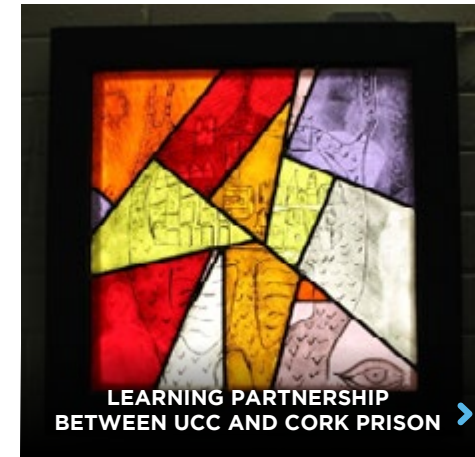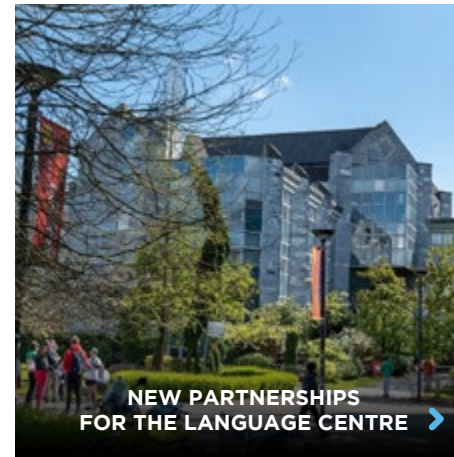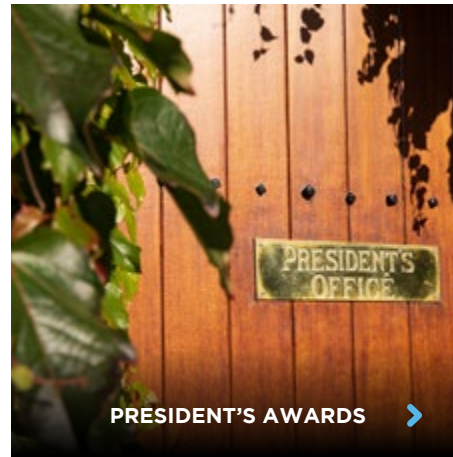
WELCOME TO THE WINTER EDITION OF THE OVPLT ENEWSLETTER 2022

Professor Paul McSweeney, VP Learning & Teaching

The last few months have been as busy as ever. There is a pleasant buzz around the campus as students and staff have returned. All is not the same as it was, but it is nice to see student life returned to something approaching normal.

In our latest Newsletter, we **celebrate the achievements of our colleagues** who were awarded with Excellence in Teaching Awards in November, and those who **completed Postgraduate Certificates and Diplomas** in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

We congratulate our **honorary doctorate recipient** and present the **many initiatives and projects** our colleagues throughout the university campus have been working on.

We hope you enjoy reading the newsletter and welcome any comments or submissions for the next newsletter.

Please contact Jacqui at
✉ **j.churcher@ucc.ie**

Professor Paul McSweeney
VP Learning & Teaching

🌐 **www.ucc.ie/teachlearn**

AWARDS

Left to right: President John O'Halloran, Professor Ursula Kilkelly, Professor Áine Hyland, Mr Don O'Leary, Dr Maurice Manning, Dr Attracta Halpin, Professor Paul McSweeney

HONORARY DOCTORATE FOR CORK LIFE CENTRE DIRECTOR, DON O'LEARY.

Jointly nominated for the award by Professors Paul McSweeney and Ursula Kilkelly, Director of the Cork Life Centre Don O'Leary received an **Honorary Doctorate at UCC's Conferring Ceremony in November**. A former City Councillor and youth worker, Mr O'Leary has been **director of the Cork Life** Centre for the past 15 years. The centre offers young people **a holistic approach to education** in an alternative learning environment.

Under Mr O'Leary's Directorship, the volunteer-run Cork Life Centre has formed many partnerships and collaborations with organisations such as UCC, with the common goal of providing **a place of learning for children outside the formal, mainstream education system.**

The award of this honorary doctorate to Don O'Leary is an acknowledgement of his dedication to and advocacy for young people, the work of the Cork Life Centre and the commitment and dedication of the staff and volunteers who support it.

AWARDS

PRESIDENT'S AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING 2021

UCC prides itself on being a student-centred university. This awards scheme, the longest-running scheme of its kind in Ireland, recognises the **outstanding efforts of teaching staff** to ensure that UCC students receive the highest quality learning and teaching experience. All UCC students, staff and alumni were invited to submit nominations for these awards. **To be nominated in itself is a significant honour and we congratulate all nominees and not just those who were successful.**

Successful Nominees are:

DR PHILIPP HOEVEL
School of Mathematical Sciences

DR FRANK CROWLEY
Economics

DR AOIFE DALY
School of Law

DR HANNAH DALY
School of Engineering, Energy Engineering

EUGENIA BOLADO COLINA
Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies

UW0005 'SUSTAINABILITY' TEACHING TEAM
Multi-disciplinary team from a range of academic and support units

Full details of the University Staff Recognition Awards Programme, including membership of the Awards Selection Committee, are available at **www.ucc.ie/en/sdc/** and full details of the President's Awards for Excellence in Teaching, including membership of the Awards Selection Committee, are available at **www.ucc.ie/en/teachlearn/staffawards/**

Given the ongoing challenges of Covid-19 it has been decided to **postpone the in person celebration to early 2022**. I look forward to celebrating the achievements of the successful nominees at that time.

AWARDS

STAFF RECOGNITION AWARDS

The University Staff Recognition Awards Programme is now in its eleventh year. **Highlighting OVPLT colleagues' success** in the UCC In 2021, fourteen awards are available across six categories. The Academic Council Staff Development Committee (SDC) seeks to ensure that the Awards Programme recognises **a wide range of achievements by all staff at various stages of their careers.**

The five categories are as follows:

1. **The Frank McGrath Perpetual Award for Equality and Welfare**

2. **Impact Award**

3. **Leadership Award**

4. **Exceptional Citizen Award**

5. **Enhancing the Student Experience Award**

6. **Outstanding Colleague**

In 2021, the OVPLT were delighted to congratulate **Dr Catherine O'Mahony** of CIRTL for her Leadership Award and **Tom O'Mara** of the Centre for Digital Education for his Impact Award.

Right: Dr Catherine O'Mahony of CIRTL won the Leadership Award.

Left: Tom O'Mara of the Centre for Digital Education for his Impact Award.

CIRTL PARCHMENT CEREMONY

The annual **CIRTL** Parchment Ceremony took place online for the first time in the centre's history in November to honour **'Valuing Ireland's Teaching and Learning (VIT&L) Week' 2021**, a national week-long series of events funded by the **National Forum** for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. For the academic year 2020/2021 there were **66 new graduates of the Postgraduate Certificate and 26 in the Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.** These graduates are based in UCC and across other Irish HEIs in Galway and Dublin.

At OVPLT we recognise the huge undertaking of all of these graduates especially over the last year. A wonderful ceremony was had by all with recorded messages of congratulations posted by President Prof. John O'Halloran, Vice President for Learning and Teaching, Prof. Paul McSweeney, Heads of Colleges and family and friends alike posting messages to their loved ones on Twitter. A big congratulations to the graduates on their ongoing commitment to teaching and learning.

View the ceremony here:
www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/parchmentceremony/

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES OF 2020/2021

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PROJECTS/RESEARCH

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The Vice-President for Learning & Teaching is the UCC Project Sponsor of a national HCI-funded project on the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) in Higher Education. Dr Ciara Staunton and Lyndsey El Amoud are the joint UCC Project Institutional Leads. **A UCC RPL Project Steering Group,** chaired by Professor Paul McSweeney, has been established to explore implementation of the national initiatives at an institutional level. The further development and enhancement of RPL in UCC will require **updates to policy, systems, processes, and practice.**

RPL has been in use in Irish higher education for decades and despite considerable progress and excellent examples of innovative practice, provision of RPL services is geographically uneven, fragmented and often very difficult to navigate for learners and higher education staff. Many people don't know what RPL is or why it may be beneficial to them.

The aim of this national HCI project is to work in partnership with enterprise, learners and the 19 participating HEIs to bring RPL from the **margins to the mainstream** and to **substantially grow** RPL opportunities (to 6,000 annually by the end of the project) and **enhance RPL services** across the sector in a manner which is coherent,

consistent and user-friendly.

The project's vision is that RPL becomes an integral part of the higher education system, widely understood, celebrated and utilised as a flexible pathway to further learning, certification and professional development. Key activities for the project cycle until April 2025 can be summarised as follows:

- Develop and implement a learner-centered National Recognition of Prior Learning Framework to grow RPL opportunities and support service enhancement across the participating HEIs.

- Engage Enterprise Partners to understand the higher education needs of employees and identify RPL opportunities.

- Develop a National Online Platform to provide centralised information for diverse users.

- Expand Communities of RPL Practice in HEIs and enhance capacity through the provision of a suite of training tools, materials and resources.

- Develop a National RPL Dataset to monitor/report on progress and inform policy.

- Develop national and local Communications Campaigns to promote RPL opportunities and increase the numbers of admissions on the basis of RPL.

National RPL in Higher Education Project: The UCC Context By Lyndsey El Amoud & Dr. Ciara Staunton 25 November 2021

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

An important underpinning of all this activity will be each partner institutions' policy on RPL. Over the coming months, it is anticipated that the national project group will a**gree key definitions and terminology** that will inform the policies of each of the HEIs involved to ensure some level of **consistency and alignment** with the project's national RPL framework, while acknowledging that a one-size-fits-all approach is neither feasible nor desirable.

Currently, the working definition of RPL used by the project is as follows:
RPL is the recognition of a learner's prior achievement of learning outcomes, whether by means of formal, non-formal, or informal learning. RPL can be used for access, advanced entry, exemption(s)/credit, or full awards.

The existing UCC RPL policy is mostly aligned with this definition, although there will need to be consideration given to whether or not we wish to offer full awards via RPL.

Another important point to highlight is **the scope of the national project** where prior non-formal and informal learning are deemed to warrant particular attention. While experiential learning is addressed in the current UCC policy,

further consideration of this theme may be useful in a review of the policy.

A recent institutional survey completed by the UCC RPL Project Leads identified a number of strengths and areas for improvement for RPL practice in UCC:

Strengths

- RPL policy exists (although it needs updating)
- RPL activity exists (although it is somewhat ad-hoc and dispersed)
- RPL is captured in some programme entry requirement (although this is not consistent practice),
- RPL data now captured at PG level in UCC Apply.

Room for Improvement

- RPL policy update needed
- RPL activity is ad-hoc
- Collection of RPL data (applications, admissions, reasons for unsuccessful applications, etc.)
- RPL signposting for learners on UCC website & RPL promotional activity
- Staff professional development for RPL Capturing good RPL practice within UCC.

The list above represents the **key areas** that the UCC RPL Project Leads will be focusing attention on over the **next 12 months.**

PROJECTS/RESEARCH

MAKERSPACES AS PLACES FOR COLLABORATIVE LEARNING AND TEACHING

At the recent ISSOTL21 Conference Siobhán O'Neill presented on research conducted by herself and Dr Briony Supple, **exploring the opportunities for teaching and learning in makerspaces.** This research was part of a larger project aimed at developing best practice guidelines for the management and use of the UCC Makerspace located in the Hub.

In this presentation, the qualitative study of **9 national makerspaces** was discussed in relation to formal and informal learning and teaching observed within the spaces and the impact of COVID-19 on the services offered by the spaces. Additionally, the research highlighted the ongoing focus of these spaces to provide **opportunities for learning and the desire to forge connections with higher education institutions** to further support these opportunities and to develop a programme of research.

PERSONALISED LEARNING FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

The INTERPEARL Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project came to a successful close recently, following a 3-year partnership between UCC (represented by CIRTL and the School of Education), the University of Iceland, Vilnius University, and Vytautas Magnus University.

Together, the consortium developed innovative teacher education practices enabling personalised learning in different socio-cultural contexts. The project enabled the development of a **personalised learning framework**, and numerous **teacher education programmes** have been updated in line with the framework. The project has fostered **significant change** in teacher education, enabling teachers and their future students to become **confident, reflective and autonomous learners.**

REVIEW OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS

The Language Centre was delighted to be part of **a review of the English language requirements for postgraduate admission.** Kerry Platts led the team of language experts working closely with the Head of the Graduate Studies Office, Aine Flynn, Deputy Director of the International Office, Marita Foster, and Director of Recruitment and Admissions, Dr Jennifer Murphy. Kerry met with Vice Deans and College Managers across the four colleges, as well as other stakeholders in schools and departments.

PROJECTS/RESEARCH

LEARNING ANALYTICS LITE WOULD LIKE YOUR INPUT

The **Learning Analytics LITE** project hosted by the Centre for Digital Education, strives to enhance the design, development, and implementation of teaching to enable students to reach their full potential.

In addition to the case studies that are currently underway with four contributing teams, the Learning Analytics LITE team would like to engage with staff and students to better understand how Learning Analytics could be implemented within UCC to enhance student success.

UCC Staff from all departments are invited to take part in a **60-minute Focus Group** to discuss the implementation of Learning Analytics in UCC or alternatively fill out a **10-minute online Survey** to let us know what you think. Students will also be invited to have their say in a separate focus group and survey. The focus group topics and surveys for this element of the project are based on the **SHEILA** and **DALTAI** frameworks and responses will help to inform policy and procedures for Learning Analytics in UCC going forward.

For more information on the Learning Analytics LITE project, contact **Michelle Donovan** at **mdonovan@ucc.ie**.

If you would like to take part in the Staff survey, please click here

NEW PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE LANGUAGE CENTRE

The Language Centre is continuing to gain new university partnerships and the latest university to sign up is **Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Manizales.** With optimism that Covid restrictions will not prevent mobility, it is planned for Language Centre staff to travel to Colombia to deliver on-site classes in spring and summer in 2022.

La Universidad Católica de Valencia is another university that is planning to send its staff to our Centre for a teacher development course. Similarly, KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, who prior to Brexit sent its staff for English language development courses at Cambridge University, will now come to our Centre starting from spring 2022.

LAUNCH OF DIGITAL BADGE IN AUTISM AWARENESS FOR UNIVERSITY STAFF

We were delighted to launch the **Digital Badge in Autism Awareness** for University Staff as part of ViT&L Week in November 2021 (and would like to thank CIRTL and the National Forum for their support). At the online event, Kirsten Hurley (badge facilitator and former AFUI project coordinator) gave a short overview of the development of the badge itself and how it has been designed to encourage reflection on the importance of considering 'autism friendliness' in all of our roles within UCC, as well as offer practical guidance on how to do this.

This quick overview was followed by a series of short talks by autistic (current or former) UCC students who gave their perspectives on the concept of an **'autism-friendly' university education and the university experience.**

First Laura Murray spoke about the need to recognise the different experiences of autistic students, followed by Lisa Dalton discussing the importance of 'autism-friendly' group work (and how that can be facilitated). Rhona J. Flynn examined the framing of disability access and accommodations in the context of human rights, and Maeve Richardson highlighted the importance of autistic students getting involved in student life.

Recordings and/or transcripts of all of these talks are available on the AFUI project website.

To find out more about the Digital Badge in Autism Awareness for Staff please visit the **AFUI project website**.

> **The next offering of the badge will be open to all UCC staff in early 2022 – register your interest here (please note we have a limited number of places available).**

11 Nov 2021

University College Cork
2021
Autism Awareness for University Staff
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

BRAINPOWER

Bookended by puberty and culturally defined adult roles, it is now established that adolescence extends from age 10 to age 24. Funded by the National Forum SATLE2019 scheme, and launched during VIT&L 2021 week, the new Canvas course Brainpower developed by Dr. Eithne Hunt (Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy/Graduate Attributes Programme, UCC); Dr. Samantha Dockray (Applied Psychology, UCC); and Professor Yvonne Nolan (Anatomy & Neuroscience, UCC) with input from students and higher education staff explores the ramifications of this research and gives participants an opportunity to reflect on what this information may mean for them within their work or role in higher education.

The i**nner workings of the adolescent brain** and how these workings develop and are expressed in **behaviours and engagement with the external world** have been the focus of an explosion of research inquiry. Seated in the pre-frontal cortex of the brain, cognitive abilities such as decision-making, planning, self-control, social interaction and self-awareness are only fully developed by the mid-twenties. In addition, the brain regions governing risk-taking and reward are intensely active in adolescence, and so influence behaviour, which is also shaped by context and expectations of others.

To realise student success, higher education (HE) institutions must take into account that the **majority of their students are still adolescents**, without fully developed cognitive, social, emotional and self-regulatory capacities, living and learning in a socio-cultural environment that offers less external regulation than ever before. The knowledge that many students in higher education are in developmental transition spotlights opportunities to construct academic and campus contexts that supports this transition.

Brainpower is a free, online, self-paced course, focusing on harnessing the power and potential of adolescent brain and behaviour for enhanced learning, wellbeing and student success in higher education. Within each of the six modules (each approximately 60 minutes duration) there is a variety of instructive media, including recorded **Panopto lectures, videos and short readings**. Supplemental information in the form of suggested reading lists, podcasts, and videos is provided. The Brainpower modules are provided in a predefined sequence with content unlocked step by step. Modules will be unlocked once the previous module is completed.

Although targeted mainly at academic and academic support staff in higher education, Brainpower is likely to be of interest to staff across further and higher education, nationally and internationally, as well as parents, school-teachers, coaches and all those who contribute to the lives of young people.
It is publicly available to all under Creative Commons License:
https://ucc.instructure.com/courses/34672

UCC staff can choose to take Brainpower as a digital badge micro-credential by completing the required assessments as evidence of learning - nothing too onerous! You can **enrol here** if you are UCC staff and wish to explore this option.

Watch a short **intro video** here:
www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOpmISaMvPo

A student version called Your Brainpower, funded by the National Forum SATLE 2020 scheme will be available in 2022.

Dr. Eithne Hunt
✉ **e.hunt@ucc.ie**
✉ **brainpower@ucc.ie**

NEW COURSES

PAPOR TRAIL – PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF OPEN RESEARCH

Open research is an umbrella term incorporating a range of **principles and practices to make research processes and findings more transparent, reproducible and accessible** to everyone in the society. It is relevant at all stages of the research cycle and in all disciplines in which research is conducted.

Supporting students to better understand and engage in transparent, open research practices is essential to provide a foundation in best research practice that will benefit individual students and the University. The Principles and Practices in Open Research: Teaching, Research, Impact and Learning (PaPOR TRaIL) course aims to do just this.

PaPOR TRaIL is a **freely available online course** that was developed with students and research supervisors and funded by a **National Forum** for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education award. The purpose of PaPOR TRaIL is to provide a comprehensive introduction to open research, and to help students incorporate open research in their research projects. Designed for **undergraduate and Masters level students**, the course is **also applicable for PhD students and researchers** looking for an introduction to open research.

The course is hosted on **UCC Canvas Catalog** and is comprised of an introductory module that introduces students to what open research is, why it is important, and how to do it (Image 1). This introductory module can be completed by students as a standalone self-directed module or staff can integrate the module into existing research courses. Once students complete the introductory module they can complete any or all of the six practice-based modules that provide a more hands-on approach to doing open research (Image). Students do not need to complete all six modules, some modules may be more or less relevant to the stage of their research project and they can always come back to do other modules at a later date. When students complete the introductory and all practice modules, they receive a certificate of completion. The course is **openly available**, with an open licence for use. It provides a significant and unique resource to support students conduct of research in UCC!

Students can **enrol for free here**: **PaPOR TRaIL**

For any queries, please contact:

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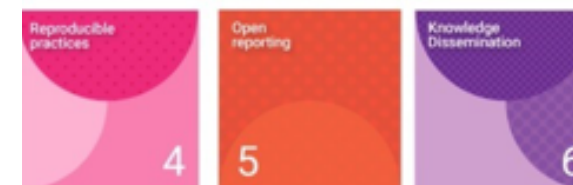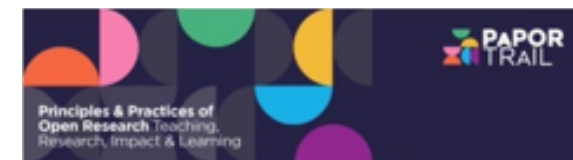
NEW COURSES

GETTING STARTED WITH PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL DIGITAL CAPACITY DIGITAL BADGE

Clíodhna O'Callaghan & the IUA Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning team launch Short Course & Digital Badge:

In November 2021 the IUA Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning (EDTL) project team, (of which our own CDE Team member, Clíodhna O'Callaghan, is leading on for UCC), launched a short course and digital badge called '**Getting Started with Personal & Professional Digital Capacity**' with 88 registered participants in conjunction with the National Forum for Teaching & Learning. The EDTL project aims to **mainstream digital in teaching and learning activities in Irish higher education**, by addressing the professional development of all who teach or support teaching and learning.

The student population is increasing in diversity and there are demands for increased flexibility in when and how learning opportunities are provided. Digital devices and applications are ubiquitous. To respond to the changes in student population and the increasingly digital environment, educators have to **develop their digital skills and adapt** to more innovative teaching approaches.

This short course and digital badge is designed to place you on **your digital development pathway**, by supporting you to reflect on your own strengths, needs and goals in the digital learning environment, as well as those of your students. Using a **pedagogy-first approach**, learners identify some key areas for personal development in the digital space and use structured tools for planning technology-based learning activities.

This is the first iteration of this short course and the EDTL team plan on running more iterations into 2022.

For further information, please contact:

Clíodhna O'Callaghan
✉ **c.ocallaghan@ucc.ie**

PEDAGOGY WORKSHOP

The Language Centre continues to offer ongoing professional **development courses for English language practitioners.** With the series of **workshops scheduled** throughout the academic year delivered online, it has allowed for participants from both Ireland and other countries to join what is proving to be a popular offering for the Language Centre's Teacher Education section.

Find out more:
www.ucc.ie/en/esol/teach-train/pedagogyworkshops/

CELTA WITH ETB

The Language Centre is looking forward to welcoming a group of teachers from **Cork's Education Training Board (ETB)** on to their next CELTA English language teacher training course. The **CELTA course** has been offered in the Centre **since 1991**, and it continues to be the leading provider of this course in our region.

Find out more:
www.ucc.ie/en/esol/teach-train/

COMMUNITY/OUTREACH

LEARNING NEIGHBOURHOODS – ACE

Nano Nagle Place/Lantern Project invited the Learning Neighbourhoods group to have a stall at the Community Market which took place on Sunday 5th of December. The theme of the market was **charity/community** and included groups such as **SERVE, Saoirse and Kind Folk**. Norma Browne, Cork Learning Neighbourhoods Co-ordinator, ACE, had a busy stall on the day distributing the **South Parish Learning Map, which gives details of the various learning opportunities in the neighbourhood**.

INTEGRATING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE CURRICULUM

Civic Engagement is an increasingly important focus on Higher Education and a preferred approach of many applied disciplines. UCC's academic strategy, the **Connected Curriculum**, highlights civic and community engagement as a key focus of education in UCC. In support of this, Ruth Hally, Civic Engagement Project Coordinator in CIRTL has led out a year-long project to develop **a toolkit for staff** to support both the novice and expert to **integrate civic engagement in teaching and learning** across all disciplines. The toolkit includes a range of practice-based examples from colleagues across UCC. **www.ucc.ie/en/cirtl/projects/cetoolkit/**

The toolkit was **launched at the recent VIT&L series of events** alongside the **national launch of a series of high quality Civic Engagement case studies** developed by CIRTL in partnership with UCC's graduate attributes programmes and Campus Engage.

LEARNING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN UCC AND CORK PRISON SHOWCASED AT VITAL WEEK

This artwork was just one of **a number of works produced by student-inmates** discussed by James Cronin who shared experiences of a community learning partnership between UCC and Cork Prison in conversation with Therese Cooper, Education Unit, Cork Prison, Prof. Maggie O'Neill, Criminology and Sociology, UCC and Dr. Katharina Swirak, Lecturer, Department of Sociology and Criminology, UCC.

The work of this learning partnership will be available as a booklet, **Visual Thinking for Convivial Learning in Cork Prison**, with photographs by Therese Cooper and an essay by James Cronin. Copies of the booklet will be available from the Glucksman Gallery Shop for the New Year.

Student response in glass to a series of talks on a history of Cork delivered by James Cronin (University College Cork). The light box shows a **Plan of Cork from Pacata Hibernia (London, 1633)**. The subject of Pacata Hibernia is the Elizabethan wars in Ireland. Students translated the theme of surveillance, which the map represents, into the symbol of the all-seeing eye, notice in the bottom right corner of the composition.

Designer: **Therese Cooper** (Cork Prison) and **Debbie Dawson**, supported by the Arts Council of Ireland. (Photography by Therese Cooper, reproduced with permission of the Education Unit, Cork Prison, 2021).

OUR COLLEAGUES

SEAMUS O'TUAMA, DIRECTOR OF ACE

Congratulations to Seamus O'Tuama, Director of ACE, who has been appointed to the **Singapore Workforce Development Applied Research Fund (WDARF) Expert Review Panel (ERP)**.

As part of Singapore's efforts to sustain and enhance workforce development and lifelong learning, the WDARF was launched by the SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG) to foster high quality applied research in workforce development and lifelong learning. It encourages inter-disciplinary research and seeks to strengthen research capabilities through leveraging both local and international expertise.

The role of the international ERP for the next term of WDARF will be to;

- Evaluate research proposals submitted through the WDARF Grant Call

- Recommend to SSG's Research Committee (RC), chaired by SSG's Chief

Executive, research proposals which merit consideration for funding based on the evaluation criteria of WDARF. Seamus is also currently **Director of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Lifelong Learning Hub**, and on the **UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) Advisory Group** to the international research project on Universities' contributions to lifelong learning. Other members of this group include people from SciencesPo, UNESCO, UCL and other leading Russell Group universities in the UK.

ELEANOR MCSHERRY, ACE

Eleanor McSherry, UCC ACE Programme Co-ordinator, who also lecturers on the Diploma in Autism Studies and on the Practice Support in Social Farming Certificate, and is a PhD student at Maynooth University, was chosen, along with two undergraduate students, to represent Maynooth University's students at an event on the 29th of November, hosted by the President of Maynooth, Professor Eeva Leinonen.

Eleanor and her research was presented to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, Simon Harris TD. Eleanor was specifically chosen as her PhD, titled '**Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Autism in Television Drama**', will produce **a code of practice and guidelines** to better support and the inclusion of **autistic people in the screen industry** in Ireland. This is a significant piece of work considering the current lack of any policy in this area in Ireland or internationally. In October 2021, Eleanor was a guest speaker at a seminar on 'Neurodiversity in the Screen Industry' facilitated by Screen Ireland's Screen Skills department. Eleanor is working with the organisation to develop **a new programme for ACE on neurodiversity,** the first university course of its kind. The programme is due to commence delivery in 2022.

PATRICK HOLLOWAY, ACE

Patrick Holloway, who holds a Master's degree and a PhD in Creative Writing, works as the **Project Manager for the ASEM LLL Hub**. Next semester he will offer two short courses in ACE: **Have Fun With Flash Fiction**, which is for anyone who has ever had in interest in writing, and, **The Short Story (A Reader's Guide)**, which is for anyone interested in literature. In the last few months, Patrick has won three prestigious literary awards.

He won the **Molly Keane Creative Writing Award** for his short story 'The Paradox of Remembering', which deals with language, identity, and trauma. He also won the **Allingham Flash Fiction Prize** and the **Flash 500 prize**, for a fragmented piece of fiction that spans 20 years. He has also been recently **published by The Moth, and Southword**, and has upcoming **poems in Waxed Lemon, and Silver Apples**. His poem 'To that other me behind the looking glass' has recently been included in the anthology, The Best New British and Irish Poets, 2019-2021.

BRENDAN MCENERY, LANGUAGE CENTRE, ON HYBRID TEACHING

Effective language teaching relies on the **grouping of students into similar skills levels**. Due to the moratorium on the issuing of visas for new English language students for most of the pandemic, it has not always been possible to create viable teaching groups on campus. As a consequence, the Language Centre, along with others in the commercial English teaching sector, has been experimenting with hybrid classrooms. It is only through the dedication, innovation and perseverance of teachers like Brendan McEnery and his colleagues, that the Centre has been able to continue **offering full-time programmes to non-UCC-registered students**. As Brendan describes below, even for teachers of 20 years' standing, there have been some very significant challenges involved…

'Hybrid teaching at the LC
You have seen the recent episodes of the Graham Norton Show: socially distanced celebrities seated in armchairs in the studio in London, chatting to the host and to an A-lister joining in with big smiles from LA via a big screen beside Graham. The studio guests have discrete mics clipped to their jackets. Not a headphone in sight. This is my dream for hybrid teaching. At the moment, it's just a dream.

The equipment in UCC classrooms is well able to handle a hybrid lecture/monologue, where some of the listeners are in the room with the lecturer, and the other listeners are joining remotely. In our LC language lessons, we want much more than that. We want our remote students and our onsite students to be able to interact effortlessly with each other, and with the teacher, both in whole-class activities and

in BORs. We want to be able to share audio/video tracks to all our students live, pausing when we need to get their feedback.

In the absence of the high-tech kit available to the Beeb, or on RTE Prime Time, we have had to improvise. The simplest way to teach a hybrid lesson is to treat it as an online lesson. In other words, all the participants, including onsite students and teacher, use headphones and make eye-contact with the cameras in their devices. Before the lesson starts, I write the following words on the whiteboard on the wall for the benefit of the onsite students: "For long contributions, switch on your mic. When finished, swich off your mic immediately". I point to this message during the lesson when onsite students forget, as they often do! This method is not ideal, but it works. The teacher's mic is switched on most, or all, of the time. She repeats the short contributions of the onsite students so that the remote students can hear them. For longer contributions, it's better if the teacher mutes her mic when an onsite student has his mic on.

There are, of course, more ambitious ways to add features to hybrid lessons. I recommend that novices like me add them one at a time and see how far they can get without sound problems. These added features include the following. Firstly, using the wall speakers so that onsite students don't always need to wear headphones. Secondly, adding a second teacher-operated camera so that one T camera is facing the onsite students and the other is facing the teacher. (This can be done by logging onto Teams

with a non-UCC email address on a second device such as a lap-top, like a dummy student). Thirdly, try to share audio/video live while still being able to do all of the above - without echoes, 'noise', or loss of audio-share to remote students. There are a lot of 'Device Settings' to get right in all this.

Hopefully your hybrid lessons have gone, or will go, well. Sometimes for me they have been as enjoyable as a half-glass of GN wine. On other occasions, however, I have run into difficulties and my students and/or I have felt like those poor unfortunates who suddenly get chucked off that famous Big Red Chair!'

FOR STAFF

STUDENT SUCCESS SURVEY

The **UCC Student Success Survey** ran from 18 October – 1 November, giving all students and all staff the opportunity to share their important views about Student Success. The objectives for conducting the survey were to gain insight into the diverse **meaning of Student Success within the UCC community**, to identify how UCC is currently supporting Student Success, and to highlight how the university may support Student Success further in the future.

Student Success is **not dependent on students alone** and can be impacted by a variety of other factors, including **teaching, finances, health and wellbeing, assessment, transitioning to university life and belonging**. Student Success means different things to different students and can vary throughout the student journey.

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education has recently confirmed the following shared understanding:

"Student Success optimises the learning and development opportunities for each student to recognise and fulfil their potential to contribute to, and flourish in, society.

To be achieved, this requires a culture in Irish higher education that values inclusivity, equity and meaningful engagement between students, staff, their institutions and the wider community."

A total of **791 students completed the seven-question survey**. Students in all stages of studies were represented, from first year to final year undergraduates, masters to PhD students, and non-degree students. The majority of student participants were female and Irish, between the ages of 17-22. The College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences and the College of Science, Engineering and Food Science had the highest participation rates.
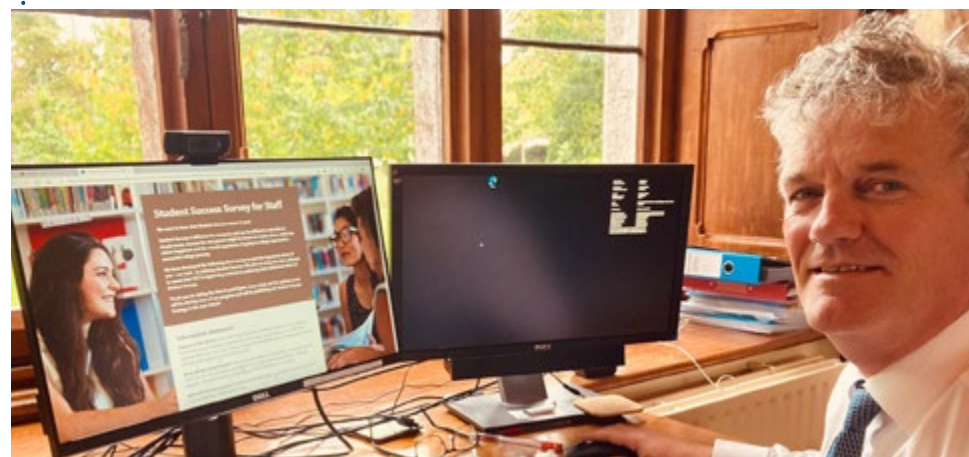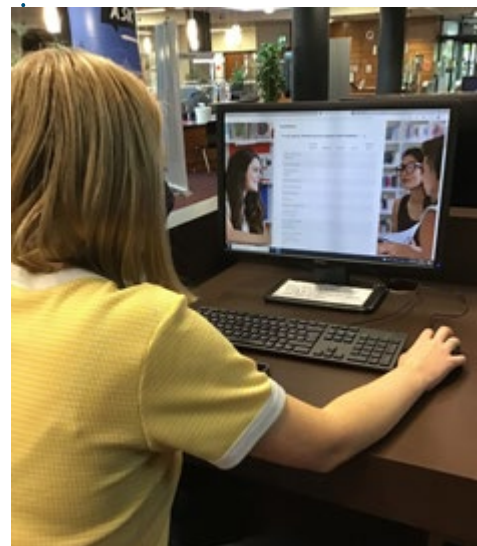
STUDENT SUCCESS SURVEY

In comparison, **163 staff members** shared their views in the survey. Similar to students, staff participants were mainly female, with over 10+ years' experience working in the university, in academic or administrative/professional services roles. Again, the highest number of respondents came from the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences, followed by Central Services.

The **topline survey results are outlined in the graphic** shown here. The results will be detailed further in the forthcoming **Student Success framework**, which aligns with Pillar 3 of UCC 2022: Delivering a Connected University and fulfils UCC's requirements under the Mission-based Performance Compact 2018-2021 between the university and the Higher Education Authority.

Thanks to all of those who took the time to take part in the survey. Your valuable feedback will help to guide the university's Student Success work in the years to come!

If you have any queries in relation to this, please contact

Julie O'Donoghue
✉ **julieodonoghue@ucc.ie**

FOR STAFF
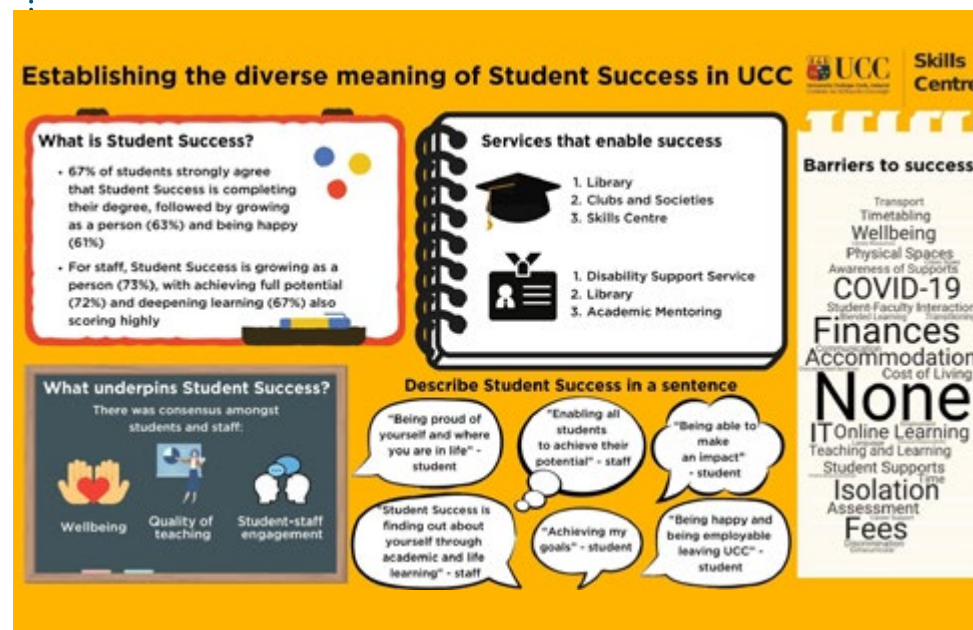
A LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS

—

The Language Centre has welcomed the end of the Irish government moratorium on visas for non-EU citizens to travel for the purposes of English language study. This has led to a recommencement of commercial activity with **student arrivals from South Korea, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Albania**, as well as from **France, Italy and the Czech Republic** in the period from 11 October 2021.

Although initially only a slow trickle, most **new admissions are now face-to-face**, and we continue to provide **online and hybrid tuition** when required. Students from partner universities in Japan and South Korea are planning to resume sending their students to us for semester abroad programmes in February 2022.

A snap of Language Centre students in less socially distanced days at Fota Wildlife Park (2019)

FOR STAFF

STAFF TRAINING

The admissions review led to a recognition of the need for training for UCC staff to better understand the language needs of international students. The first training course was entitled, **Language-related Communication Skills for the International Workplace: communicating effectively together.** The 90-minute workshop took place on Wednesday 8th December 2021 and was attended by colleagues from across the institution. Its aim was to enhance the skills of staff in all capacities to work within a diverse, multicultural and multilingual environment and to provide them with knowledge and practical steps focussed on effective spoken communication.

Feedback was excellent (see comments below). Another training workshop will be launched in the near future, designed to help programme leads better understand the language skills of applicants at different IELTS bands (or equivalent)

Comments, pictures and statistics from the training course:

ID	Name	Responses
1	anonymous	an excellent workshop to help us achieve greater clarity, even when talking to first-language English speakers from different regions.
2	anonymous	helpful and insightful
3	anonymous	Very good workshop. Its a time well spent for anyone whos work involves communication with non-native English speakers.
3	anonymous	The workshop really made me reflect on some of the language that English speakers regularly use that can be confusing for non-native speakers, as many phrases don't translate.
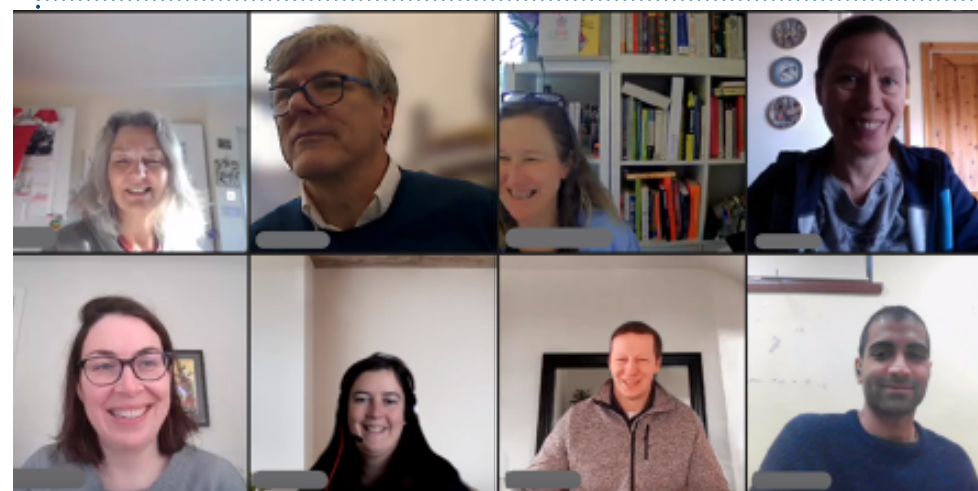
- academic
- administration
- research
- teaching
- other

Of the 24 who registered, here's a breakdown of their department:
- Tyndall (9)
- Food and Nutritional Sciences (3)
- Career Services (2)
- Student Recruitment (1)
- Department of Pathology (1)
- Cork Centre for Architectural Education (1)
- School of Mathematical Sciences (1)
- Department of Asian Studies (1)
- School of Nursing and Midwifery (1)
- School of Applied Psychology (1)
- Skills Centre (1)
- Department of Physics (1)
- Language Centre (1)

THE INCLUSIVE ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE

The creation of a **staff professional development offering** is currently underway, led by Dr Laura Lee and supported by Siobhán O'Neill. This work is funded by the National Forum's SATLE 2020 grant and aims to provide staff with additional skills, knowledge and support to implement **inclusive assessment practices** into their teaching.

This work is informed by national and international best practice and is predicated on the Universal Design for Learning Framework. Since the beginning of this initiative in June, a number of conversations have been undertaken with colleagues across the country who have substantial knowledge of inclusive assessment in higher education.

These conversations, along with a UCC staff survey that was completed in Semester 1, have informed a benchmarking report and the baseline for the professional development offering. Piloting of this offering will be underway in early 2022.

Details of an **innovative curriculum design approach** which places students centrally as partners in the design process were shared at the October conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The paper described the **Design Sprint initiative** developed by a team in University College Cork which involved 19 staff and 50 students and explored how to integrate sustainability and civic engagement in Higher Education learning and teaching. Following its evaluation and redevelopment, a second Design Sprint will be run in early 2022 and details will be circulated via the weekly Learning and Teaching.

PREPARING OUR STUDENTS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: LAUNCH OF THE SDG TOOLKIT

—

Close to 150 participants from HEI across Ireland and internationally took part in the launch of UCC's SDG Toolkit during VIT&L week. UCC President, John O'Halloran, opened the launch by highlighting the **importance of Higher Education in responding to sustainability challenges and opportunities** both in terms of research and through learning and teaching.

The **SDG toolkit is a web-based resource** developed to assist teaching staff to **integrate the SDGs into teaching and learning.** It includes teaching and learning strategies, videos, databases, case studies and interactive tools. The toolkit also includes mapping tools to help staff realise connections between specific SDGs and their modules, programmes or research while offering self-reflective exercises to guide further SDG integration.

The overarching goal of this SDG Toolkit is to guide students to develop a deep **transformative understanding of disciplinary knowledge and values** aligned with sustainable development, so they are enabled with a mindset to become innovative agents of change and to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world in both their professional and personal lives. The toolkit is being modified for other sectors currently based on expressed need. It is also being developed into a digital badge for Higher Education staff across Ireland and will be available in 2022. **www.ucc.ie/en/sdg-toolkit/**

1 No poverty	2 Zero hunger	3 Good health and well-being	4 Quality education	5 Gender equality
6 Clean water and sanitation	7 Affordable and clean energy	8 Decent work and economic growth	9 Industry, Innovation and infrastructure	10 Reduced inequalities
11 Sustainable cities and communities	12 Responsible consumption and production	13 Climate action	14 Life below water	15 Life on land
16 Peace, justice and strong institutions	17 Partnerships for the goals	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals	Sustainable Development Goals

FOR STAFF

DESIGN SPRINTS:
STAFF DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE TO ENSURE A CONNECTED CURRICULUM

Details of an innovative curriculum design approach which places students centrally as partners in the design process were shared at the October conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning. The paper described the **Design Sprint initiative** developed by a team in University College Cork which involved **19 staff and 50 students** and explored how to **integrate sustainability and civic engagement** in Higher Education learning and teaching. Following its evaluation and redevelopment, a second Design Sprint will be run in early 2022 and details will be circulated via the weekly Learning and Teaching.
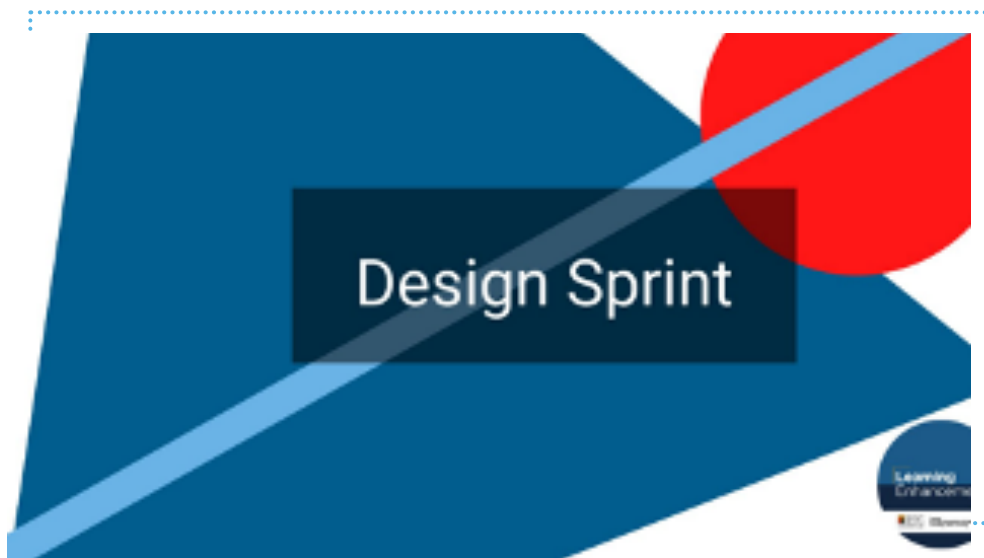
SUPPORTING OUR DIGITAL FUTURE

Dr. Sarah Thelen, new lecturer in Teaching and Learning Enhancement in CIRTL, is leading an **initiative to develop a professional development offering for staff in digital education**. Building on the findings of the DEFT survey which uncovered how staff use technology in their teaching in UCC, Sarah is meeting with College and Department Teaching and Learning and Curriculum committees to understand the **professional development needs of staff** in relation to digital education. These insights will inform the development and rollout of a CPD offering for staff in 2022.

For any questions or feedback, please connect with
Dr. Sarah Thelan
✉ **s.thelen@ucc.ie**

FOR STAFF

THE CENTRE FOR DIGITAL EDUCATION AND UCC 2022

The vision of the Centre for Digital Education is
'...to empower staff to improve student learning through the best practice application of technology.'

Check out our website for more at:
www.ucc.ie/en/digital-ed/about/

As we support the delivery of UCC 2022, our focus has been primarily around actions 1.3.1 and 1.3.3. Some of our recent work is outlined below:

- The Teaching and Assessment Continuity Group, jointly chaired by Tom O'Mara, Head of Digital Education and John McNulty, Director of Academic Services was extended to run up to the end of Semester exams this December.

- The Digital Education for Teaching (DEFT) gathering of staff digital education needs was completed on time and a draft report is with the Steering Group for consideration

- Supported the setting up of the Digital Passport digital badge run by the Skills Centre

- Worked with the Inclusive UCC Project Manager to support the establishment of this project

- Continuing to support the Towards a MultiCampus Microcredentials (MC2) project

- The IUA-led Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning project has created an online digitally badged course entitled 'Getting Started with Personal & Professional Digital Capacity' in conjunction with the

National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.

- Following up from the Digital Education Thematic Review held in April, the Digital Education Leadership Forum (DELF) held its first meeting on 2nd Sept and has begun to consider how best to devise a Digital Action Strategy.

- An academic lead for creating a PG qualification in digital education has begun work in CIRTL.

- Supporting the pilot project on piloting and Assessment Integrity Solution for UCC, managed by the Skills Centre.

- Managing the Teaching Today in UCC website to support staff around teaching and assessing online, overseen by the Teaching and Assessment Continuity Group.

- The Digital Education Leadership Forum (DELF) held its first meeting on 2nd September.

- Running weekly Teach Digi Q&A sessions, Canvas training sessions to support staff around enhancing their digital education offerings

FOR STAFF

TEACH DIGI & ENHANCING DIGITAL TEACHING & LEARNING

—

Semester one has seen more challenges, as well as innovations, in the digital education arena for both UCC staff and students. Therefore, Teach Digi has organised training sessions and relevant initiatives to respond to the needs of staff in this regard, thereby further enhancing the student experience in UCC.

Teach Digi has had a number of initiatives and strands ongoing, including:

1   **Weekly Q&A's**

2   **Fortnightly 'Ag Caint' Podcasts**

3   **Monthly Roundtable Events.**

Our Ag Caint podcast style recordings are accessible on both our Teach Digi website and the Teaching with Technology Canvas resource. This semester we included the student voice within the Ag Caint recording where both a lecturer and their student, or a professional services staff and their student, met with both Clíodhna O'Callaghan, and the EDTL Student Intern, Stephen O'Riordan, to reflect on the role of digital education today. We are hugely grateful to both the UCC staff and students who gave their time in contributing to this exciting initiative whereby they reflected on what was working, what was not working, and plans for the future. Our Student Intern Stephen has kindly developed our new Ag Caint logo pictured here (right).

FOR STAFF

TEACH DIGI & ENHANCING DIGITAL TEACHING & LEARNING

Ag Caint Guests, Semester 1 2021-2022:
 (Accessible on our Ag Caint Sessions page)

- Professor Paul McSweeney, Vice President for Learning & Teaching
- Dr. Amanullah de Sondy, Head Study of Religions & Student, Amano Miurao
- Dr Mohammad Abdulla, Physiology Lecturer & Student, Ethan Shamis
- Dr. Loretta Goff, Academic Integrity Project
- Dr. Luigina Ciolfi, Professor of Human Computer Interaction & Student, Thomas Forde
- Ms. Colette McKenna, Director of Library Services & Student, Cara Long
- Mr. Tom O'Mara, Head of Digital Education with Student Intern, Stephen O'Riordan.

We have created resources summarising these conversations, an example of same is here representing the conversation with Dr. Amanullah de Sondy & Student Amano Miura (shown here to the right).

Our monthly roundtables included three rewarding collaborations:

(1) **September 2021:** Teaching & Learning using Teams, with IT Services

(2) **October 2021:** Inclusive Learning in UCC, James Northridge & the Inclusive Learning Project

(3) **November 2021:** Enabling Student Success by Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning - Students as Partners, (as part of the VIT&L Week) with UCC SU, & Student reps from our Ag Caint series & our own Student Intern Stephen O'Riordan.

We continue to support staff into the New Year through scheduled training and initiatives, as well as more bespoke and customised training sessions for staff. If you would like to book training or learn more about Teach Digi please contact **Clíodhna** ✉ **c.ocallaghan@ucc.ie**

Ag Caint: Key Points

Staff:
Dr. Amanullah de Sondy

1. Challenging to teach online during a global pandemic – especially not being able to see your students!
2. We all felt grounded, and it allowed us to become more sensitive to social injustices. We can't go back!
3. Flexibility was key to adjusting and blended learning is a positive.
4. We have become more efficient and we have become closer through our social injustices.
5. We need to learn from this experience and think about how to be more sustainable and socially active. We should be proud of what we did achieve.

Student:
Amano Miura

1. Learning is a social experience – we are not used to learning in isolation.
2. The social anxiety students often face can make it hard to reach out when online.
3. Tech mistakes can make a lecturer seem more human and approachable.
4. As a person who suffers from IBS, recorded lectures provide me with the flexibility to recap on any part of a missed lecture. It makes education more accessible and fairer for everyone, not just those registered with the DSS.
5. Let's ensure no student is left behind as we return to campus and think about representation in wider university and societal circles.

Resource summarising Ag Caint conversations.

TEACHING TODAY IN UCC AND ONLINE EXAMS

In mid-June, the CDE supported the work of the Teaching and Assessment Continuity Group by creating the new **Teaching Today in UCC** site. This site brought together useful resources from the last eighteen months around digital education and important teaching and learning considerations into one overarching site.

On 23 November, the site was updated to include information on the switch to online exams. Teaching and Learning information from last year's Assessment Hub was moved to Teaching Today while policy and procedural information was consolidated on the **Student Records and Examinations Office** site.

The site includes general information on **Moving Assessment** online and also specific information relating to **Assessment on Canvas**.

There are six channels to support academic staff using Canvas for online assessment:

1. This Teaching Today site with key information below and on the Using Canvas for Assessment One Page Guide

2. The **Teaching with Technology Canvas course**

3. **Teaching with Technology MS Team**

4. Scheduled weekly Canvas training will run from 29 Nov to the exams, dates to be confirmed

5. **Bookable consultations** with CDE Instructional Designers

6. The 24/7 Canvas Help system, available on the left-hand menu of Canvas

DIGITAL EDUCATION FOR TEACHING (DEFT)

The **Digital Education for Teaching project** was undertaken from 9 June to 21 July in UCC, led by Dr Sarah Thelen of the CDE. The aims of this project were to:

- Elicit feedback from all those who teach in UCC about their needs around digital education;
- Determine the teaching and learning needs of those who teach with regard to educational technology in UCC;
- Describe the existing digital education tools and platforms in use in UCC;
- Identify challenges with and limitations of existing tools;
- Perform a gap analysis between existing provision and identified additional needs of educational technology; and
- Produce a position paper outlining the overall situation, including recommendations for change and feasibility planning in conjunction with IT Services.

Sarah is working on the final piece of this project and we hope to have a summary of responses and a plan of action to address issues raised early in 2022. The **figures below give an indication** of who participated in surveys and interviews to inform this project.

Survey 9 June - 21 July 2021 – 138 responses 32 Interviews 3 June - 14 September
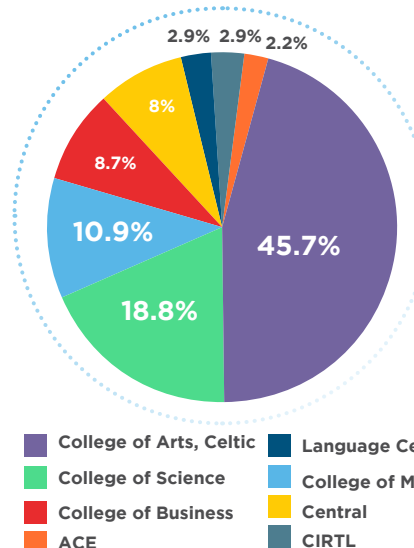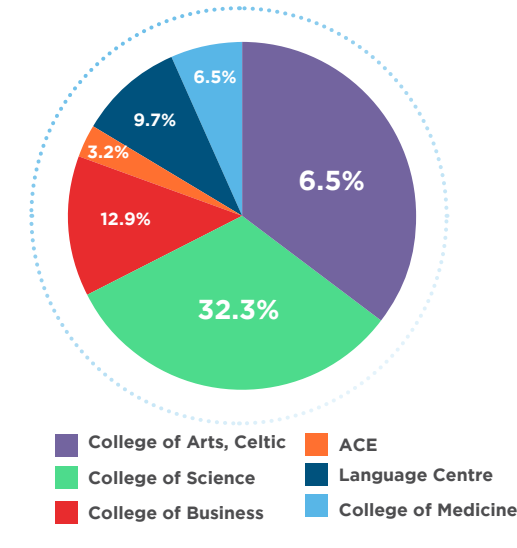
Chart 1: Survey Responses

- College of Arts, Celtic
- College of Science
- College of Business
- ACE
- Language Centre
- College of Medicine
- Central
- CIRTL

Chart 2: Interviews

- College of Arts, Celtic
- College of Science
- College of Business
- ACE
- Language Centre
- College of Medicine

The table below gives an indication of what the responding UCC staff said about their intentions for post-pandemic teaching and learning involving digital education.

Digital Education Plans for Post-Pandemic Teaching	Survey (138 responses)	Interviews (32 responses)
Blended Delivery	39%	22%
Increased/improved use of Canvas (eg. support material, online quizzes	31%	63%
Recording	30%	13%
Meetings Online	10%	16%
Collaboration and Interaction	9%	9%

THANK YOU TO UCC LIBRARY

After almost seven years, the Centre for Digital Education is **moving out of its first home in the Boole Library.** The Library have been brilliant colleagues and wonderfully accommodating and generous hosts in allowing us to use their building over the last number of years.

Thank you very much **Colette, John, Grace, Angela, Lorraine, Maureen and Alan** in particular but all of the other library staff as well who made us feel at home and put up with our boisterousness and non-library demands. We hope the relationships we forged through sharing space will continue into the future.

For now, the CDE is taking up **temporary 'digs' in Sheraton Court** but we hope to find a new permanent home for the centre in 2022. We will keep you posted.
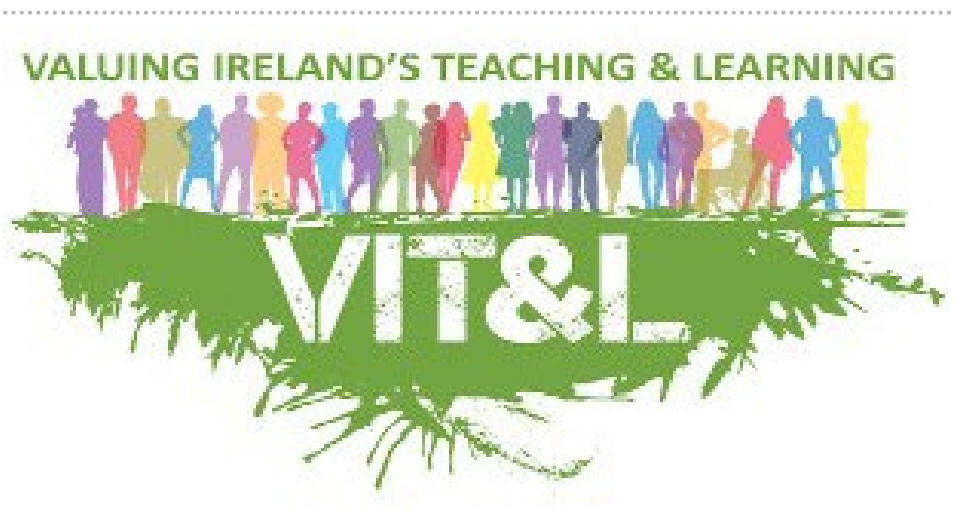
VALUING IRELAND'S TEACHING & LEARNING (VIT&L) WEEK

During November the National Forum for the Enhancement Teaching and Learning in Higher Education encouraged institutions to mark their education communities contribution to teaching and learning. Valuing Ireland's Teaching and Learning (VIT&L) week ran from the 8th – 12th of November and was organised locally through The Centre for the Integration of Research Teaching and Learning. The events were launched by Prof Paul McSweeney on Monday and staff from across the UCC hosted 598 registered attendees at twenty events across VIT&L week including;

* **UCC Opening and Launch of the Civic Engagement Toolkit, Vital Week: Principles and Practices of Open Research**
* **Virtual Tour of the ASSERT Centre, University College Cork**
* **TRANSforming the Curriculum**
* **Student Success, SATLE 2020 project**
* **Virtual Games**
* **The Inclusive UCC project**
* **Preparing our students for a sustainable future: launch of the SDG Toolkit**
* **Cork Prison Education Unit**
* **ELEVATE, SATLE 2019**
* **Enabling Student Success by Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning**
* **Thinking with things**
* **Launch of the Digital Badge in Autism Awareness for Staff**
* **Virtual Laboratories**
* **Launch of Brainpower Digital Badge**
* **UCC Tree Tour**
* **Academic Integrity, SATLE 2020 project**
* **Walk and talk on 'Walking as Critical pedagogy'**
* **Tour of the Calm Zone**

OVPLT and CIRTL would like to sincerely thank the staff and students who contributed to and hosted the events, and the National Forum for Teaching and Learning for funding VIT&L week in UCC. It was a thoroughly enjoyable showcase of the exciting and innovative Teaching and Learning initiatives in UCC.
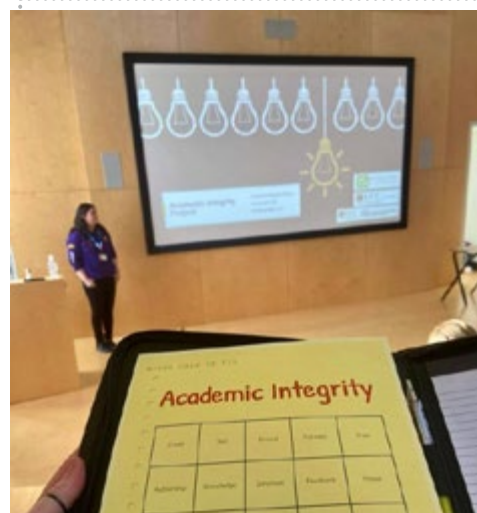
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY BINGO

As part of the National Forum's Valuing Ireland's Teaching & Learning (VIT&L) Week, Loretta Goff and Kathy Bradley hosted an **Academic Integrity Bingo session** on Friday, 12th November. This session was open to all staff and was a fun, interactive way to engage with and reflect on concepts relating to academic integrity, with a focus on fostering a culture of academic integrity across the University. Our plan is to host similar events for students, and this session will be a special preview event for designed for staff.

Loretta introduced **the Academic Integrity Project**, led by the Skills Centre and the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL), and some of the key developments to-date, including new resources to share with students.

OVPLT eNewsletter

Office of the Vice President for Learning & Teaching

February 2022

UCC

University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh