



# Learning Innovation Network *Newsletter*

## ACADEMIC PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (APD)

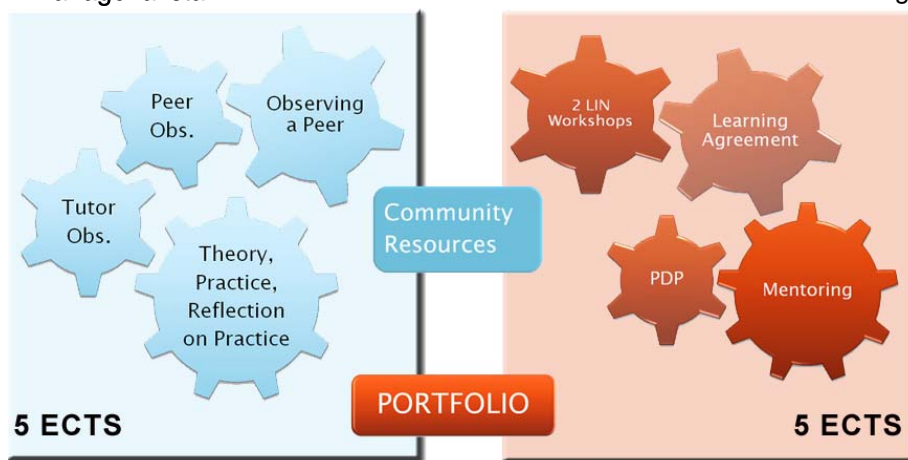
The LIN APD subgroup is charged with informing the Steering Group Committee with regards to the project goal; "To scope the parameters of an agreed Academic Development Programme". To facilitate this process, an adapted version of the DIT Postgraduate Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching, using a blended mode of delivery, was successfully rolled out in Athlone IT and Carlow IT. Nine Carlow staff were involved in this pilot. Thirteen Athlone staff, in addition to two staff from both IT Tralee and IT Sligo attended in AIT. Several other IoTs are also interested in this blended model approach as it is hoped that delivery in this mode would encourage wider participation in the programme. Furthermore, a pilot of a short continuous professional development module was also conducted in AIT. Interestingly, the group participating on this module comprised both student support and academic and managerial staff.

The overall results from the evaluations were very positive and are in keeping with the results from the sectoral survey.

In addition to our work on the development and rollout of academic professional development modules, LIN has also been involved in the delivery of a number of workshops (Learning outcomes, Linking learning Outcomes to Assessment, Changing the teaching of a whole institution) in Athlone, Galway and Dublin.

Podcasts and notes from these workshops can be downloaded from <http://www.lin-ireland.com/index.php?title=Workshops>

LIN also plans to develop a number of short accredited modules (10 ECTS, Level 9) collaboratively across the sector, in the coming year. These modules (whose structure is as shown in Figure 1) will cover such topics as ; Assessment, Enquiry Based Learning, Technology Enhanced Learning, Learning and Teaching in Higher Education and Mentoring.



The LIN APD subgroup is chaired by Dr. Jen Harvey (DIT). It also comprises the following members Dr. Liam Boyle (LIT), Anne Carpenter (IT Carlow), Rosemary Cooper (IT Tallaght), Dr. Attracta Brennan (GMIT), Dr. Noel Fitzpatrick (DIT), Nuala Harding (AIT), Dr. Etain Kiely (IT Sligo), Larry McNutt (IT Blanchardstown) and John Wall (WIT).

For further information about LIN APDs, please contact Dr. Noel Fitzpatrick, [noel.fitzpatrick@dit.ie](mailto:noel.fitzpatrick@dit.ie).

Figure 1 : Structure of a LIN APD

Obs. = Observation  
PDP = Personal Development Planning

Both of these pilots i.e. the adapted DIT PG Cert and the short continuous professional development module were evaluated and reported. This evaluation took the form of module feedback questionnaires and focus group interviews.

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## LIN PORTAL

The LIN portal is currently under development and aims to provide a coherent, sustainable and dependable portal of teaching and learning resources which both supports the stakeholders (i.e. academics, researchers and anyone interested in learning and teaching) in their work and indirectly fosters networks of inter and intra institutional collaboration.

Examples of other learning and teaching portals include:

- Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) [www.jisc.ac.uk](http://www.jisc.ac.uk)
- Higher Education Academy, UK <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/>

## LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS

Teaching awards have become a popular method for recognising teaching excellence in Higher Education. The Teaching Awards subcommittee comprising; Dr. Liam Boyle (Chair), Dr. Etain Kiely, Dr. Attracta Brennan and Dr. Noel Fitzpatrick is currently reviewing the literature related to existing national and international awards with a view to developing guidelines for best practice.

## LIN SECTORAL SURVEY

In early 2008, LIN carried out a sectoral wide teaching and learning survey of teaching and learning activities and needs in all of the institutes of technology in Ireland (Sligo IT was independently surveyed) and including DIT.

This study was targeted at teaching staff and aimed at answering some of the following fundamental questions concerning;

- The level of professional development undertaken by academic staff in their IoTs.
- The desire of academic staff to obtain further professional development training.
- Preferences for either an accredited or a non-accredited route.
- The level of commitment for professional development.
- Academic staff awareness of institutional learning and teaching policies.

- The level of and interest in research in learning and/or teaching and/or education.
- Academic staff views on the advantages and disadvantages of Teaching excellence awards
- Current interest regarding workshops and CPD (Continued Professional Development) programmes.
- The desire for and preferences in the functionality and features of a central repository of learning and teaching resources.

In answer to the question "Would you be interested in obtaining (further) academic or professional development/training in learning and teaching?", all colleges replied with a unanimous yes. On average 82% of all respondents in all colleges were very interested in further academic professional development.

The results from this study showed that;

- Whilst the majority of respondents were very interested in obtaining further academic professional development, their preference on the whole was for accredited short programmes.
- The most popular programme format was a series of one day accredited workshops leading to a qualification.
- Time was indicated to be the main obstacle to further professional training. Other barriers included; lack of credible management commitment and support, difficulty of sourcing suitable workshops/courses, lack of obvious benefits, timetable constraints, external responsibilities, heavy current work load, the difficulty of re-scheduling lectures, institutional policy and red tape etc.
- Respondents were most interested in workshops in; assessment strategies, teaching non-traditional students, e-learning, learning and teaching in HE, blended learning, working in a modular environment, curriculum design, academic writing and recognized prior learning.
- Whilst 90% of all respondents indicated an overwhelming need for a portal of learning and teaching resources, the most important feature - which all respondents desire - is a comprehensive search facility.

For more information on this survey, please contact [attracta.brennan@gmit.ie](mailto:attracta.brennan@gmit.ie)



# 'EYE' on IT SLIGO



Silver Medal  
Euroskills Joinery



Imagine Cup, 2008



2008 Newstalk Student  
Enterprise Competition

IT Sligo students achieving success at national and international level in 2008

## ENQUIRY BASED LEARNING (EBL) AT IT SLIGO

**?** Many courses in IT Sligo have incorporated EBL within their programmes. Industrial Design is delivered solely by EBL in fourth year. Health and Safety courses in Science have prioritised specific EBL modules throughout the four years. Developments include: specific learning environment layouts and resources. An EBL handbook has been developed which includes: scenario templates and assessment criteria. Team leader: *Blaithin McGrath*.

## EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The Educational Development Unit coordinated a series of writing clinics to support research capacity development amongst academics. Educational research paper themes being presented by IT Sligo staff at the Learning Innovation Network (LIN) conference 2008 include: *Interactive Large Group Teaching; Mentoring Tools; Personal Development Planning; Student Centred Learning Strategies using Project and Problem Based Learning*.

## L2L 'LEARNING TO LEARN'

This module was developed to facilitate students' transition into third level and motivate the learner about his/her chosen field of study. The module is incorporated into the first year experience to reinforce and develop key academic skills and

prepare the student for a lifetime of learning. Team leaders: *John O Dea and Marion Dowd*

## WORK BASED LEARNING

Placement resources being utilised by the

Humanities Dept. include: training modules for placement supervisors (*Irish Association of Social Care Educators*) as well as information videos for students on national and international placements. Team leaders: *M Gilmore M. Clarke, M. Mulkeen and T.Kane*.

Custodial Care: Developed with the Irish Prison Service this course has 330 registered students. The programme is delivered by Prison Service and IT Sligo staff using team teaching and distance learning tools. Course Coordinator: *Fergus Timmons*.

## LIN

IT Sligo is leading the development and accreditation of a LIN funded module titled "Developing and Promoting Research Capacity" in collaboration with the IoT Research Alliance. The module will specifically address managing research practice and developing academic writing skills.

## LEARNING & TEACHING INITIATIVES

For more information on learning and teaching initiatives contact: Dr. Etain Kiely: [Kiely.etain@itsligo.ie](mailto:Kiely.etain@itsligo.ie)

## News & Events

IT Sligo warmly welcomes new President Terri Scott who took up her tenure on Oct 1<sup>st</sup> 2008.

Lifelong Learners: International Masonite employees participated in Ireland's first online virtual conferring ceremony

Online Learning: 30 % increase in online learning registrations. For details of techniques used go to

<http://brian.mulligan.googlepages.com>

Webcasts : Public talks are openly available at: <http://sligotalks.blogspot.com>

Science week talks will be available online in November 2008

*National Digital Learning Repository (NDLR) funded 30 graphics tablets and training for academic staff to rapidly create and contribute simple learning objects to the repository.*

Team leader: Brian Mulligan.

*Creative Community and Social Innovation Research Centre has been established in IT Sligo. Team leaders: Chris Sparks and Perry Share.*

Government Minister Jimmy Devins officially opened the IT Sligo Business Innovation Centre (ITSBIC). Manager: J.Gillen.



Educational Development Unit

## FOR YOUR DIARY

### LIN

#### 10<sup>th</sup> October

#### LIN Annual Conference

“Fostering a Student Centred Learning Experience”,  
Hodson Bay hotel,  
Athlone,  
Westmeath  
W: [http://www.lin-ireland.com/index.php?title=LIN\\_Conference](http://www.lin-ireland.com/index.php?title=LIN_Conference)

### OTHER

#### 12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> November

NAIRTL (National Academy for Integration of Research & Teaching & Learning) 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual conference “*Teaching and Learning in Higher Education: Challenging Assumptions*”,  
Waterford Institute of Technology  
W: [www.nairtl.ie](http://www.nairtl.ie)

## LIN PICKS

LIN picks for this month’s issue include;

### IBIBLIO

ibiblio.org is a repository of freely available information, including software, music, literature, art, history, science, politics, and cultural studies.  
<http://ibiblio.org/>

### OPENLEARN

The [OpenLearn](http://www.openlearn.org/) website gives free access to course materials from [The Open University](http://www.theopenuniversity.ac.uk/). The [Learning Space](http://www.learning-space.org/) is open to learners anywhere in the world.

### EDUCATIONAL USES OF SECOND LIFE

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOFU9oUF2HA&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qOFU9oUF2HA&feature=related)

### ONLINE LEARNING: PRIVACY VERSUS PROTECTION

The US Chronicle of Higher Education reported that in a new 1,200 page bill before Congress there "is a small paragraph that could lead distance education institutions to require spy cameras in their students' homes."  
[http://blog.innovatelearning.com/higher\\_ed/2008/07/online-learning.html](http://blog.innovatelearning.com/higher_ed/2008/07/online-learning.html)

## TOP 100 LEARNING TOOLS

This website presents a list of learning tools, compiled from the contributions of **190** learning professionals (from both education and workplace learning) who shared their Top 10 Tools for Learning both for their own **personal** learning/ productivity and for **creating** learning solutions for others.

<http://www.c4lpt.co.uk/recommended/top100.html>

## QUOTABLE QUOTES



Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten - **B.F. Skinner**

The task of the excellent teacher is to stimulate "apparently ordinary" people to unusual effort. The tough problem is not in identifying winners: it is in making winners out of ordinary people - **Patricia Cross**

## CONTACT US

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