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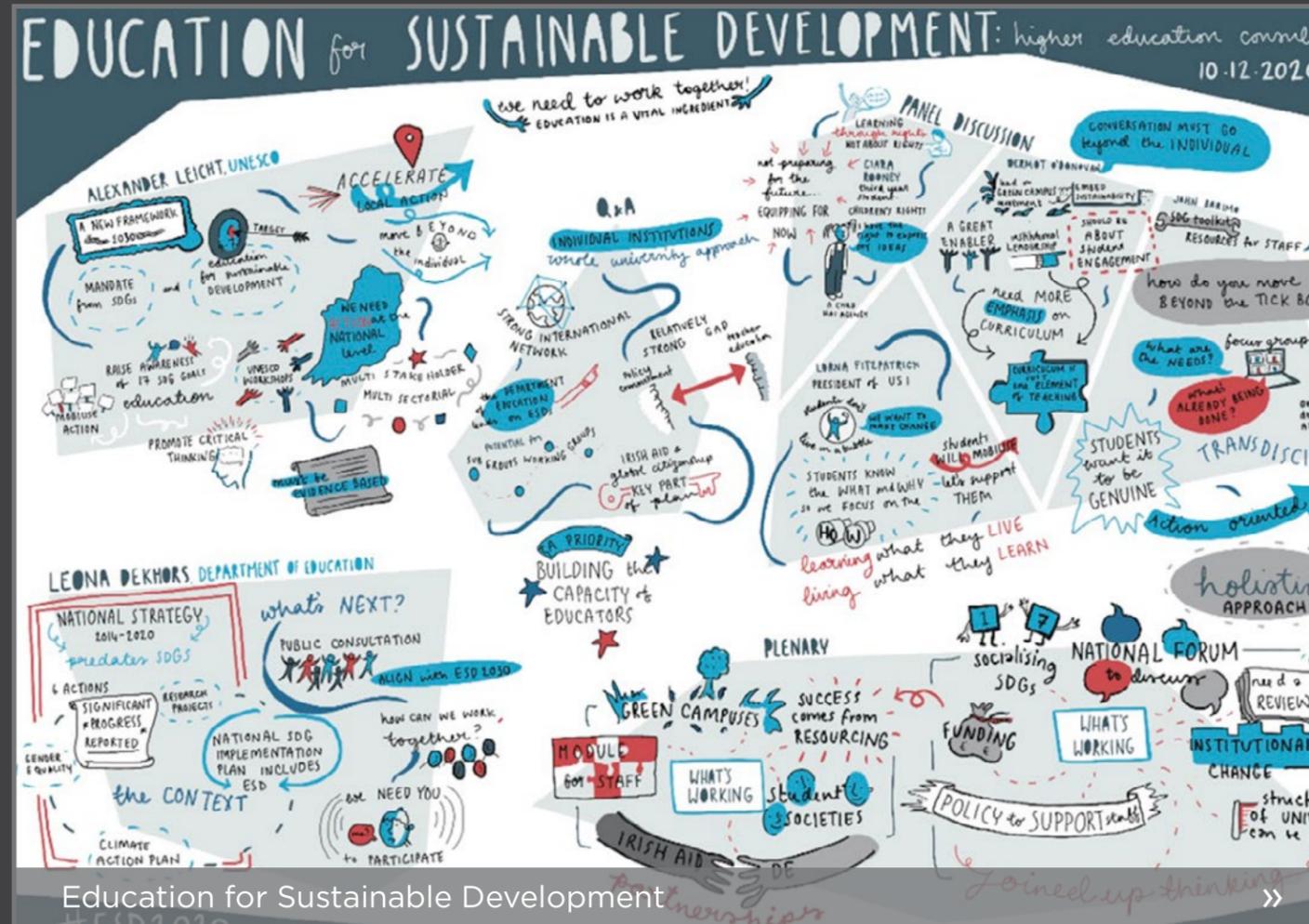
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Welcome to the Winter 2021 edition of the OVPLT eNewsletter



Professor Paul McSweeney, VP Learning and Teaching

Welcome to the winter edition of the OVPLT eNewsletter. The challenges of working from home and balancing work and home life has certainly not dampened the enthusiasm and dedication of our colleagues across the University. This edition is packed full of stories of achievement, commitment and optimism.

The annual Staff Recognition Awards were held virtually for the first time, on 8th October 2020 and four Awards for Excellence in Teaching were presented. UCC prides itself on being a student-centred university. This awards scheme 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. The successful nominees for 2020 were Professor Louise Crowley, School of Law, Dr Gerard McGlacken, School of Chemistry, Dr Katharina Swirak, Department of Sociology and Criminology, Dr Sharon Lambert and Dr Angela Veale, School of Applied Psychology (Team Award). In this edition, some of the awardees discuss their research and award winning teaching projects. More stories from awardees to follow in the next edition.

We hope you enjoy reading this Newsletter and would like to thank all our contributors across the OVPLT and the wider university, for further information or feedback, please contact Jacqui at j.churcher@ucc.ie

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul McSweeney". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Professor Paul McSweeney
VP for Learning and Teaching

Excellence in Teaching Awards 2020

Team Award for the co-directors of MA in Applied Psychology



Above: Dr Sharon Lambert,
School of Applied Psychology

Dr Sharon Lambert joined UCC in 2014, prior to this Sharon worked in a number of positions with a strong advocacy function for marginalised and socially excluded groups. Sharon's research interests have emerged as a result of her frontline work and she conducts research on psychological trauma, mental health, addiction and homelessness, in addition to secondary traumatic stress which is the impact on staff and organisations, of working with socially excluded groups.

Sharon's research is embedded within the community and research is generated in collaboration with a range of community-based organisations (National Family Support Network, Focus Ireland, HSE Addiction Services, the National Ambulance Service etc.) Sharon is co-director of the MA Applied Psychology along with her colleague Dr Angela Veale who also conducts research with socially excluded groups such as migrants and refugees. This partnership has resulted in the MA program being very focused on current societal challenges, the application of psychology to applied settings and research-based teaching. Sharon was awarded the President's award for impact in 2018 and this year Sharon and Angela were jointly nominated by the 2019/20 MA cohort for the President's Award in Excellence in Teaching, the students cited their commitment to social justice issues and suing academia and psychology to impact on policy and practice.



Above: Dr Angela Veale,
School of Applied Psychology

As a psychologist, the ideas and experiences that influence my teaching are far-ranging. Early in my career, as part of my fieldwork with street children, I travelled to Brazil and met with a new type of educator, "street educators"; those from the same communities as street children and who went to meet them in the street and teach them there. The teaching was on the risks of sniffing petrol and the use of drugs, HIV and Aids but also on how to mobilise together to advocate for safe spaces to sleep, for the right to education and a better life. In meeting with the leaders of this movement, I was introduced to critical community psychology and human rights perspective. I later conducted fieldwork in Ethiopia,

Rwanda, northern Uganda, Sierra Leone, UK and Ireland. I made the principles of action-reflection-action that was central to participatory action research paradigms central to my teaching. My research motto as far as possible is 'No research without action.' I trained as a Child & Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapist in TCD and this training enormously impacted on my teaching as the model of supervision- a process of accompaniment in which teacher and students reflect together on the work - is now my own supervision model. This influences my teaching of qualitative research, - in addition to the technical skills of method and analysis, I incorporate a focus on the relational quality of the work; the task of entering and leaving the research relationship; the notion of 'voice', participation and critical reflective practice. In the past few years, I've been lucky to work in diverse contexts from researching with Concern in northern Lebanon to working with Dr Naomi Masheti in the Cork Migrant Centre (CMC). With CMC Women's group, we collaborate on a MA module bringing students and asylum seeker women together over a semester- online this term but to our surprise, it's all working well!

Dr Angela Veale

Engaging students and the public in Organic Chemistry



Above: Dr Ger McGlacken, School of Chemistry

Dr Gerard McGlacken

I was really delighted and honoured to receive the President's Award for Excellence in Teaching and Learning this year.

Approach and Inspiration

My approach to a number of the modules I teach, is to grab the students' attention in the first lecture. This will probably not involve the subject material per se, but might involve the role that organic chemistry plays in our lives, the role that organic chemistry plays in the pharmaceutical industry in Ireland, or maybe a focus on the leaders in the field, or the 'faces' of organic chemistry. I even talk about the (fairly accurate) organic chemistry in the TV series *Breaking Bad*. I also give my personal

experience of working with one of the great synthetic chemists, Prof Robert Holton, who was the first to synthesise the blockbuster anti-cancer drug Taxol.

I was always interested in teaching. My Dad and a number of my family are teachers, although I was in 2nd year at NUI Galway before I really decided that I wanted to be a Lecturer. We had a really great Lecturer, Dr Niall Geraghty, and everything he said made sense! There is a great logic to organic chemistry!

Of course wanting something and attaining it are very different, and Lectureships are extremely competitive. In fact, getting a good first postdoctoral position is maybe the biggest hurdle to an academic position. I was very lucky to be taken on by a great Mentor at the University of York, Prof Ian Fairlamb. He was very young at the time, and I think we made a really great team. I learnt a lot from him. He had an honesty about him, and confidence to admit that he didn't know all the answers. I think they are very important virtues, that all teachers and researchers should have.

Research-Led Teaching

Research-led teaching is a very important aspect to what we do. Our undergraduate teaching

should be informed by state-of-the-art research. Recently, during the Christmas holidays over a 2 year period, myself and a number of volunteers (undergraduate and postgraduate) came into the lab to carry out some experiments! The idea was to apply some cutting edge 'C-H Functionalisation' chemistry to an undergraduate setting. This really was research-led teaching at its best, as we also had to design new reaction conditions to make the experiments suitable for undergraduates. This was a very enjoyable experience, and a number of the undergraduate volunteers are now carrying out PhDs! We **published** our results in the *Journal of Chemical Education*.

My Research

My core research involves devising more environmentally friendly approaches to pharmaceutically relevant molecules, and devising routes to completely new molecular entities. In organic chemistry we consider a 'Chemical Economy'; this might involve using 'catalysts' to enable or speed up a reaction, using conditions that are better for the environment. A key focus of our research involves using a small number of steps in any process, we call this 'Step Economy'. We recently **published** a new approach, in one of the top journals in organic chemistry,

to make carbon-carbon bonds by combining two well-known reactions in a single pot reaction. As it turns out, the side products from the first step actually help the second! So it's almost like repurposing waste!

Ireland and UCC is a great place to undertake organic chemistry, as we sit in one of the biggest clusters of pharmaceutical companies in the world.

As organic chemists, we really can make almost any molecule now, given the time and the finances! And so our experience should, and can, be harnessed by a number of other disciplines such as materials and analytical chemistry. But probably the most interesting area of overlap for me is with the biologists, especially in the area of antimicrobials. This is a great area of science to interact with the public, and we do as much as we can, via the mainstream media such as RTÉ **Brainstorm** or other interesting formats for science communication, such as **Famelab**.

Ger is a Senior Lecturer at the School of Chemistry and the Analytical and Biological Chemistry Research Facility.



Above: Dr Katharina Swirak, Department of Sociology and Criminology

What happens when your classroom moves from the UCC Campus to Cork Prison? What happens when your students are both BA Criminology ('outside') students as well as incarcerated men ('inside') students? For me, this meant the most challenging, enjoyable and humbling teaching experience so far in my teaching career. The 10-credit undergraduate module, *CR2022 Inside-Out Criminal Justice and Social Justice*, was the first Inside-Out Programme offered in Ireland in a University-Prison partnership during Semester 2 of 2020. Bright and early, every Tuesday morning for 9 weeks (with the last 3 weeks

Inside-Out Prison Exchange Programme: UCC Students and Incarcerated Men Studying Together

"You can let go of my hand now, the ship is calling you. I know, it's sad we must part, but you must go. Don't worry, honestly, I will be fine, I assure you. Farewell my academic friend."

Closing words from an Inside-student's evaluation

delivered by correspondence due to Covid-19), 11 outside students, my co-facilitator Dr James Windle and I met outside Cork Prison on Rathmore Road. We would be spending the next 3 hours with 14 inside students, in one of the state-of-the art, bright and airy teaching classrooms of the Education Unit of Cork Prison: fiercely debating, meticulously analysing and laughing a lot.

The study of prisons, carceral institutions and practices is one of the central elements of our 3- year BA Criminology degree. Frustrated by the criminological gaze on incarcerated persons as 'others', I was searching for a means of engaging our students with Cork Prison beyond occasional site visits and guest lectures. Through Professor Maggie O'Neill's introduction to the *Inside-Out Prison Exchange Programme*, founded by Lori Pompa in Philadelphia/US in

1995, I was offered the opportunity to be trained as an Inside-Out facilitator in a week long training in June 2019 in Canada. My teachers were incarcerated men in Nanaimo Prison, Lori Pompa and Vancouver Island University staff. My peers were Criminology, Law, English literature, Drama and Zoology university professors, from the US, Canada and the Netherlands and the training experience truly transformed my perspectives on and engagement with teaching and learning.

The delivery of a programme to both inside and outside students within the walls of a prison, required meticulous preparations. Risk assessments, security briefings, strict behavioural guidelines and the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between UCC and Irish Prison Service took several months of preparation. Students were carefully selected for participation

and without the enthusiasm and support of Cork Prison Governor Peter O'Brien and the Head Teacher of the Education Unit in Cork Prison, Edel Cunningham, Inside-Out would have not been possible.

Based on Freirean principles of emancipatory pedagogy, *CR 2022 Inside-Out Criminal Justice and Social Justice* was devised as a second and third year BA Criminology module, including all rigorous quality control measures and assessments involved in the delivery of a University module. Following the tailor made curriculum, students prepared weekly readings and throughout our sessions engaged in small group discussions, debating as to who is authorised to define 'crime'; how we can differentiate between 'social harms' and 'crime' or how strategies of 'denial' operate. We did this by deconstructing imaginative

stories of harm, by annotating and discussing key criminological texts and popular media narratives. In other weeks, students formed teams of 'architects', designing and drawing ideal spaces of rehabilitation, offering opportunities to challenge our views on what punishment means. Students also kept 'sound diaries' to explore through reflective writing how 'sounds' and 'emotions' are connected to lived experiences of confinement.

The Inside-Out pedagogy is aimed at building bridges between people who may otherwise never get a chance to meet and every interaction in the classroom is designed to facilitate genuine

dialogue that transgresses and at the same time transforms boundaries. For example, one of the rules of Inside-Out is that students always sit in a circle, alternating inside and outside students, and this symbolic practice of equality, weaves itself through every conversation, exercise and assignment of the module.

Community-building games and exercises exploring some of the themes covered in the module at the beginning of every session contributed to a lively classroom atmosphere, allowing very personal views and experiences to be shared freely. This helped both student cohorts to overcome mutual distrust, nervousness and insecurity and

approach one another as peers. Drawing on more critical and radical schools of criminological thought, inside and outside students embarked on the mutual journey of realising that clear-cut answers to social problems rarely exist. Through participation in the module, students were trained in confidently expressing their informed and nuanced views. Criminology can draw heavily on individualising narratives of crime and social harm, often oversimplifying the role of wider structural contexts. The curriculum designed for Inside-Out sought to overcome this dualism, by systematically encouraging students to draw on their own lived experiences through reflective journaling, and then using

sociological texts to locate these personal experiences within broader societal processes.

I can warmly recommend the Inside-Out training (www.insideoutcenter.org/) to any interested colleagues in any academic discipline and would be happy to chat to anyone interested. I conclude with one of our outside student's reflections on the module, which gives me great hope that it has achieved what we set out to do, and we will be back in Cork Prison as soon as Covid-19 allows us to do so.



"I walk away with a different perception of those in prison as I always felt like I was sat beside equals. Although we only met a few people in prison, the acknowledgment, contributions, and respect shown by the students which we did meet has altered my perceptions greatly."

From an 'outside' student's evaluation

Visioning the Future, Enhancing Artistic Research Pedagogies in Ireland

VISIONING
THE FUTURE

Visioning the Future: Artistic Doctorates in Ireland is a Teaching and Learning initiative to support doctoral provision in performing arts (Dance, Music, and Theatre) and Film and Screen Media. The project is based in the School of Film, Music, and Theatre and asks what we can learn from previous practice and research into the pedagogies of the Artistic Doctorate, and how this relates to the Irish context. Artistic doctorates (where creative practice is on equal footing with writing) have been in place for over thirty years, yet its pedagogies and protocols vary extensively across contexts, countries, and fields. This

project aims to develop best practices and to create Open Educational Resources (OERs) for supervisors, students and examiners informed by current research. The initiative is led by Professor of Creative Practice, Jools Gilson, funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, and supported by a lively team: postdoctoral researcher Inês Bento Coelho, and research assistant Michael Ryan.

Visioning the Future was to include an international symposium and a series of workshop intensives. In re-imagining how we

might do this differently once the pandemic hit, we were grateful for input from UCC colleagues Orla Murphy, Head of Digital Humanities, and Dr Sarah Thelen, instructional designer. Both Orla and Sarah helped us think through how we could bring experts and audiences together in meaningful online knowledge exchange that didn't exhaust them. When we began, it felt risky to hold an event for one hour a week for several months, but we soon realised this actually made it palatable for a new world where online lives had suddenly expanded exponentially. We changed our public delivery to a weekly online seminar series, which has had considerable success in terms of the number of attendees, the calibre of our speakers / debate, and the fact that it is now documented as an online resource. The pandemic also gifted us the availability of high-profile speakers at short notice. Our fifteen seminars over three months included speakers with specialised knowledge in artistic research in performance, dance, music, and film across the EU. We also strengthened our ties across Irish institutions by collaborating with colleagues



Pictured (l-r):
Professor Jools
Gilson, Inês
Bento Coelho
and speaker,
Paulo de Assis

at NUI Galway, University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College and Trinity College Dublin who brought their perspectives on artistic research to the online seminars. In addition, we conducted one-to-one interviews with PhD candidates and supervisors across Ireland on their experience of the doctorate, examining the scope of artistic practice in the research degree. Informed by the seminars and the interviews, we are now devising OERs for staff and students to support doctoral education. They will be freely available on our website in January 2021.

This year brought many challenges but also highlighted an opportunity for us to explore learning and teaching approaches outside traditional academic forms. We became more adept at developing and delivering knowledge exchange activities online, and successfully dealt with unexpected technological obstacles with good humour and a sense of adventure. Our reach went far beyond what we expected, with participants connecting to the seminars from USA, France, Austria, UK, Finland, Ghana and further field. Most importantly, we now have a rich archive of seminars accessible

to all which covers a wide range of topics, from PhD supervision, examination, funding, and challenges in artistic practice, to case studies of artistic research projects. If you are interested in finding out more about *Visioning the Future*, check our website (artisticdoctorateireland.com) or contact us directly.

Jools Gilson (jgilson@ucc.ie) & Inês Bento Coelho (ines.bentocoelho@ucc.ie)



OVPLT to distribute €458,000 in Learning and Teaching Enhancement Funding

The Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund 2020 (Transforming Teaching and Learning from Student Success) is a joint initiative of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching & Learning and the HEA. The fund is designed to form a coherent basis to drive teaching and learning innovation and enhancement across the higher education sector, bringing together teaching and learning expertise and institutional priorities. The fund will be utilised to support a range of Learning and Teaching enhancement initiatives aligned with institutional priorities. An open call for seed funding to support small-scale initiatives centred on assessment and feedback approaches (max €2000 per initiative) will be launched in Spring 2021. The call is administered in UCC by the OVPLT through the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL).



A European lens on Employability

A broadened definition of employability was agreed by the participants in the European University Association's thematic peer group including staff from UCC and nine other HEIs. This definition encompasses the totality of student development and seeks to equip students to become citizens of the world, as well as the future job creators and workers.

The Thematic Peer Group project is an initiative of the EUA and is focused on peer exchange of good practices on areas of direct concern and relevance to European Higher Education. Chaired by

UCC's Vice President for Learning and Teaching, the group featured staff from a range of institutions in nine countries including: Finland, Georgia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Russia and the UK. The work of this year's group will culminate in an interactive workshop at the 2021 EUA Learning and Teaching Forum.

A summary post by Dr O'Mahony was published by the EUA distilling the learning from the project <https://eua.eu/resources/expert-voices/202:reimagining-employability.html>



UCC partnering in European Leadership project in Learning and Teaching

UCC was successful in a competitive process to engage in the EUA LOTUS project (Leadership and Organisation for Teaching and Learning at European Universities). The project aims to contribute to capacity building and strategic change management for learning and teaching at higher education institutions across Europe and to demonstrate the potential of various actors (ministries, university associations, student and staff unions, etc.) to support transformation and innovation in learning and teaching. LOTUS will also address the key challenges that institutions face in priority areas of the EHEA reforms (such as student-centred learning, digitalisation, teachers' professional development, institutional organisation and quality management), and seek ways to build them into an overarching institutional framework, thus relating learning and teaching to other parts of institutions' missions. This project will be led in UCC by Professor Paul McSweeney and will bring in key areas of OVPLT such as CIRTL, the CDE and the Skills Centre as well as linking with Learning and Teaching champions and aligning with institutional initiatives.



A UNIC collaboration to foster European mobility

CIRTL is a partner in a €5million pilot project funded by the European Commission to establish a European University of Post Industrial Cities (UNIC). Coordinated in UCC by Dr Jean van Sinderen Law, External Relations, this project brings together eight universities from eight European countries including University of Deusto (Spain), Ruhr University Bochum (Germany), University College Cork (Ireland), Koç University (Turkey), University of Liège (Belgium), University of Oulu (Finland), University of Zagreb (Croatia) and Erasmus University Rotterdam (coordinator, the Netherlands). The project aims to develop innovative and sustainable means of university collaboration that will boost student and staff mobility while fostering social inclusion and furthering societal impact. The UCC project partners include ISS21, Civic Engagement, Research and Innovation and the International Office.

For more information see <https://www.unic.eu/>

GATHERING AND USING STUDENT FEEDBACK TO INFORM TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT



Dr Catherine O'Mahony
Director, Centre for the Integration of
Research, Teaching and Learning



Dr Laura Lee
Research Manager,
Centre for the Integration
of Research, Teaching and Learning



James Cronin
Lecturer, Teaching &
Learning Enhancement,
Centre for the Integration of
Research, Teaching and Learning



Student Voice in Evaluating Teaching

CIRTL staff provided a professional development session for staff from HEIs in Haiti as part of the Erasmus+ EMINENT project, coordinated by the Quality Enhancement Unit in UCC. The project is focussed on equipping Haitian Higher Education Institutions to establish, develop and implement a quality framework and infrastructure. The video featured Catherine O'Mahony, James Cronin and Laura Lee and covered a range of considerations when gathering and using student evaluation to inform teaching, learning and assessment. The video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/y-T1him61N8>

REMOTE INVIGILATION IN UCC

An explainer by Tom O'Mara, Head of Centre for Digital Education

Remote Invigilation or Proctoring is very topical at the moment as education providers adopt increasingly online forms of assessment. In UCC, there are several conversations happening on this topic, so it is perhaps useful to consider what we mean by the term.

'Remote Proctoring' refers to the use of technology to oversee an examination from a distance. 'Proctoring' is the term generally used in the United States, while 'Invigilation' is what we tend to use in Ireland.

The concept stems from a belief that students taking exams online require some degree of invigilation, in the same way they would be invigilated during an on-campus examination.

'Remote Invigilation' has become synonymous with a particular range of software solutions that provide a wide range of solutions. These activities can be carried out by human invigilators sitting in front of a bank of screens or in some case by artificial intelligence systems.

I believe though that **we need to reclaim the term 'remote invigilation'**. We

might imagine that there are lighter touch options that do not require the implementation of additional software. For example, a Lecturer may ask students to check in during an exam using MS Teams to confirm their identity. You could also ask students to record themselves taking an exam using Panopto. You could also require students to use Canvas' Ask My Lecturer a specific Question function during a timed Quiz. All of these are a form of remote invigilation in my view.

Many of the issues that people raise around remote invigilation tend to be about Remote Invigilation software, and most of these need careful consideration. We do not currently run remote invigilation software in UCC, but it is expected we will have a pilot project running in 2021 with two disciplines requiring additional rigour for professional accreditation.

To read more about this topic and some of the more critical issues relating to it, please go to www.ucc.ie/en/digital-ed/happenings/

Tom O'Mara, Head of Centre for Digital Education

UCC Assessment Hub

The **UCC Assessment Hub** went live on 13 November. Combining resources from across UCC, the site supports academic staff in delivering end-of-module and continuous assessments in the changing environment necessitated by the evolving COVID-19 restrictions. The site was built by Sarah Thelen from the CDE with content from the Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning (CIRTL), the Student Exams and Records Office, Academic Programmes and Regulations, Disability Support Services, and other offices from across UCC.

Providing advice about designing online assessment as well as links to UCC offices and services, the Assessment Hub supports all aspects of the assessment process and provides information on the **key dates** relating to scheduling of exams and the provisional release of marks, **assessment design** and **delivery** (including information on supporting DSS students), and resources for **grading assessments** including COVID-related changes to procedures around exam boards, viewing scripts, and returning marks. The Assessment Hub also includes links to **assessment-related policies** such as plagiarism, mitigation, and the appeals process and an overview of the offices and contacts who provide **assessment services** such as the exam timetables, exam paper cover sheets, scheduling of exam boards, accessing broadsheets, etc. Lastly, the Assessment Hub includes a page of resources around **using Canvas for assessment** and useful checklists for building and delivering online assessments.

UCC'S DIGITAL BADGES UPDATE



UCC's Digital badging initiative continues to grow in popularity. There are now 70 unique digital badges with 67 of these in circulation, an increase from 45 in the previous academic year and the number of recipients doubling from 1,138 to 2,362. All four colleges – CACSSS, COMH, B&L & SEFS and those in Professional Services are represented with the acceptance rate¹ currently at 66%.

In response to the COVID crisis, several new badges were developed to acknowledge the skills and attributes UCC and non-UCC personnel have acquired during this time. Examples include the digital badge in 'Climate Law and Governance for Engaged Citizenship' created by the School of Law and the 'Connected Curriculum' badge by the Registrar's Office, the latter proving to be very successful with 155 recipients in receipt of the badge so far.

¹Acceptance rate: refers to the number of earners who have downloaded a badge from the Open Badge Factory platform.

ASSESSMENT IN THE LANGUAGE CENTRE

In line with UCC's 2018-22 Academic Strategy, the LC has been working on the construction of a new Curriculum and Assessment paradigm for the Centre's Academic English courses. This involves aligning all parts of the teaching and learning experience, including teaching content, classroom learning activities and assessment of English language progress and proficiency. Although the LC teachers themselves bring a breadth and depth of teaching experience to this project, the Assessment Team has been actively seeking perspectives on Assessment from outside the discipline of English Language Education. Fortunately, they do not have far to look. CIRTTL, UCC's resident education specialists and pioneers of innovation and change in tertiary level education, has a diversity of pedagogic expertise which they are happy to share with colleagues. In this spirit of

collaboration, CIRTTL lecturers will meet with the LC Assessment Co-ordinator in January to share ideas about Assessment and Assessment Policy. It is hoped that this will yield fresh insights into course and assessment planning for students with broader educational horizons who are transitioning through LC English courses into field specific disciplines through the medium of English.



Above: Shane Sweeney, UCC Language Centre

Autumn Teach Digi Series

The Autumn Teach Digi series finished on November 25th last, with a talk from the National IUA Student Intern Ruairí Ó Gallachoir and the UCC Intern Catherine Dawson. Turnout was high throughout the series, with lots of engagement from staff across several departments. The [IUA EDTL Approach](#) was used as a framework for the workshops in this series. Presenters included Clíodhna O'Callaghan, Tom O'Mara, Sophie Gahan and Dr Sarah Thelen from the Centre for Digital Education.

An inter-departmental approach was also taken, with Dr Dave Otway, Dr Aoife O'Sullivan and Dr Ian O'Connor from the School of Chemistry delivering a session on lab-based approaches to teaching. Dr Catherine O'Mahony from CIRTTL also delivered a session on Assessment and Feedback, with some practical advice for staff included.

Feedback from attendees, throughout the seven weeks, included "I found this session really informative and engaging. Especially the discussion with

other staff" and "Lots to think of, I would love to carry on with this discussion." Breakout Rooms in Teams were utilised to foster more intimate discussions between staff, with positive outcomes.

A full list of the sessions, including Panopto recordings, can be viewed [HERE](#). Watch this space for the upcoming Spring series, where staff will be given centre-stage for sharing their ideas and ambitions for online teaching. You can follow the Teach Digi schedule by joining the Team [HERE](#).



Above (l-r): Intern Catherine Dawson and National IUA Student Intern Ruairí Ó Gallachoir



Adult Continuing Education - The July Stimulus Package

Adult Continuing Education (ACE) has over 70 students beginning stand-alone modules across a number of disciplines this semester, funded under the Government's July Stimulus Higher Education Initiative.

Minister Harris delivered funding for the additional part-time and full-time postgraduate places and modular places under the July Stimulus HE Initiatives Call across higher education institutions.

The postgraduate and modular courses offered by UCC allowed the learner to be registered on these publicly funded HE courses. Applicants could focus on multiple modular courses if they did not exceed 30 credits. Although a short recruiting time was involved, UCC captured candidates who were delighted with the opportunity to start learning with UCC in January 2021. Queries for courses are high, which has given students a much-needed lift during these difficult times.

The running modules include Technical effectiveness in Bio-Pharma Processing, Supply Chain,

Leadership and Management Modules and Regulation and certification modules.

These are modules that are heavily funded by the HEA and Government and are part of their response to the COVID crisis. They are aimed to bolster the efforts of Irish industry and business to combat the economic challenges that the pandemic has caused. The modules provided by ACE are being utilised to provide opportunities to members of the national workforce to upskill, and re-skill and are linked to areas most needed by employers. The modules have been taken up by job seekers, returners to work, employed, formerly self-employed and those who have recently graduated. The modules will enhance skill sets, career advancement and seek to provide new job opportunities for students.

ACE has successfully recruited over 70 students who will commence their studies in January 2021. This has allowed them to engage with modules that can be exempted from main course study should they pursue the same at a later stage.

Interdepartmental & Inter-institutional Collaboration

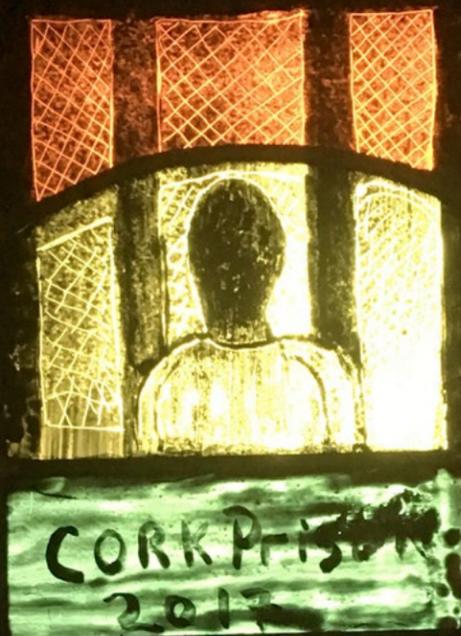
Following on from the launch of FITU's and Taste 4 Success Skillnet report on digital badges for the Irish food and agri-food sector on April 16th 2019, a symposium on the 'The Future of Workforce Learning: Digital Badges and Micro-credentials' was held in UCC's Devere Hall on November 14th 2019. Per-Fredrik Hagermark (Head of DACH LinkedIn Learning Solutions), John Counihan (Head of Organisation and Talent Development, Musgrave Retail Group) and more spoke of the value of digital badge credentials, the opportunity for further development of these for the Irish food and agri-food sector, and the impact for industry across all sectors. The symposium was attended by those involved in recruitment, training and upskilling of staff and those interested in CPD and micro-credentials.

Digital badging as a form of micro-credentialing has proven to be of long-term interest within UCC. The approach taken in UCC is unique in Ireland and enhanced our reputation among peer institutes in this regard. As the uptake and popularity grows, and in line with national HE interests in considering flexible and innovative responses to learning needs, it is likely that digital badging will inform how UCC decides to implement micro-credentials in the near to medium future.

To learn more about the initiative, visit the **Digital Badge website** or, email: digitalbadges@ucc.ie

Partnership with Cork ETB

James Cronin, CIRTL



Minister for Further and Higher Education, Simon Harris, TD, recently commended UCC's partnership with Cork ETB through its participation with the Education Unit in Cork Prison in furthering opportunities in lifelong and life wide learning for student inmates. The learning partnership has two objectives: firstly, to foster critical thinking strategies influenced by UCC's application of the Project Zero Classroom, Harvard Graduate School of Education; secondly, to support student voices by promoting conversations on creativity resulting in the production of artworks exhibited during summertime on Spike Island, Cork Harbour, communicating prison as community in society. The following lessons are being learned from this learning partnership. Firstly, experiential learning that involves deep reflection and practical skills has the potential to build capacity for resilience. Secondly, everyone has the right to be actively involved in determining the conditions that shape their lives. Thirdly, the curriculum is co-designed by the partners in collaboration with the students themselves. Learning partnerships give visibility to prison as social communities and remind us that prison and society are interconnected.

For further information on this item please contact Edel Cunningham, Head Teacher, Education Unit Cork Prison, email: Edel.Cunningham@corketb.ie

5th International Seminar on Education

Briony Supple

Despite Covid, December has been a somewhat busy month in terms of conference attendance and presentations.

On the 9th of December, Dr Briony Supple (CIRTL) was invited to the 5th International Seminar on Education as an international speaker. At the event, hosted by Pattimura University in Ambon, Indonesia, Briony spoke about 'How we are rethinking pedagogy in the pandemic' with a focus on what she had learned from her students this semester from the Certificate in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education.

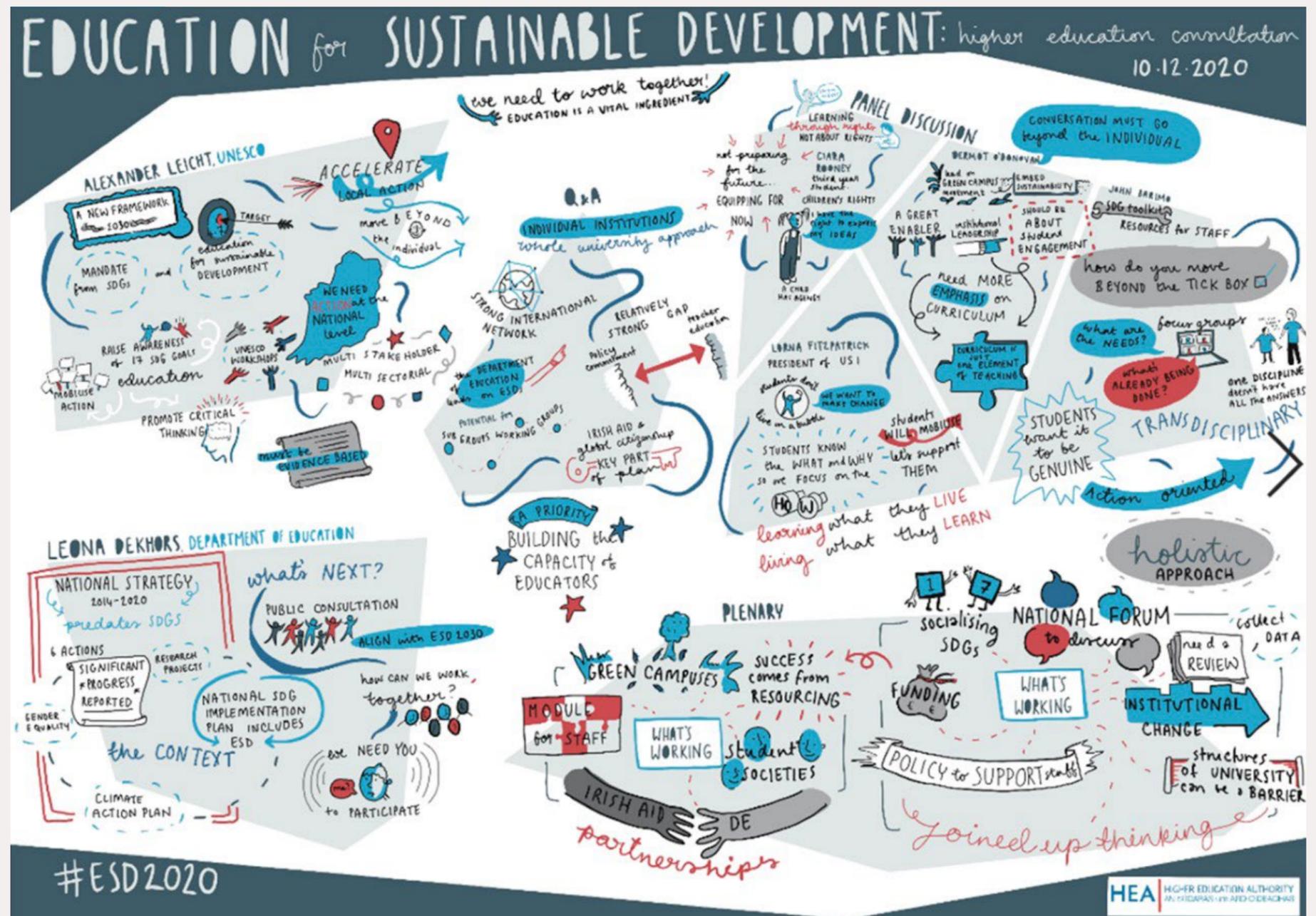
Briony focused on the use of two tools: the SPARK self-care tool developed by staff at UCC https://ideachildrights.ucc.ie/resources_page/tools-page/spark/ and the ABC to VLE toolkit for curriculum innovation <https://abc-ld.org/abctovle/>

On the 15th of December, Dr Briony Supple and Siobhan O'Neill from CIRTL also presented at the RGCS (Research Group on Collaborative Spaces) conference hosted by Polytechnic University of Milan regarding work which has taken place over the past year focused on Makerspaces. Their presentation 'Making during the pandemic: An Irish case study' was a summary of data collected from 9 makerspaces stakeholders and questionnaires completed by staff and students at UCC. This work will also be part of a book chapter to be written in collaboration with members of a COST action, due for publication in 2022.

The Higher Education Authority hosted a virtual event to raise awareness for the upcoming consultation process on the revision of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) which official launches early 2021. This event offered an opportunity to reflect upon the previous framework while HEI representatives collected input on participant priorities for the next strategy.

Dr John Barimo, an RSO in CIRTL, was invited to participate in a panel discussion and elaborate on his current work with the SDG Toolkit which is open source teaching enhancement resource to be made available to all HEIs in Ireland. Formal presentations were also given by Alexander Leicht, Chief of the ESD Section in UNESCO, who spoke on UNESCO's Framework for ESD to 2030 and Leona De Khours, Department of Education, who provided input on the current National Strategy.

National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development





Above: Robert William McCaul, UCC Language Centre

Language acquisition is all about making the target language comprehensible, that is, level-appropriate and engaging, and therefore understandable and enjoyable for learners. As the linguist David Krashen said, we acquire language when we understand a message (or content, you might add). Well, we aim to provide rich, engaging and comprehensible content to our students by offering a module on the culture, history and art of the Emerald Isle. To this end, I give weekly lectures, based on students' levels, on various aspects of the history, language, art, customs, folk tales, music, flora and fauna, environment and geography of this island nation we call home. As well as being an English language

Irish Culture at UCC LC - Creating Engaging Content to Encourage Language Acquisition

teacher, and an Irish-speaker, I am fiercely proud of the cultural heritage that we have and I am delighted to share this with students. I am studying Léann Dúchais (Irish folklore, music and history) at NUI Galway through the medium of Irish. All this gives me a unique insight into subject.

One of the lectures coming up over the next 12 weeks will be Oliver Cromwell's conquest of Ireland. I remember my mother telling me about the atrocities committed by Cromwell in Wexford in 1650. Apparently, I had ancestors who were there and who suffered at his hands. We will also be looking at the mythological story of the Children of Lir; a tale of an ancient sea god, whose children were cruelly turned into swans for 900 years. I will be showing you the exact place on the map in West Cork where this notorious event was said to have happened. There is a wishing stone on the site.

We will also be looking at places that can be visited by tourists in Ireland. One of the most famous is Newgrange or Brú na Boinne, as it's known as in Irish, i.e. the palace of the Boyne river, is one of the wonders of the world. It was built a thousand years before the first pyramids and it was used as an ancient astrological clock

and religious centre. I will also explain to you why it's so important to try to visit it on the winter solstice.

There will be a special talk about some of the illustrious women in Irish history- for example, Nano Nagle, the lady of the lamp, who was a true humanitarian for the uneducated poor and sick of 18th century Cork. A separate talk in block 3 will look at the pirate queen, Grace O'Malley, who was ruled the waves, long before Britannia, from her base in Galway in the 1600's.

No course on Ireland would be complete without a look at our breath-taking wildlife. To this end, we will examine some of the marine mammals that live in the coastal waters of Cork, including one of the biggest animals that ever walked the face of the earth, or swam!, the Blue Whale. As the amount of fish in Irish waters have been increasing, we also have a wealth of other marine mammals including humpbacks, orcas, dolphins and we will also briefly look at the incredible hunting behaviour of the gannet.

Robert William McCaul | ESOL Teacher
Roibeárd Liam Mac Cathmhaoil | Múinteoir
Béarla mar theanga iasachta

ACE's New Short Course on The Book of Lismore



In October 2020, The Book of Lismore, one of the most important extant masterpieces of Irish literature was donated to UCC by the Trustees of Chatsworth Settlement. The Book of Lismore (also known as the Book of McCarthy Reagh) is a substantial medieval Gaelic vellum manuscript, written in Irish at Kilbrittain Castle, Co. Cork, at the end of the 15th century for Fínghean Mac Carthaigh and his wife Caitilín Fitzgerald. At ACE, we are honoured and privileged to offer a short course dedicated to an exploration to the manuscript contents, its creation and history in our spring 2021 short course programme (Coordinator Regina Sexton). The course, *The Book of Lismore and the Gaelic Manuscript*, assembles a team of experts unrivalled in the curation and the study of the Gaelic manuscripts of Ireland, to deliver insights on the Book, one of the most singular manuscripts of Irish tradition. The course offers participants the first opportunity to gain insight to this unique, rare and aesthetically beautiful manuscript.

Left: John Fitzgerald, Director of Information Service and University Librarian, Boole Library, takes a closer look at the manuscript, which now holds prides of place in the University's Treasures Gallery

CELTA - ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHER TRAINING - UCC LANGUAGE CENTRE



Above (l-r): Brendan Ó Sé, Head of Development and Professional; Finola Burke, Administrator for CELTA

With the pivot to online delivery of all our courses, the Language Centre gained Cambridge University approval to deliver the **CELTA English Language teaching training course fully online**. By the end of 2020 we had delivered three of these courses with our trainees coming from as far afield as Spain, Italy, Germany and even Japan; evident of our moving from a position of local recruitment to a global one.

While, unquestionably, the demand for English language teachers is nowhere near what it was pre-Covid, it is heartening to learn that approximately 80% of our graduates when surveyed reported that they had secured teaching positions.

With the support of Cliona Maher (UCC International Strategy Officer for Latin

America), we have had webinars online and been able to promote our CELTA courses in the Americas with a view to providing the course for those wishing to become state-qualified English language teachers in their own countries. Our next webinar is scheduled for Monday January 25th. We also ran CELTA Open Nights online in the first semester for the general public which were well attended. The next CELTA Open Night is pencilled in for Wednesday, February 24th.

Doing a CELTA in our University offers so much more than just the CELTA qualification. We pride ourselves on the ongoing support we offer our graduates in terms of assistance in securing work and also in the provision of a range of teacher development courses and workshops our Centre offers. Our tutors also offer a mentoring service to CELTA graduates

as they embark on their teaching careers.

On January 23rd, we offered a two-hour workshop on Grammar Pedagogy. In April, we have a one-week **teacher development course** with face-to-face courses planned for the summer. Our recently-established UCC CELTA Alumni LinkedIn group has proven to be popular and some of those who were unable to return home due to Covid restrictions shared their stories of what **Christmas is like in foreign locations**. Other stories can be read **HERE**.

While Covid has restricted mobility, it has allowed us to evolve in areas that perhaps may have remained undiscovered. We will return in a much stronger position and also with an expanded perspective of the potential of our offering.



Non-Credit In-session Work in the Language Centre

by Julie Butters, UCC Language Centre

One of the functions of the Language Centre is to provide in-session English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses for international students whose first language is not English. In-session courses and workshops are aimed at UCC students who are studying at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The aim of in-sessionals is to develop students' awareness of how academic language and discourse, both spoken and written, are used to create meaning. The Language Centre runs three types of In-sessionals: academic credit modules, digital badges and embedded disciplinary in-sessionals. I coordinate the digital badges and embedded disciplinary in-sessionals and my colleague Dr Sanaa Khabar coordinates the credit modules.

Above: Julie Butters, UCC Language Centre

English for General Academic Purposes Digital Badges

We offer English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) Digital Badge courses to UCC international students whose first language is not English. We currently run two 5-week digital badge courses:

- Academic Reading and Writing
- Academic Listening & Speaking

The aim of the courses is to give students the opportunity to explore how academic language is used to construct meaning and express complex ideas. Students are also encouraged to develop their own awareness of how language is used within their own disciplines. These courses give students an insight into the necessary tools and strategies to navigate their own discipline, and ultimately to build up self-confidence and a sense of belonging to the academic community at UCC.

We have had a large uptake for these courses. Semester 1 2020, we had around 90 students sign up, and this semester so far, we have had over 100. Most students signing up are studying at a postgraduate level, including both Master's and PhD students from a wide range of disciplines.

Embedded Disciplinary In-sessionals (English for Specific Academic Purposes ESAP)

For two years, we have been delivering embedded disciplinary in-session workshops on both the Bsc and Msc Nursing programmes to international students whose first language is not English. And this academic year, for the first time, we ran in-session workshops for MA Applied Linguistics and MA Translation Studies. These type of in-sessionals are highly effective as Language Centre teachers work closely with the disciplinary team to ensure that the content of the in-sessional is relevant to the language needs and discourse of that specific discipline. The main aim of these sessions is to guide students with developing the tools to be able to analyse and evaluate their own academic written language and discourse against the rubric/criteria that their work is marked against. We help students to understand the diverse types of assignments and academic language that is required, which includes identifying both the macro and micro elements of academic written discourse.

Successful 'Centre for Global Development' (CGD) Seminar Series

Last term saw the CGD lunchtime seminar series move online for the first time. Dr Rosarii Griffin was the convenor of the seminar series the theme of which was 'Science, Responsibility and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)'. The CGD seminar series was designed to link in with the renewable theme along with the EU's new emphasis on 'Dissemination and Communication'. Overall, the seminar series was a success, attracting an average of 25 attendees. Contributors included UCC speakers, along with national and international speakers. Attendees included UCC staff, students, researchers, and outside attendees interested in the nature of the topics.

A sincere thanks goes to everyone for contributing, and those who Chaired the sessions (members of the CGD Steering Committee), to Alice Creed for her IT assistance, and to the wonderful presenters who prepared great work. A rich Q&A session followed every seminar allowing greater participation with attendees. The final seminar of 2020 took place on Tuesday the 14th of December. A new CGD seminar series recommenced in January 2021 with Dr Rosarii Griffin as the convenor.

Supporting Strategic Course Development

Over the last number of months, the Centre for Digital Education has been supporting the development of a number of strategic Canvas courses in response to the COVID-19 emergency and national priorities. This included:

- Development of the **COVID-19 Student Induction Module** for Student Health
- Design and delivery of Canvas templates for the First Year Orientation course; and
- Redevelopment of the **Bystander Intervention Digital Badge** course, with a view to supporting the rollout of same to all Irish HEIs under a HEA-funded initiative.

Support provided included advice and training as well as limited content conversion, course design and development. On the Bystander national project, the CDE has also been the primary point of contact with other HEIs around the conversion of UCC's course to local versions using a range of other VLEs. Follow up support included assistance with the evaluation of engagement using Canvas and Panopto analytic tools.

“Curiouser and curiouser!” Recollections from the Ebb and Flow of Time as Examination Appeals Officer, Daniel Blackshields



Above: Daniel Blackshields, Department of Economics

“Everything’s got a moral, if only you can find it.”

The Duchess in Alice in Wonderland

Every time we engage with our students, they take away an impression of UCC as an educational institution – their educational institution. We invite the formation, enhancement or diminishment of a relationship, a relationship we collectively ascribe to, one embedded in core values and principles such as responsiveness, transparency, integrity and respect. Every time we engage with our students is what Richard Normann called (speaking in the context of a client relationship), a potential *moment*

of truth on whether we affirm our stated values and principles – whether we give meaning to *begin, belong, become*.

The Examination Appeals Officer (EAO) is a privileged position within the University ecosystem. The EAO engages in learning journeys to (and with) academic units, areas and facets of our diverse University community and beyond, an opportunity otherwise rarely afforded given the busyness of academia. The EAO engages in conversations to become aware, understand and inquire into whether our espoused theory (what we say we do) is in congruence with our theory-in-use (what our actions tell us we do) vis-à-vis the governance of modular assessment. At times, these conversations have been difficult, albeit, in that cut and thrust they have been authentic, leading to (hopefully) shared understanding, problem-solving (where possible), consideration by and resolution through the auspices of the Examination Appeals Committee (EAC) (where necessary) and, at times, recommendations for wider institutional change. Being able to engage with such a diversity of colleagues has been transformative. I have learned more through my lived experience of over four and half years as EAO than I could have possibly imagined when agreeing to the invite to take on the role and later to

continue in the role from Presidents Murphy and O’Shea respectively. These connections have expanded my cognisance of hitherto unperceived and unexploited affordances in teaching, learning and assessment. More importantly these connections have made me consciously aware of the integrity with which UCC engages with our students. When you have opportunities to connect in a meaningful way with colleagues, you recognise care in much of what is done. Being witness to this has been professionally affirming.

Most significantly, as EAO I have had the privilege to engage with students qua human beings not as disembodied learning beings. I have been able to support (and, as appropriate, challenge) their understanding of the matrix of rules, regulations, policies, procedures and norms that form the necessary (though often to them invisible or partly visible) governance boundaries of assessment. I have been able to guide students through, the times and certainly at times of personal difficulty, this seemingly labyrinth and archaic governance system; facilitating the articulation of their voice of appeal. Often however, the most significant dimension of the role has been to be an institutional figure to listen – a representative of our collective ethos of being a student-centred institution. At times this is a difficult balancing

act as the EAO cannot be or be seen to be an advocate for either students or academic units but is and must be perceived as a steward of the University’s rules and regulations. However, negotiating this balancing act has been rewarding on both a professional and personal level. The expectations of many students vis-à-vis the appeals process could not (and should not) be met given the governance structures, equity and the canons of natural justice and therefore often there were difficult post-EAC decision conversations. Sometimes as EAO you were able to open other doors for students (especially those in distress) to seek the appropriate support and try to foster within some the courage to take those first steps for themselves. That I had that privilege I am grateful.

A colleague of mine once mused: ‘*What value do we add to the development of our students?*’ How we engage with our students as human beings, for instance when they are confused, lack understanding, feel lost or are dealing with the vicissitudes of life at a still tender age, does, I believe, add value, not to their scholarly development perhaps but to that hidden curriculum, the transmission of norms, values, beliefs and principles. If we can transmit our core values and principles in what we say and how we act apropos our students, then we

are, I believe, adding value to their development as we are modelling the values we aspire our students to embody.

**“And the moral of that is –
Be what you would seem to be”**

The Mock Turtle Story in
Alice in Wonderland

When I reflect, albeit not with much distance yet, on my time as EAO what have I learned? I think, through my multitude and varied interactions with students, staff and other interested stakeholders, it is, perhaps the not so novel observation of the importance of *communication* and *communicating with integrity*. On many occasions a student’s issue (or perceived issue) was ultimately founded in a lack (or perceived lack) of communication about decisions – academic judgements achieved, reasons for penalties etc. This lack (or perceived lack) of clear, consistent and reliable communication can lead to a vacuum and that vacuum can lead to a lack of trust on a student’s part, manifesting in a perception that they were not dealt with fairly, with equity, with transparency. Colleagues might complain that the information is there, the communication does occur – and often this is the case. However, taking the time to educate our students on where to locate and how to navigate the web of information – *Marks and Standards, Suspected Breach of Examination Regulations, Marking Criteria, Extenuating Circumstances*, helps to reduce the development of

potential understanding vacuums. We should come to this interaction, not from our egocentric position of educator, but assume the role and attitude of the student upon ourselves. We should see our educator-student interactions as perspectival. Acknowledge difference and divergence but instead of coming from the fixed position of the self, we should afford ourselves a dual position – that of staff member and of student – thus potentially gain insight into how to bridge possible gaps of understanding.

Concomitantly, colleagues must remain vigilant ensuring that we are embedding our teaching, learning and assessment within a thorough understanding of our governance ecosystem. In doing so, our interactions with students gain confidence, an assurance that they embody the values and principles of the University as signified in *Marks and Standards*, the *Guide to Examinations and Assessment* etc. When there is a congruence between our actions and our words we are communicating with integrity, an integrity we expect of our students and thus must demand of ourselves. The mathematician Hyman Bass spoke of research work as needing to be ‘good’ in the moral sense – to follow a code – that this forms the ‘integrity of community’. I believe that this is an appropriate ethical demand of all our scholarly endeavours. I have found that when perceived by students and staff to be so communicating it has meant that as unpleasant and disagreeable the content of what you

must communicate; it will be deemed sincere, truthful – it will provide that sense of trust. This I think is reflected in correspondence I have received after an appeal is not upheld or when a student, following advice, chooses not to appeal – that correspondence has often (but of course not always) been positive and grateful, something that I consider as their acknowledgement that they were dealt with ‘on the level.’

When asked what advice would I give colleagues from my experiences I would say, to see the rules, regulations, policies, procedures of the University, Colleges, Departments as a guide for your actions and interactions – not as hinderances, not as blind-spots – the *unknown knowns*, not as rigid and intolerant bureaucratic shackles on our creativity as educators. They are I believe, rather, the ground upon which engagement with students can thrive on a sure footing. Nor are these rules etc to be perceived as a petrified forest – *Marks and Standards, Book of Modules* etc. are living documents that can and must change for the continuing vibrancy of the University. However, change should normally be organic, evolutionary, equitable, transparent and clearly communicated. We are all stewards of the rules and regulations underpinning the effective governance of assessment in UCC. We are all tasked with maintaining university education in working order, preserving the University for those to come. In this I believe we find the embodiment of our collective institutional moral compass.

I have been gifted to collaborate with those who I believe embrace and demonstrate this institutional moral compass, from those professional staff supporting the appeals process, first in the President’s Office and then in the Vice-President for Learning and Teaching Office, whose sense of dedication – often late nights and weekends – never wavered, the EAC members past and present, whose sense of the significance of the decisions they are tasked lead to some of the most informed, engaged, serious and yet good humoured discussions I have witnessed in my twenty and more years in UCC, members of Cork’s legal profession who give their time and expertise to the EAO and the EAC – the consistent dedication of these men and women to be present for little more than a cup of coffee and word of thanks I have nothing but admiration and gratitude, the University’s offices and committees from SREO, to the Mitigation Committee, to the Registrar’s Office, to OCLA, DSS, Mature Students Office and the Students Union without whose consistent support and guidance, the task of the EAO and EAC would not be possible to fulfil in a holistic and informed way. I have learned much from these dedicated people that I believe that not only my doing and thinking but my being-as-an-academic has transformed so that echoing Alice “*It’s no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then.*”

MARIAN ELDERS RECEIVES LONG SERVICE AWARD



Above: Marian Elders, UCC Skills Centre

The 32nd Annual Long Service Awards 2020 Ceremony took place on Tuesday 15th December 2020. The contribution of 53 colleagues was celebrated and acknowledged. Marian Elders, UCC Skills Centre was awarded a long service award for 25 years. Here she reflects on her time in UCC.

I currently work in the Skills Centre in UCC. My role is to provide administrative support for the activities of the Skills Centre. I attended UCC as a mature student and was the only mature student in the cohort! I graduated with a B Social Science and an MA in Women's Studies. In addition, I successfully completed a Post Graduate qualification in Guidance and Support from NUI Maynooth.

Over the years I have held a variety of roles in UCC. One of these was teaching on the part-time basis on the Diploma in Social Studies which was delivered in a variety of locations throughout Munster. The courses ran from 7-10pm. One evening I travelled to Davis College, Mallow with Joan McCarthy - now Dr in Nursing Studies - to find the gates locked, but we weren't deterred. Joan stayed at Davis College and I went to the Central Hotel in Mallow to book a room. The only available rooms were bedrooms! The manager was very obliging and took the beds out, turned the wardrobes around and over 50 people arrived to register for the course that evening. Another evening, I travelled to Limerick to

deliver the Social Policy module. I arrived an hour (6pm) before the course was due to start so I decided to have forty winks. I woke at ten past seven and was so 'upset' at being late that I covered the material I had prepared for the three-hour session in an hour!

One of my proudest moments was when my granddaughter told me that one her teachers in secondary school told her I was the 'best teacher she ever had'!

My interest and hobbies include walking, online scrabble and hand-sewing patchwork quilts. Life during lockdown has been extraordinary and at times difficult. Our youngest granddaughter was born in July, but we were unable to visit until she was six weeks old - we were able to look at her through the window! Sadly, three of our sisters-in-law and one nephew died during lockdown and we couldn't attend their funerals.

Working from home was particularly challenging because of the quality of the internet service. Given a choice, I would prefer to keep home and work completely separate.

Something people at work don't know about me is that I can't sing - I failed the singing exam for primary school teaching many years ago. However, I haven't stopped singing since and sing to my grandson (2) every evening via ZOOM!

Dr Sanna Khabbar, Language Centre



Above: Dr Sanaa Khabbar,
Language Centre

I am an English Language Teacher and the Academic Modules Coordinator at the Language Centre (LC) in UCC. Before joining UCC, I taught Freshman Seminar, Freshman Writing and Research Writing in the Rhetoric and Composition Department at the American University in Cairo for 11 years. I also have a PhD in Education from the University of Exeter, UK; my research focused on students' linguistic, national and religious identities in the context of an internationalised HE

institution. What I enjoy most as an Academic English teacher is facilitating my students' initiation into the academic reading and writing conventions expected of university students and witnessing them firsthand become more confident and effective English language users and university students.

The LC academic modules provide UCC international students with the linguistic and academic knowledge and skills necessary for 21st Century university students. We offer a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses that help them improve not only their academic reading, writing, speaking and listening skills but also their critical thinking abilities and information literacy skills. Some of our courses are discipline specific such as LC0001 'Medical English' and LC3201 'Introduction to Teaching

English as a Foreign/Second Language' while others, such as LC1002 'English for Academic Study' and LC1003 'Advanced English for Academic Study', cater for the diverse UCC undergraduate international student population and cover generic academic English skills useful across disciplines.

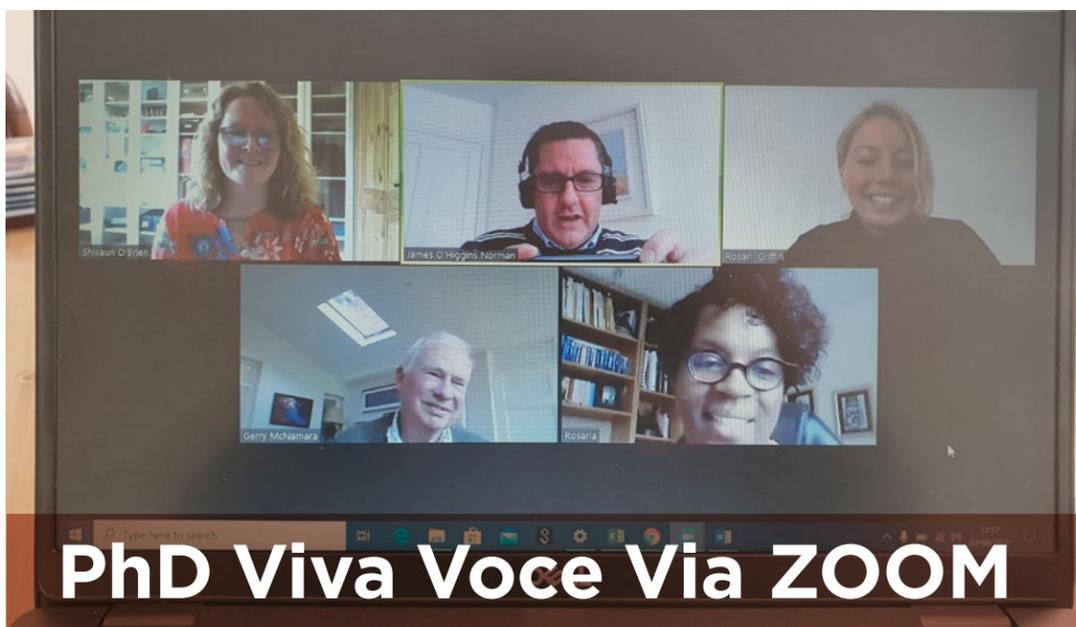
We additionally offer three 'English for Postgraduate Studies' courses (PG6021, PG6022, PG6023) aimed at full-time PhD students.

All our academic modules have been adapted to an online mode of teaching and are continuously reviewed to meet students' needs. Students' feedback was very positive last term: *"What we learn in the course is really helpful and can be used for any other course"* (LC1003); *"Reading, writing and listening skills can be improved by taking this course"* (PG6021).

New Podcast by ACE Lecturers Sarah Harrington and Kathy O'Hare

The topics covered in this podcast are online teaching and learning and the inclusion of persons with disability in lecturing teams. First-year students of the Diploma in Disability Studies have experience of being taught by persons with disability in both of their first semester modules. Sarah was a co presenter in *AD1800 - Models of Disability and Care* while Sinead Kane delivers *AD5838 - Supporting Equality Policy and Practice*. Sinead is blind but her ability to adapt to online teaching technology is an example of inclusivity in action. Sarah who, has cerebral palsy, presents the material and interviews students who took part. Kathy produced the podcast.

Please find the podcast link here:
https://youtu.be/8FFRK1IA_Ak



PhD Viva Voce Via ZOOM

2020 was a year of many ‘firsts’ for many, and the conduct of a PhD Viva Voce via ZOOM was one such first for Dr Rosarii Griffin. The doctoral candidate in question was a DCU student, and her thesis was based on educational interventions in Malawi. As Rosarii’s background is in ‘International and Comparative Education’ with particular reference to the developing countries. Rosarii was also familiar with Malawi having worked within its educational sector. Hence, she was the ideal external examiner. The Viva Voce day arrived, and as aforementioned, due to the Corona Virus lockdown, DCU decided

to conduct it via ZOOM (their choice of platform). Unfortunately, a storm whipped up earlier that morning accompanied with yellow warnings. Ordinarily, Rosarii has excellent broadband reception in her home, but unfortunately, due to inclement weather conditions, it knocked out the electricity in her home. Thankfully, Rosarii had made contingency plans, gathered her gear (laptops, notes, books) and made her way to a friend’s house whose electricity was intact (credited to the fact that she lived near a hospital). The Viva Voce was a success and the student passed with only a few minor corrections.



UCC Radio - Culture Programme

UCC Radio’s Culture Hour has been featuring stories from the Language Centre. The show airs on 98.3 FM each Tuesday from 10:00-11:00 and Carolyn O’Brien, the LC’s Student Engagement Officer organised for a number of LC students to take part.

Carolyn’s role is to help students connect to UCC Services and to the wider community, and she was delighted with the outcome of this project:

In the midst of COVID and lockdowns, Celio Floretti’s culture show has lifted spirits and created a great atmosphere amongst students and staff. But even more so, it has provided some fantastic networking opportunities. Akane Fujisaki from Japan connected with Irish students learning Japanese as a result of appearing on this show and is now part of a language exchange programme. Alina Popescu from Russia spoke about why



she left Russia to do a medical degree in Spain. Her dream is to set up a GP practice in a rural village in Ireland and she was able to meet staff in the College of Medicine and Health after the show.

Although some of the students who took part have in the show are no longer full-time Language Centre students, they have retained their connection to the Centre through projects like this and by accessing the ongoing support provided to degree students at UCC. Lourdes Davila Arrendondo from Mexico, formerly a Pre-Sessional Student and now doing a master’s degree in Public Health, spoke about Mexican cooking and consequently made connections with Hispanic Studies. Anzela Raseva from Latvia, completed the a Pre-Sessional course at the Language Centre as a pathway to her studies in Law.

Above right: Carolyn O’Brien, Student Engagement Officer in the Language Centre