Learning Innovation Network

Learning Innovation Network *Newsletter*

ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (APD)

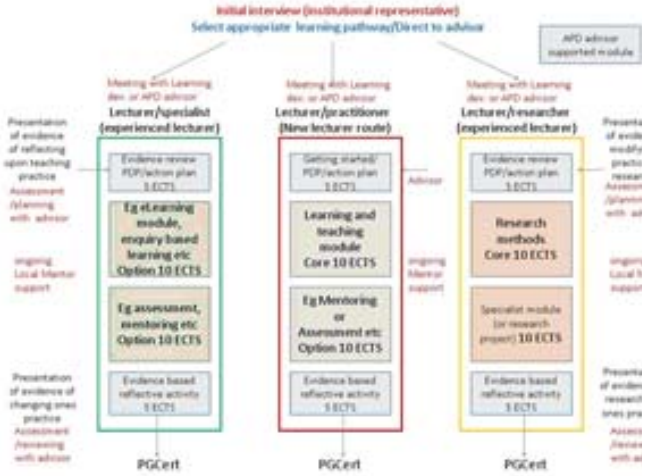
The LIN APD subgroup has continued to support the accreditation and validation of the seven agreed level 9 special purpose awards in Learning and Teaching. Further progress has been made again this month. Over the last few weeks, Dr. Noel Fitzpatrick has met with the institutional teams in Athlone IT, Limerick IT and Blanchardstown IT who are involved in the design and development process. The following table summarizes the current status of the awards. The validation of these modules has been a slower than expected process but a special thanks should go to all those involved. It is now hoped that the validated modules will be advertised shortly and then be piloted in their respective institutes in September 2009.

Special Purpose Awards Level 9 10 ECTS in Learning and Teaching

Assessment and Evaluation	WIT (Anne Jordan/Marion Palmer)
Learning and Teaching in Higher Education	**Validated** AIT (Nuala Harding)
MentoringWIT (John Wall/ Sea	WIT (John Wall/ Sean Moran)
Engaging in Educational Research Practice	**Validated** IT Silgo (Etain Kiely)
Formative Assessment and Feedback	IT Carlow (Anne Carpenter) **Validation in Junction with the DIT**
Technology Enhanced Learning	LIT (Liam Boyle)
Enquiry Based Learning	**Validated** ITB (Hugh McCabe)

There has been a lot of interest generated by other HEA funded projects, namely the NDLR and the IoTi/DIT flexible learning projects, around the development of these modules as part of a shared academic Development programme initiative and the collaborative processes that have been and continue to be involved. All three projects are keen to work together to develop sustainable modules for the sector and have met to discuss where the projects can mutually help one another. As the process of validation and design has moved forward the combination of awards into one overall programme has become a point of discussion. The APD subgroup are currently exploring a number of possibilities.

One possibility would be to provide exemption opportunities from other existing programmes (Waterford, the DIT and University of Ulster) another would be create an award which could combine modules together to make one PG award. To this end the DIT has offered to validate a PG Cert at 30 ECTS which could incorporate LIN modules developed above. The following proposed structure is under consideration :



(see the website for a clearer picture)

This model is under discussion within the APD sub-group, but it would appear to be flexible enough to allow staff either to take an overall programme or to simply take whichever module they think is most suitable to them at that time. An option to then continue onto the programme within a specified timeframe would then be possible.

If you have any questions about the development of shared academic development programmes please do not hesitate to contact; Dr. Noel Fitzpatrick (noel.fitzpatrick@dit.ie).

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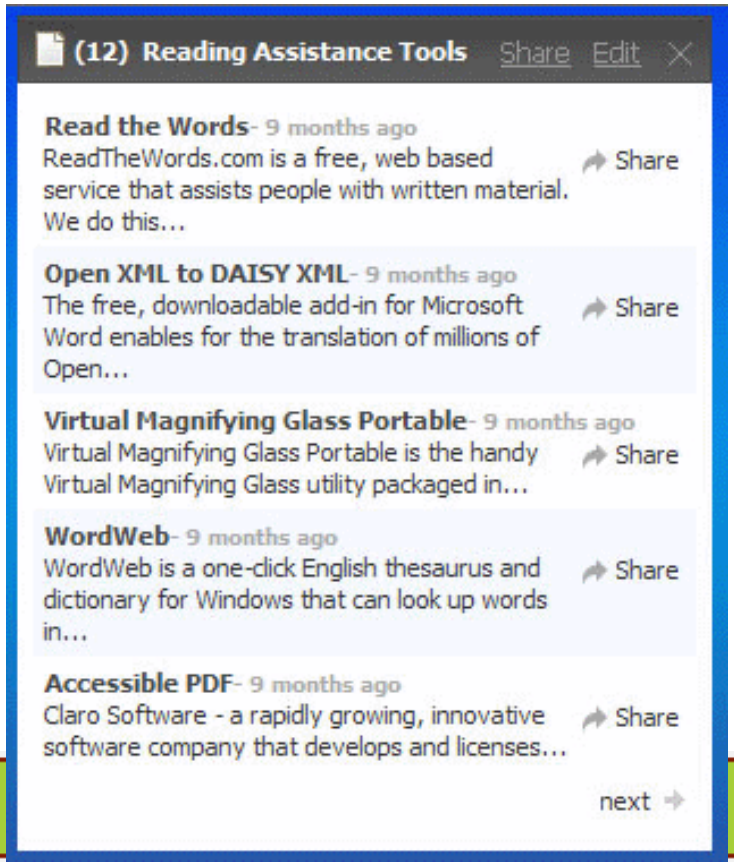
LIN PORTAL

Under the Tab entitled 'Tools', the category 'Reading' includes;

1. Read The words - ReadTheWords.com is a free, web based service that assists people with written material. http://www.readthewords.com/
2. Open XML to Daisy XML : The free, downloadable add-in for Microsoft Word enables for the translation of millions of Open XML documents into DAISY XML, the lingua franca of the globally-accepted Digital Access Information SYstem (DAISY) standard for digital talking books. http://www.openxmlcommunity.org/daisy/
3. Virtual Magnifying Glass - Allows the user to easily use a screen magnifier on any PC he/she uses. http://portableapps.com/apps/accessibility/virtual_magnifying_glass_portable
4. IZoom : iZoom's patent-pending ClearPoint font smoothing maintains crystal clear text quality regardless of zoom level. http://www.issist1.com/
5. Word Web : A one-click English thesaurus and dictionary for Windows that can look up words in almost any program. http://wordweb.info/free/
6. WordTalk : WordTalk is a free text-to-speech plugin developed for use with all versions of Microsoft Word (from Word 97 upwards). It will speak the text of the document and will highlight it as it goes. It contains a talking dictionary to help decide which word spelling is most appropriate. http://www.wordtalk.org.uk/Home/

For more information on the portal, please contact attracta.brennan@gmit.ie



RECOMMENDED READ

"Our Underachieving Colleges: A Candid Look at How Much Students Learn and Why They Should be Learning More" by Derek Bok, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006

Recommended by Anne Carpenter, IT Carlow

President Derek Bok of Harvard University weighs in with some seasoned wisdom on the debate about teaching and learning in American higher education. He responds with balance and real information to the assaults launched by William Bennet, Lynne Chaney, Dinesh D'Souza, Charles Sykes and Allan Bloom.

http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8125.html

RECOMMENDED READ

"The Chicago Handbook for Teachers: A Practical Guide to the College Classroom", Alan Brinkley et al.,. Chicago: University of Chicago Pres s, 1999.

Recommended by Anne Carpenter, IT Carlow

Lots of good practical advice, especially for new teachers and teachers in the first five years of their careers.

http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/075117.html

'EYE' on DIT

DIT LTTC BACKGROUND

The DIT Learning and Teaching Centre was established in 1999. The aim of establishing the centre was '*to develop, support and facilitate good teaching and learning practices across the DIT*'. In 2000, the post of Head of Lifelong Learning was created with responsibility of overseeing the work of the LTC in addition to the pre / post entry support of mature students in association with other central support services. This activity is now supported by DIT mature student recruitment and support officers.

In 2003, following the recommendations of the Technical Working Group overseeing the implementation of the DIT strategic Plan, a Learning Technology Team was established as a three year project to roll out the selected institutional Virtual Learning Environment: WebCT. The task being to have 50% of all DIT programmes with a web presence within the specified timeframe. In January 2009, the LTT and LTC merged to become the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre (LTTC) The new site is available from http://lttc.dit.ie .

LTTC activities have expanded over the years and now include a wide range of DIT Postgraduate programmes, workshops, seminars, events, projects and consultancy services as part of the overall provision of continuous professional development opportunities not only for our academic staff within the Institute but also for colleagues in other Irish institutions.

ACCREDITED ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES IN LEARNING AND TEACHING

Postgraduate On-Campus programmes: The Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and MA in third level learning and teaching was first validated in 2000 through the Directorate of Academic Affairs. A second Masters, the MSc in Applied eLearning in association with the Faculty of Applied Arts was validated in 2006. From 2006, all academic staff appointed to the DIT, and without an equivalent qualification, are required to undertake the PG Certificate within 2 years of their starting date. The programme teams have recently restructured the Masters programmes as two year programmes. Changes to the streamlined versions include a number of new cross programme shared modules as well as a postgraduate conference for research students to disseminate their work in progress. Applications for the September 2009 intake for these 2 programmes or the PgCertificate are still welcome with a closing date of the end of May.

Off-Campus programmes: In addition to the DIT cohort of participants on the PG Cert and following on from the pilot roll out for LIN of the Post Graduate certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching (30 ECTS Level 9) the DIT is running this programme in IT Carlow with 12 participants and Athlone IT with 18. In Athlone, 10 staff from GMIT are taking the programme, this version also runs in a blocked model of seminars and is supported online. Successful IT Carlow PGCert Graduates have continued on to complete a number of DIT PgDiploma modules over this current academic year.

There are also participants from several institutions including the DIT, on the Doctorate of Education which is run jointly between the DIT and Sheffield University.

Short courses in learning and teaching: At the moment, the centre is running two short courses (5 ECTS Level 9) where the content has been adapted to the participants' specific requirements:

1) short course in Learning and Teaching specifically tailored towards library staff teaching Information Literacy within DIT programmes . Content covered includes strategies to support the teaching of information literacy and issues relating to plagiarism in Higher Education.

2) a short course tailored to the needs of the Law Society , supported through Skillnets, that looks at learning and teaching for the legal profession.

Both courses use best practice in blended learning to support the participants throughout and have proved to be very successful. We are hoping to run both of them again later this year.

The LTTC programmes are all well supported by the Library in Mount Street , the biggest library dedicated to educational research in third level learning and teaching in the country.

ELEARNING DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The activities of the Learning Teaching and Technology Centre act as a hub for the overall institute's 2000 staff members who wish to get involved in either further developing their current strategies or developing new skills to better support student learning.

'EYE' on DIT

The roll-out of technology enhanced learning within the DIT has been particularly successful since the LTT was first established and use of an institutional VLE supported: the introduction of technology onto programmes has also allowed a space to be opened where discussions around pedagogy can take place. Staff from the LTTC are also involved in conducting an audit of eLearning within the Dublin Region HEIs as part of the Enhancement of Learning Strand of the DRHEA SIF2 project and as a way to support the development of a network of eLearning excellence.

Webcourses workshops are amongst the best attended workshops within the DIT and the Staff Training and Development Unit working with the elearning Development Officers also provide a timely consultancy support towards the effective use of a variety of elearning technologies. The DIT annual elearning summer school which is now in its fifth year focuses on best practice in the use of technology enhanced learning; the annual event has been very successful. The provisional programme for this year's event is available from http://ltt.dit.ie/lttc/workshops-events/elearningsummerschool/2009ess.html

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT WORKSHOPS

The LTTC run workshops both within Mount Street and also across all the main Campus buildings. These workshops are open to all and are run on a weekly basis. The focus of the workshops this year has been in line with the strategic priorities namely: first year curriculum, diversity and modularisation. Topics covered in this current semester include 'how people learn theory and practice', 'The first year experience, Web2.0 technologies','Making sense of it all - academic transition and the first year student ', 'Active learning in the classroom', 'How to help your students think!' and 'Teaching without Talking'. There have also been a series of workshops around the use of Webcourses, plagiarism and safe assign, assessment and technology enhanced learning. The full list of workshops is available at http://ltt.dit.ie/lttc/workshops-events/january_2009_workshops.html.

LTTC EVENTS

The annual DIT showcase in Learning and Teaching was established in 2000. The focus of this day is both to celebrate learning, teaching and practice within the DIT and to showcase institutional seed funded projects. Presentations, papers, workshops and demonstrations on learning teaching and assessment are given by DIT staff. The winner of the President's excellence in teaching award is also asked to present at this event.

This year, Avril Beehan who received the award in 2008 presented her work on the use of wikis to support learning on her courses. This year over 120 DIT staff members attended the event. A plenary session 'A Student Centred Experience: Learning Spaces – The DIT Campus of the Future' facilitated by Andrew Harrison of DEGW explored some of the possible master planning options for the next stages in the process of the DIT moving towards the Grangegorman Campus. Previous external keynote speakers have included Professor Grainne Conole, Professor Jim Boyle and this Professor Mantz Yorke.

(Avril Beehan winner of the Presidents Teaching Excellence Award, Professor Brian Norton, Professor Mantz Yorke and Dr. Jen Harvey)

EXTERNALLY FUNDED PROJECT RELATED ACTIVITIES

As well as involvement in the SIF 1 LIN project, the DIT chairs another SIF 1 project – the WBL strand of Education in Employment, led by CIT (http://eine.ie/) On the 5th - 6th May 2009, University College Cork (UCC), in association with the "Education in Employment" project will host a Work-Based Learning (WBL) Symposium in UCC. On Wednesday, May 6th the Symposium will consist of a variety of national and international speakers who will speak on work-based learning and the opportunities that exist through work-based learning partnerships. On 24 April the DIT organised a seminar 'Shared perspectives on learning in the workplace' to facilitate an open exchange of views and ideas from across industry and the professions. It was aimed at those interested in learning more about how institutions such as DIT could provide support for organizations in addressing upskilling requirements. Contributions were given by representatives from our industry partners, academic staff and students involved in learning in the workplace.

'EYE' on DIT

The Centre has also organised, with the support of LIN, a one day event on Assessment last May with Professor Graham Gibbs and will be running another full day event on the 5th May : 'First Year Curriculum: Strategies to enhance Retention'. This participative session will focus on the first year curriculum and strategies to support retention under the strands of modularisation, assessment and learning. Currently 70 individuals from all over Ireland are registered**.** Institutional activities to support the development of reusable learning objects as part of the rollout of the National Digital Learning Repository have also been organised this year to support the DIT based Communities of Practice for Physical and Chemical Sciences and Information Literacy.

DIT AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

The DIT has offered awards for excellence in teaching since 1999. The purpose of the awards scheme is

- To affirm the Institute's commitment to teaching excellence
- To contribute to enhancing a learner centred environment as outlined in the DIT Strategic Plan.
- To recognise, encourage and reward individual academic staff for their contribution to teaching and programme development

From 2007, the awards were made at both a school and institutional level. Winners of the School awards are invited to present a selection of evidence from their award winning portfolio to a review panel comprising 7 internal and external members, chaired by the President. In 2008 a student online survey was introduced as part of the staff nomination process.
The DIT has recently introduced a teaching fellowship scheme. The initiative provides money for staff to carry out educational research linked to institutional strategic themes prioritised within the Faculties. Data is then fed back to help inform other initiatives across the DIT. It is intended that these fellowship projects will run over next academic year and focus on areas such as modularisation within the DIT, widening participation and broadening the curriculum. Funding from the Dublin Regional Higher Education Alliance is being used to support this initiative.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH SEMINARS

The Learning Teaching Technology centre coordinates educational research seminars on a monthly basis where staff can attend an informal case study presentation and follow-up discussion. Continuing on from 'What is Education For?' a question posed at the beginning of the year, the papers this semester have focused on the DIT's response through the strategic plan on the move to a more student centred environment. Other topics covered have been" Can eLearning be used to further improve the learning experience, to better prepare students for work in industry?" given by Eileen O'Donnell; "Skills Portfolio in Apprenticeship Education'' given by Dermot McGarthy "Developing & Delivering CPD in collaborative industry partnerships - issues and challenges"; given by Sandra Fisher and David Kirk.
In addition to these research seminars the LTTC has organised a series of first Friday discussions again opening a space for informal discussions around issues of technology and learning, the topics covered this semester have been 'Does Google Make you stupid?' by Brendan Devlin, 'Learning to Learn the wiki way' facilitated by Muireann O'Keeffe and Pauline Rooney. "Sorry do you mind if I take this' looking at the use of mobile phones in third level education and training.

We are also delighted to note that Nobel Laureate, Dr. Carl Wieman, will visit DIT on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 May and will deliver three lectures to invited audiences of academics. Dr. Wieman is renowned as a physicist, and was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2001 for the creation of Bose-Einstein condensation.
However, he is also renowned as a pioneer in the area of learning and teaching, with a passion for developing new and better ways to teach science – at all levels – so that students learn more easily and also learn more.

FOR YOUR DIARY

LIN

Tuesday, May 5th, Grangegorman Campus, DIT (10.00am – 3:30pm)

The First Year Curriculum - Strategies to Enhance Retention by Professor Mantz Yorke Lancaster University & Eddie Conlon, School of Engineering, DIT

This participative event, will be of particular interest to academic staff or programme teams who are currently or about to consider:
* Programmatic or School Review
* Addressing Retention issues on a particular programme
* The development of new programmes

For more information or to book this workshop, please contact miriam.brosnan@dit.ie (01 4027892)

Monday, May 11th, Letterkenny IT, (12.00pm – 3:00pm)

Problem Based Learning by Dr. Brian Bowe

This workshop will begin by introducing the concept of student-centred learning, discussing its central tenets and exploring the implications it has on the roles of the teacher and students and the impact on curriculum development. The initial part of the workshop will encourage the participants to critically evaluate their teaching practices, and to discuss the relationship between teaching and learning. Issues such as content coverage versus learning, constructive alignment and group learning will be explored. From this context, problem-based learning is presented along with similar approaches such as enquiry-based learning and project-based learning.

Thursday, May 14th, AIT, Athlone (10.00pm – 5:00pm)

Student Assessment by Dr. Chris Rust

The first half of the day will consider what the research literature on learning and teaching has to say about assessment, and the implications for assessment practice. In the afternoon, there will be a practical focus on how to reduce the assessment workloads of staff without having a detrimental effect on student learning.

Friday, May 15th, Letterkenny IT (12.00pm – 3:00pm)

Formative Assessment by Martina Crehan

Formative assessment and feedback, in class or on assignments, enables students to restructure their understanding/skills and facilitates more effective learning strategies.

Thursday, May 21st, Dundalk IT (10.00am – 1:00pm)

Interactive Teaching by Dr. Kate Exley

This interactive session will provide a forum to explore a range of ways in which teachers can gain, maintain and build upon students' interests in a Lecture theatre.

For more information on or to book any of the above workshops, please contact LIN@gmit.ie . For all of the above workshops, attendance is free but places are limited and will be awarded on a first-come-first-served basis.

For more information on LIN workshops, please go to; http://www.lin-ireland.com/index.php?title=Workshops

LIN PICKS

ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT BASED LEARNING

In this link, you will find resources for assessing project based learning

W : http://www.gsn.org/web/pbl/plan/assres.htm

PAPERS

Supporting collaboration in my work place through the use of Moodle

W: http://ejolts.net/node/128

How can I encourage my pupils to think critically through collaborative online-learning?

W: http://ejolts.net/node/129

QUOTABLE QUOTES

A man's character may be learned from the adjectives which he habitually uses in conversation - Mark Twain

A hundred years from now it will not matter what my bank account was, the sort of house I lived in, or the kind of car I drove...but the world may be different because I was important in the life of a child – Forest E. Witcraft

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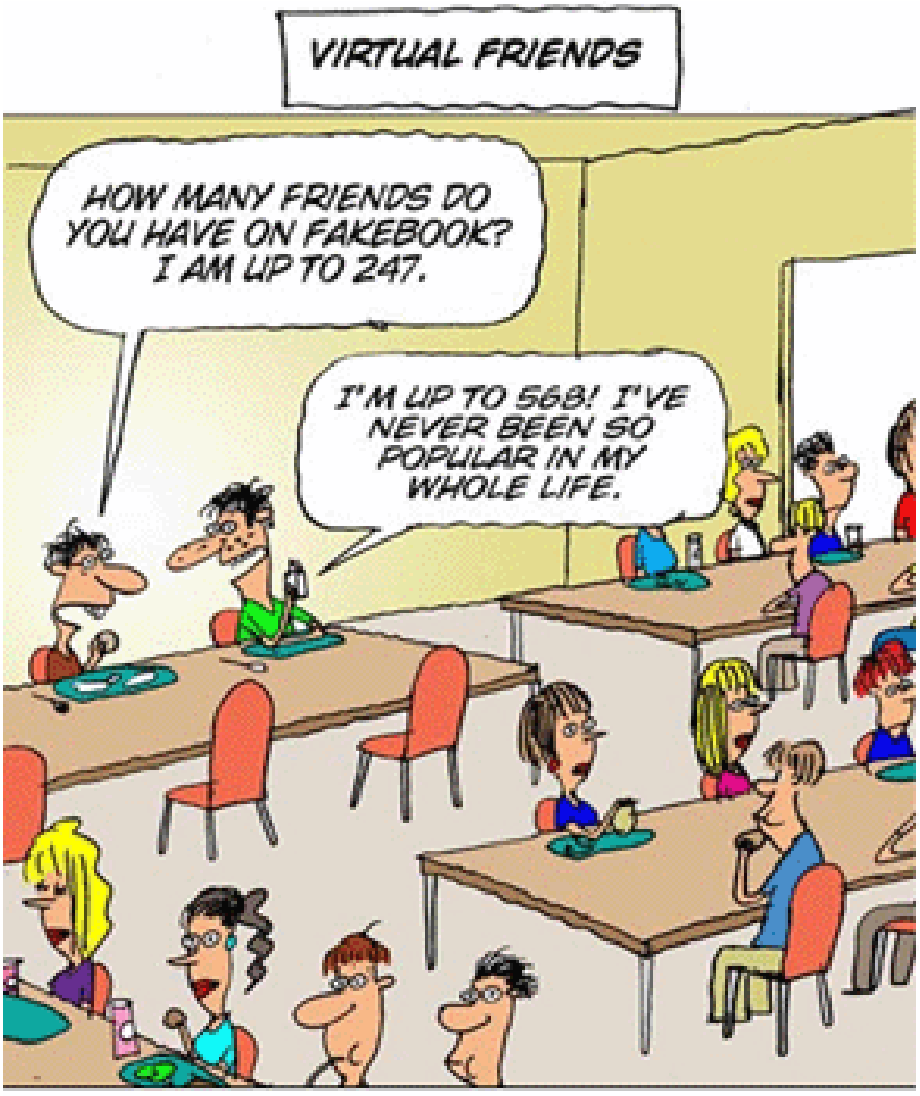
LIN'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT!!!!

Houses had thatched roofs-thick straw-piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying. It's raining cats and dogs.

LIN NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Dr. Attracta Brennan,