



Graduate Student Conference

Proceedings and Abstracts

DIT Aungier Street
12 June 2012

lttc^o

Getting your Research Published: From student to scholar

Third Annual Graduate Student Conference



Dublin, 12 June 2012

Dear Colleagues,

It gives us great pleasure to welcome you to our third Graduate Student Conference. Since last year, we are very pleased that a number of participants from last year's cohort have presented at national and international conferences and events. Also some have published in peer reviewed journals, and so the process of disseminating educational research is well and truly underway from the postgraduate programmes in Learning, Teaching and Technology in DIT!

Our vision is that this will grow and continue, and that many who present here today will ultimately disseminate their work further afield. We are confident that you will have a fantastic conference where you will learn, share and meet like-minded colleagues.

As well as wishing you an enjoyable and engaging conference, we would like to take this opportunity to thank you for submitting and/or attending; without your presence there is no conference.

With best wishes,

Roísín Donnelly and Martina Crehan

Graduate Student Conference Co-Chairs



Introducing a new DIT Online Journal....

Irish Journal of Academic Practice

Published by the Learning, Teaching and Technology Centre



<http://arrow.dit.ie/ijap/>

Journal Overview: This academic year we are introducing the new online Irish Journal of Academic Practice (IJAP), which will be published once annually from 2012 by the LTTTC at the Dublin Institute of Technology; it will feature peer-reviewed scholarly and practice-based case articles, and research reports written by graduate (diploma and masters-level) participants in the areas related to the MA in Higher Education and the MSc Applied eLearning.

Purpose: This journal is a vehicle for the academic staff who are the participants on the postgraduate programmes to disseminate their research to a wider audience. The participants are drawn from different components of the third level sector in Ireland including vocational, further and higher education. Such a graduate journal is a good place to learn the 'ropes' of the publishing process, and try out ideas in early stages of research and study.

Journal Focus & Scope: IJAP is based the areas of learning, teaching, technology and professional development. Special emphasis is on innovative practices in teaching and learning. Articles in this **inaugural** edition include:

- How can we nurture and develop creativity in first year design students?
- Trainee perspectives of the effectiveness of active learning in a legal education context
- Irish Students and Facebook: Informal Learning Choices in a Web 2.0 World
- It's good to talk: discussion in blended learning courses in the context of CPD for solicitors
- Using Gardner's Theories of Intelligence in the teaching of early childhood education
- Conversation as Academic Practice: Tutors' Strategies in Integrating Student Learning in a Professional Training Degree Programme
- Learning in the Science Lab: a new approach
- Getting out of the House; An examination of the experience of a group of Women returners to education



Graduate Student Conference

MA in Higher Education/MSc Applied eLearning

Getting your Research Published: “From student to scholar”

Tuesday June 12, 2012 Aungier Street

TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
9.15	Registration opens, Coffee & Refreshments	Foyer
9.30	Welcome & Opening Address, Launch of New Online Journal of Irish Academic Practice <i>Professor Brian Norton</i>	Room 3067/68 MAIN ROOM
10.00	Keynote Speaker: <i>Dr Rhona Sharpe, Oxford Brookes University</i> “From Student to Scholar” Chair: <i>Dr Jen Harvey, LTTC</i>	
11.00	Coffee/Refreshments & ePortfolio Viewing <i>Andrew Stuart; Kathleen Hughes; Odette Gabaudan; Niamh O’Mahony; Nuala Sweeney-Burt; Debbie Howlett</i>	Foyer
	Graduate Student Presentations: Each presentation will last 15 mins plus 5 mins allowed for questions	
	<i>Room 3067/68</i> <i>Chair: Kevin O’Rourke</i> Theme: Learning Technologies	<i>Room 3044</i> <i>Chair: Vincent Farrell</i> Theme: Learning, Teaching & Policy
11.30	Paul Melrose Irish Students and Facebook: Informal Learning Choices in a Web 2.0 World	Bróna Raftery Engaging adult learners: andragogy and heutagogy reviewed
11.50	Killian Holmes Teaching Teachers: A Learning Technology Story	Bernadette Townley Phonics – the continuing debate and its effectiveness in teaching reading
12.10	Karen Sutton A review of online communication for community-building in Legal Education	Marie Tighe An analysis of the learning needs of care workers in an Irish challenging care setting
12.30	Valerie Hascoet Listen and click: enhancing listening comprehension skills in the language classroom through the use of clickers	Ann Marie Farrell Special Educational Needs Act: Implications for Initial Teacher Education
1.00	Lunch: In Foyer	
2.00	Roundtable discussion: <i>Chair: Mary McNamara</i> <i>Room 3067/68 - Main Room</i> Finding Opportunities to Collaborate and Publish: Experienced DIT authors DIT share practical advice! List of contributors: Paula Bourke (Tourism & Food); Sarah-Jane Delany (Computer Science); Noel Brady (Architecture & Urban Design)	
3.00	Conference Close	



Book of Abstracts

Keynote: Dr Rhona Sharpe

Title: "From Student to Scholar"

In the opening keynote, Rhona Sharpe will draw on her experience of bidding, writing and editing to explain how to make the most of the research process and improve your publication success. The session is structured around three key activities: reviewing (knowing what editors are looking for), planning a paper and of course, writing. Rhona aims to dispel some myths about academic writing in order to encourage productive research and writing strategies.



Learning Technologies

Paul Melrose: Emerald Cultural Institute

Irish Students and Facebook: Informal Learning Choices in a Web 2.0 World

While there has been a commitment in Higher Education (HE) to the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in formal education in the Irish Republic, little is known of the use of social-networking sites (SNSs) in informal learning by students in the Irish Republic, particularly at secondary-school level. Furthermore, there is a lack of evidence on how these choices compare with how Irish students are electing to use other Web 2.0 tools to informally assist their learning. This presentation presents research from a survey of Irish students on their informal use of ICT/Web 2.0 tools, with a particular focus on Facebook, in preparation for their Leaving Certificate examination (state exams taken by Irish students at the end of their secondary-school cycle). The literature review looks at research that points to a preference by learners to demarcate SNSs from formal learning spaces, not as a simple desire to keep SNSs as separate from their academic activities, but to use these platforms in an identity-formation role as learners.

Karen Sutton: Law Society of Ireland

A review of online communication for community-building in Legal Education

The purpose of this presentation is twofold. Firstly to critically review the value of eLearning within legal education and consider the background to online education, the virtual learning management systems currently available and how by incorporating online communication into eLearning it can provide learners in a legal education context with a sense of community. Secondly, to explore how eLearning can be successfully adopted into legal education for the benefit of both learners and educators. The legal field in Ireland comprises 13,000 solicitors. The Law Society of Ireland, the professional body for solicitors is based in Dublin. While a large variety of courses are run for members by the Law Society, they are run from a central site. However, increasingly over the past number of years courses have been successfully provided by way of eLearning to accommodate legal professionals at home and abroad. Although there is evidence that online delivery is successfully being used in legal education at both third and postgraduate level, exactly what the effect of eLearning on legal education is has not been sufficiently explored from the dual perspective of teacher and student.



Valerie Hascoet: School of Languages, DIT

“Listen and click”: enhancing listening comprehension skills in the language classroom through the use of clickers

The following article relates to an experiment with a group of second year students learning an applied language as a minor subject of their degree. Personal Response Devices were introduced to improve the students' listening skills by creating more engagement with the course material. It led to 100% participation in class activities run through clickers, facilitated the students in self-evaluating their performance at the tasks and was fun, despite some technical issues occasionally. The experiment fell short however on the reflective aspect. Students were either incapable of or unwilling to reflect on the questions they found difficult. The lecturer was left with improved performances in listening assignments, but no usable feedback on how to support her students in transferring those improved skills to the related area of speaking performance.

Bróna Raftery: Culinary Arts and Food Technology, DIT

Engaging adult learners: andragogy and heutagogy reviewed

In the twenty-first century major changes have occurred in undergraduate higher education in terms of access and student profiles. There has been a considerable increase in mature learners in the traditional higher education classroom. This has prompted more research into different approaches and strategies that can be employed when considering the needs these learners have and the demands of outside stakeholders who are looking for capable and competent graduates. This presentation will examine an andragogical approach to teaching and learning and the progression to a heutagogical approach in the context of undergraduate adult learners and in terms of developing competent and capable students. Suggestions and guidelines drawn from the literature of how to harness and facilitate effective learning are presented. Understanding and recognising heutagogy as a practical approach to changing the way both academic courses are developed and delivered to adult learners is critically discussed. Adult learning is a dynamic area of research but it is difficult to reduce it to a simple system that applies to all adult learners. The more we know about adult learners the better able we will be to develop suitable teaching methods and activities. A more holistic approach to learning will encourage reflection, dialogue and links to past experiences where adult learners can make meaning of their learning. A heutagogical approach to learning will allow adult learners to recall how they learn and it will encourage self-determined lifelong learning.

Bernadette Townley: Liberties College of Further Education

Phonics – the continuing debate and its effectiveness in teaching reading

This presentation examines the continuing debate on the inclusion of Phonics as an effective reading instruction. The context of the study is further education students who are presently training to become Montessori practitioners. These students are on practicum in pre-school Montessori environments. In light of the literature on phonics, the Montessori Phonic-Word Approach to reading instruction in pre-schools is argued as the most advantageous for children from pre-school age upwards. The aim of the presentation is to examine the various types of phonics being introduced in schools, in particular, synthetic and analytic phonics and to compare them with the Maria Montessori Phonic-Word Approach to beginner reading. This is a reflective piece searching the literature to note common threads and to identify the gaps in the topic of phonics. In the final analysis the literature review shows a consensus which opens up more debate and research with regard to using phonics on a reading instruction programme. The major findings reveal three distinct situations: 1) there appears to be confusion amongst educators as to the way phonics should be taught; 2) there would appear to be a lack of training in phoneme awareness for teachers both pre-



service and in-service; 3) teachers are totally unaware of their own articulation process. These three points are compared against the knowledge and training of Montessori practitioners with a view to establishing the effectiveness of phonic reading instruction.

Marie Tighe

An analysis of the learning needs of care workers in an Irish challenging care setting

The existing climate of employment has affected many in their current professions with job losses, re training, re structuring and vocation adjustment. Within Irish social care settings there is an increase in utilisation of agency workers to temporarily fill in gaps in hours within community houses. This has resulted in a high staff turnover and in turn has caused organisation to re-evaluate their inductions and training of staff. This article focuses on the perceived learning needs of a small cohort of care workers within an Irish challenging behaviour setting. A questionnaire was administered to the group, consisting of nine questions covering information from the employment background of the care worker to their own personal learning needs and suggestions. It takes into consideration how individuals learn, and ways in which learning can be better facilitated when approaching induction and training in a care setting. The questionnaire and an informal chat shows that individuals learn quite substantially from their environment and surroundings, and that training these care workers with a different approach may improve their learning and coping strategies in a challenging behaviour unit. There is little extant research on the learning needs of such care workers, and how training might be structured via experiential learning, reflection and debriefing. The article considers whether induction methods should be re-evaluated to acknowledge the learning that takes place through experience

Ann Marie Farrell

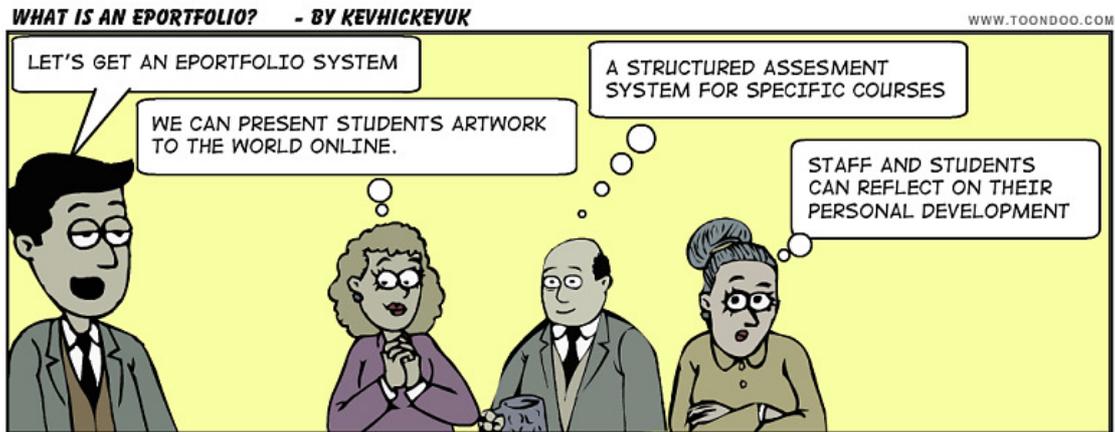
Special Educational Needs Act: Implications for Initial Teacher Education

The aim of this presentation is to report on the analysis of the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act (Government of Ireland, 2004a) with a view to (a) identifying the demands on teachers and (b) extrapolating the implications for the providers of initial teacher education (ITE) programmes. The policy analysis framework developed by McDonnell and Elmore (1987) is used to analyse the *EPSEN Act*. The key findings in terms of the requirements on teachers are the ability to diagnostically assess children with special educational needs (SEN), partake in the individual education plan process, write clear learning targets, monitor progress, write professional reports and collaborate with others. The implications for ITE include consideration of alternative programme formats, collaboration between teacher educators, challenging of student teachers' perceptions of SEN, and consideration of the professional development needs of teacher



educators to ensure that graduates of ITE programmes are equipped to meet the legislative demands.

ePortfolio Viewing



A number of MSc Applied eLearning participants, from both year 1 and Year 2 of the programme are presenting their ePortfolios, and are happy to informally discuss technical and pedagogical issues in using either Mahara or an alternative platform.

Andrew Stuart; Kathleen Hughes; Odette Gabaudan; Niamh O'Mahony; Nuala Sweeney-Burt; Debbie Howlett



Conference Notes