Learning Innovation Network

Learning Innovation Network *Newsletter*

ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (APD)

Since our conference update, the design and development of the Academic Professional Development (APD) programmes in Learning and Teaching has now got under way. The APD subgroup has been active again this month, both in face to face meetings (the subgroup met in Athlone on the 21st October for a full day workshop) and online collaborative tasks. The workshop session in Athlone aimed to facilitate the collaborative process underpinning the design and development of programmes within the different institutes of technology.
Using the LIN APD model (10 ECTS, Level 9 - adopting a blended learning delivery approach), each module is being produced collaboratively and incorporates various amendments which were made as a result of the lessons learnt from the pilot roll out of the DIT validated programmes over 2008/2009. The design and development of these APDs has been broken down into two distinct phases: Phase I will have 3 APD modules ready for delivery in the 2nd semester of this academic year (Feb 2009), whilst Phase II will have modules ready to be delivered in the 1st semester of the next academic year (Sept 2009).

In Feb 2009, 3 accredited modules in Learning and Teaching will be developed in line with the LIN model. These accredited modules will be made available for sharing across the wider IoT community. Currently, the lead institutions who are taking responsibility for validating the following modules, are;

- Athlone Institute of Technology – AIT will be focusing on the Learning and Teaching APD in Higher Education,
- Waterford Institute of Technology – WIT will be focusing on the Assessment and Evaluation APD
- Institute of Technology Sligo – IT Sligo will be focusing on the APD entitled Engaging in Educational Research Practice.

Each APD is being designed and developed with the help and assistance of other members of the Academic Programme Development subgroup (IADT, IT Blanchardstown, DIT, IT Tallaght, IT Carlow, Limerick IT, Letterkenny IT and GMIT).

It is anticipated that each module will be designed in a flexible way which will include the use of case studies, group work and online elements such as discussion fora. It is further anticipated that module development will build upon local specialisms and expertise.

The Learning Innovation Network will, it is hoped, become a means of sharing and supporting these new modules into the future. It is envisaged that the LIN partners will pilot these new modules once they have been accredited and then carry out a further full evaluation of said modules, to ensure that they meet the needs of academic staff as well as being a cost effective way to support appropriate academic professional development.

The philosophy behind the APD course development is very much one of 'collaboration' and community. Through the sharing of experiences in the design and development process and hopefully subsequent collaborative delivery of modules, it is intended to create a sustainable model for capacity building across the IoT sector.

Collaborative curriculum design appears to be a very interesting and challenging but worthwhile experience, and this, LIN believes, reflects the feelings of all those involved in this process.

If you would like to have further information about these modules please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Noel Fitzpatrick (noel.fitzpatrick@dit.ie)

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LIN PORTAL

The LIN portal of teaching and learning resources will be dedicated to supporting academic staff in their demanding and time consuming roles. In addition to being a resource of T&L materials, the LIN portal will also act as a tool for discussion and collaboration. The LIN portal will support the following five functional areas;

1. *Using the LIN portal to offer a wide range of learning and teaching resources* – The LIN portal will offer a wide range of teaching and learning resources to enhance the learning and interaction experience for all stakeholders
2. *Using the LIN portal to support different users* – To enable the LIN portal to support different types of users (i.e. academic staff engaged in teaching, staff involved in research, management interested in keeping abreast of teaching and learning policies from a national and/or international perspective, department of Education, HEA, third level educational advisors, educational suppliers etc.), it will be sufficiently flexible to enable customization and personalization of the look and feel in addition to the customization of extant and new content
3. *Using the LIN portal to support collaboration* – LIN stakeholders *will* have access to a range of collaborative tools
4. *Using the LIN portal to support flexible learning* – The LIN portal will be an efficient resource which will be available 24/7 and which will be supportive yet unobtrusive for the user
5. *Using the LIN portal to support access to a wide range of supportive tools* e.g. e-assessment tools, social networking tools, mind mapping tools etc.

If you would like further information on the LIN portal, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Attracta Brennan (attracta.brennan@gmit.ie)

LIN 2008 CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

The first annual LIN conference - 'Fostering a Student Centred Learning Experience'- took place on the 10th October, 2008 in the Hodson Bay Hotel, Athlone, Co. Westmeath. The entire agenda of LIN 2008 was arranged around the following themes;

- Innovations in Teaching and Learning
- Working within a Modular Environment
- Assessment within a Modular Environment

Despite the inclement weather, the Conference Organising Committee were delighted to see a full attendance. 180 delegates gathered to listen to the various presentations, share experiences with fellow academics, network and be inspired to develop fresh new ideas. These 180 delegates comprised attendees, presenters, poster exhibitors and companies.

The agenda for Friday, 10th October got off to a very lively start with a *Welcome Address* by Marion Coy (President of GMIT). This was followed by the *Opening Address* from Fergal Costello (HEA).

Marion Coy

Fergal Costello

Dr. Frank Mc Mahon

After Dr. Attracta Brennan and Dr. Noel Fitzpatrick had provided an *Overview of LIN*, Dr. Frank McMahon (Director of Academic Affairs, DIT) introduced the first keynote speaker – Prof. Ray Land, Professor of Higher Education and Director of the Centre for Academic Practice and Learning Enhancement (CAPLE) at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow UK.

Prof. Ray Land

Prof. Land's highly thought provoking presentation outlined and invited discussion of a new conceptual framework to inform programme design and assessment – that of 'threshold concepts'. Threshold concepts are akin to a portal, opening up a new and previously inaccessible way of thinking about something. They represent a transformed way of understanding, or interpreting, or viewing something, without which the learner cannot progress. As a consequence of comprehending a threshold concept there may thus be a transformed internal view of subject matter, subject landscape, or even world view.

LIN 2008

Dr. Richard Thorn

Following a much needed refreshment break where delegates were actively encouraged to engage with the poster exhibitors and companies, Dr. Richard Thorn - Director, Flexible Learning and Research at Institutes of Technology, Ireland - discussed workforce education and lifelong learning.

The breakout of delegates into the 3 parallel sessions commenced immediately after lunch. Each parallel session comprised 4 presentations.

After the final Q&A sessions, the delegates reconvened in the main suite to hear the last keynote speaker of the day - Prof. Sarah Moore, Dean of Teaching and Learning at the University of Limerick. Prof. Moore looked at fresh approaches to learning in 3rd level educational settings. Her presentation drew on research and development in teaching and learning to discuss dynamics, climates and cultures that can promote active, creative, successful learning processes for both students and their teachers in 3rd level educational environments.

Prof. Sarah Moore

LIN 2008

Sarah Moore & Gerry Murray

The session rapporteurs - Rosemary Cooper (IT Tallaght), Anne Carpenter (IT Carlow) and Nuala Harding (AIT) - reported back on the most salient points which had emerged from the parallel sessions. Gerry Murray (IOTI) next summarised the coherence of the different themes and the overarching theme of the conference itself.

The first LIN conference was then closed by Brian Bennett (Registrar from IT Carlow).

A post conference survey was launched by the Conference Organising Committee on Oct. 20th. The objective of this survey was to elicit feedback on delegates' experiences of LIN 2008 in order to help the Conference Organising Committee make each successive conference better than the previous one.

The Conference Organising Committee would like to thank; all of those who travelled to LIN 2008; those who both helped on the day and in the weeks preceding the conference and finally those who took the time to complete the post conference survey.

LIN 2008 Conference Resources

A gallery of photographs is available on; http://www.lin-ireland/com/gallery

The following resources are also available on;
http://www.lin-ireland.com/index.php?title=LIN_Conference

- The powerpoint presentations of the 3 keynote speakers
- Audio podcasts of all of the session speakers

Note : Video podcasts will be available within the next month

RECOMMENDED READ

***"Classroom Assessment Techniques : A Handbook for College Teachers"* by Thomas A. Angelo and K. Patricia Cross**

Recommended by Attracta Brennan

In addition to explaining what classroom assessment techniques (CATs) are, how they work and how to get started using them, the heart of this practical book are the 50 classroom assessment techniques which are outlined. Each technique is introduced from the perspective of description, purpose, related teaching goals, and advice on implementation and analysis. Furthermore, examples are provided and suggestions are made on how to adapt and extend each CAT.

'EYE' on IT Carlow

DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCES IN LEARNERS

IT Carlow is leading on a theme of the SIF 1 CONTINUE project to develop emotional competencies in learners. Developments to date include :

- Accreditation of 18 staff in EI and provision of EI competency coaching skills in ITC, ITB, IT Tallaght & IADT
- *Teaching with Emotional Intelligence* a SEDA recognised course delivered by Prof Alan Mortiboys, Birmingham University for academic staff to develop use of emotional intelligence in teaching.
- Research study to assess the contribution of EI to 1st year learner academic performance and retention

Lead: Brian.Bennett@itcarlow
Research assistant: John.Sheehy@itcarlow.ie

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING (PBL) AT IT CARLOW

IT Carlow is joint lead with ITB on a theme of the SIF 1 CONTINUE project to pilot PBL in selected programmes in Engineering, Computing & Business.

Outputs of the project include development of problem pools, metrics and teaching methodologies appropriate to PBL in various discipline areas.

Lead: David.Dennieffe@itcarlow.ie

TEACHING & LEARNING INNOVATION FUND (TLIF)

The TLIF provided seed funding for learning and teaching developments across the institute. To this end it supported, and publicised teaching - focused projects that were defined and implemented by academic staff. 11 received awards under this initiative.

Science Student chosen to represent IT Carlow at the 50th London International Youth Science Forum 2008

TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTRE

The Teaching and Learning Centre was established by IT Carlow to foster excellence in teaching and learning. In the last 2 years the Centre has provided a comprehensive programme of academic professional development - 33 workshops and seminars, with over 500 participants. These campus wide workshops and seminars brought lecturers together to share ideas across subjects and disciplines. They also helped lecturers to develop and improve their skills in teaching, learning and assessment

Furthermore, the DIT P.G. Cert. & Diploma in 3rd Level Learning & Teaching are being delivered in IT Carlow in outreach mode.

LIN & IT CARLOW

IT Carlow is leading the development and accreditation of a LIN funded module entitled *Formative Assessment and Feedback.* This module will introduce academic staff to research and practice in formative assessment and feedback.

LEARNING & TEACHING INITIATIVES

For more information on learning and teaching initiatives contact:
Anne Carpenter at
anne.Carpenter@itcarlow.ie

Winner of the Silver Medal in the EuroSkills 2008 competition in Rotterdam

News & Events

Showcase of Innovations in Teaching & Learning

In June 2008, the first *Showcase of Innovations in Teaching and Learning* took place. This showcase disseminated and shared innovative practices from the *TLIF* and *SIF* projects. The initiative aimed to foster a community of practice, centred on teaching and learning and reflection on experiences in the classroom.

Teaching & Learning Centre Staff

eLearning in IT Carlow

The NDLR has funded the appointment of an eLearning Development Officer within the Teaching & Learning Centre. The role will help the Institute to harness the power of eLearning, integrating good teaching practices with new approaches made possible by internet and other technologies.

Contact:
Damien.Raftery@itcarlow.ie

Research on Teaching & Learning

Two research papers were presented at AISHE by IT Carlow academics:

"Work on your ABS!" by

John Fogarty, Gina Noonan, Department Communications & Business

"Academics' and Students' Perceptions of Assessment Purposes and Practices" by

Anne Carpenter

FOR YOUR DIARY

LIN

12th December - LIT

Empowering staff to support increasingly diverse students' needs with innovative uses of technology
Workshop by Sal Cooke – Head of TechDis,JISC, UK.
Sal will demonstrate and provide links to case studies and resources from the many innovative projects that the JISC TechDis Service supports.

An invite will be sent to all IoTs within the next week, with more information regarding times and learning outcomes.

Contact Mary Fox (mary.fox@gmit.ie) to confirm your place at this workshop. Attendance is free but places are limited.

W: http://www.lin-ireland.com/index.php?title=Workshops

OTHER

12th – 14th November - WIT

NAIRTL (National Academy for Integration of Research & Teaching & Learning) 2nd Annual conference *"Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Challenging Assumptions"*
W:http://www.nairtl.ie

14th November – London, UK

What Really Limits Access: Exploring barriers to thinking and engaging with people with learning and complex disabilities
W: http://www.tavi-port.org/conferences

26th November – IT Blanchardstown

Teaching and Learning seminar – 1pm to 3.30pm
The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown will host a seminar detailing a number of innovations in the area of teaching and learning. This seminar will be of interest to educational practitioners in both 2nd and 3rd level who wish to share ITB's experience of the practical application of innovative pedagogical approaches.

This seminar will showcase presentations on;

- SECASE (Software Engineering Case Studies)
- Learning Styles
- Learning Support
- Accelerating Campus Entrepreneurship (ACE)
- Problem Based Learning

Please contact Aideen Hodgins at ITB to confirm your attendance (aideen.hodgins@itb.ie – tel:01 8851561)

2nd December – Health Sciences Centre, UCD

2nd National Digital Learning Repository (NDLR) symposium
Key Events

- Professor Ronald Barnett, Professor of Higher Education at the Institute of Education, University of London
- Dr. Ahrash N Bissell, Executive Director, ccLearn, Creative Commons
- Case Study presentations will be made by the NDLR Communities of Practice
- There will be two workshops facilitated by
- Chris Pegler, The Open University – "*Contextualising Content across Communities: Using Social Tools to Share Learning*" and,
- John Casey, TrustDR IPR and Jorum – "*Inside Out: Exploring the implications of Adopting an Open Policy for Learning Resources*".

W : http://www.ndlr.ie/events/conference/index.php

LIN PICKS

LIN picks for this month's issue include;

TEACHABILITY website
The Teachability project at the University of Strathclyde promotes the creation of an accessible curriculum for students with disabilities through making freely available informative publications for academic staff.
W : http://www.teachability.strath.ac.uk/

INCLUSIVE TEACHING
This site offers inclusive teaching strategies, by and for staff at Monash, to support students with learning disabilities or mental health conditions so that they have equitable access to the learning environment at Monash.
W: http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/inclusivity/

ECLIPSE CROSSWORD
Eclipse Crossword is easy to use free software that allows you to create professional looking crosswords, both as images for printing or as online interactive crossword puzzles – our thanks to *Damien Raftery at IT Carlow* for this recommendation
W: http://www.eclipsecrossword.com

THE COMMON CRAFT SHOW
A good source of short videos that can be used for educational purposes, including topics such as wikis, blogs, social bookmarking, social media, twitter, RSS and more – our thanks to *Damien Raftery at IT Carlow* for this recommendation
W: http://www.commoncraft.com/show

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We would love to hear of your own personal experiences resulting from your involvement in teaching and learning initiatives and/or projects. Please send any comments/insights/anecdotes/stories to mary.fox@gmit.ie. We will send a flash drive to the author of those experiences we publish

We would also appreciate it, if you would send us recommendations for books related to teaching and learning which you found especially insightful and helpful in addition to any recommendations for useful teaching and learning urls (papers, tools, videos, blogs etc.)

QUOTABLE QUOTES

I hear, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand - Chinese Proverb

The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires - William Arthur Ward

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