



Re-imagining our curriculum
Consolidating the First Year Experience

Prototype Project Updates:

January 2016

General Details	
Project Title	First year students with Aspergers Syndrome (AS) ADHD, ASD, with student peers interact socially to assist integration into college
Name of Main Applicant	Sylvia Mooney and Fionnuala Walsh
Position Held	Learning Support Officer (Disability Support Service) and Chaplain
College	Kevin street DIT
Tel. Number	01 4024750 and 4024568
Email	Sylvia.mooney@dit.ie and fionnuala.walsh@dit.ie
Names of any co-applicants (& colleges they are based in):	Garry Toner Disability officer IT Tallaght Disability Service
Signed	S Mooney F Walsh
Date	27/1/2016
TU4D Theme (Please tick)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Induction/early orientation <input type="checkbox"/> First 5,6 or 7 weeks; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Peer mentoring <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment and feedback; <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Graduate Attributes <input type="checkbox"/> Students/ autonomous self-directed learners, <input type="checkbox"/> Learning spaces – virtual & physical <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Curriculum models	
Summary of Prototype project (max 200 words)	<p>To integrate the increased number of first year students with AS into college life ITT and DIT.</p> <p>Students with AS/ ADHD/ ASD suffer from a variety of difficulties, which includes, an impairment in social interactions, they may not be aware of social customs, can appear socially awkward, have a difficulty with empathy and may misinterpret social cues.</p> <p>All these symptoms make integration into college an extremely stressful exercise. We have developed a programme to help alleviate some of those stressors.</p> <p>The programme includes, first year students with AS, student peers, staff and lecturers. The program aims are: (i) develop skills in social interaction; (ii) provide a safe space for students to gain a mutually reciprocal understanding of each cohort, (iii) meet staff and lecturers outside the lecture room (iv) develop capacity to work as a team.</p> <p>The project to run over 10 Thursdays, (increased to 20) and cover a topic each week e.g. tour of the college, communication skills, memory techniques, team work, creativity, improvisation, listening skills, how to tell jokes and a community project (e.g. tea/Bingo session with OAP's from the area)</p>
Project dates	DIT Weekly every Thursday 5.00pm – 7.00pm in KE007. The meetings began 29th October – Dec 3 rd . Starts back 28 th January 2016 – April 28 th . ITT start date – Monday 1 st February 2016 every week until April 25 th .
Main proposed original project	Opportunity for AS students to mix with non AS students to: develop social skills, aid their knowledge, provide a sense of belonging during

<p>outputs for the TU4D (max 100 words)</p>	<p>the first few weeks, meaningful integration and enhance retention. The ultimate goal would be the movement of AS students from ITT and DIT into the wider college Societies.</p> <p>Peer Support students; interaction will increase knowledge and understanding of AS, develop a more accepting attitude of students with AS. Knowledge would permeate the student body, providing an easier transition into 3rd level for AS students.</p> <p>Staff and lecturers increase awareness and gain insight on how to work with students with AS.</p>																								
<p>Project outputs including any evaluation data (max 300 words, data to be included in an appendix but can be summarised here)</p>	<p><i>1. Induction/orientation; 5. Peer mentors 6. Graduate</i> <i>Table 1</i></p> <table border="1" data-bbox="483 645 1401 1077"> <thead> <tr> <th>Week</th> <th>Date</th> <th>Subject</th> <th>Facilitator</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>05th Nov</td> <td>Communication – Students had to explain how to build Lego planes, without instructions</td> <td>Sylvia/Fionnuala</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>12th Nov</td> <td>Thinking outside the box-brain teasers</td> <td>Sylvia/Fionnuala</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>19th Nov</td> <td>Creativity - practice how to be creative.</td> <td>Damian (lecturer)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>26th Nov</td> <td>Team work - Detective game</td> <td>Sylvia</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>3rd Dec</td> <td>Social interaction - Cafe and mince pies</td> <td>Sylvia and Fionnuala</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Table 1, above is an outline of the agenda's for each Thursday Club session. Agenda follows as -5pm met and greet (tea/coffee). 5.30 workshops on a skill. 6pm – 7pm practice the skill, 7pm evaluation. Finish.</p> <p>An evaluation questionnaire was used, the responses from participants and peers after each session was positive. Breakdown of Participants (4) 3 females, 1 male. Age ranged 18-24. Peers (4) were from second year programmes, 3 females, 1 male. Age range 19 -35. Facilitators - 2 female, Chaplain and Learning Support officer. Lecturer - 1 male. Lecturer in computer technology Continuing with the programme Thursday 28th Jan.</p> <p>Re IT Tallaght.</p> <p>Two meetings have taken place, agreed staff and start up. To purchase materials/equipment. Agreed to work together on similar Agenda, to view what social skill/area their Students need to have addressed first. The ITT AS club will be called the Monday Club 5pm - 7pm. Start date Monday February 22nd 2016.</p> <p>With the help of Julie Stafford and Bob O'Mhurucu we applied for funding for the joint ITT and DIT AS clubs from the Pobal Dormant account fund and were successful.</p>	Week	Date	Subject	Facilitator	1	05 th Nov	Communication – Students had to explain how to build Lego planes, without instructions	Sylvia/Fionnuala	2	12 th Nov	Thinking outside the box-brain teasers	Sylvia/Fionnuala	3	19 th Nov	Creativity - practice how to be creative.	Damian (lecturer)	4	26 th Nov	Team work - Detective game	Sylvia	5	3 rd Dec	Social interaction - Cafe and mince pies	Sylvia and Fionnuala
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<p>Lessons Learned (max 200 words)</p>	<p>Participants: Four AS students attended. The programme started in November 2015 and continued to December. Low participant numbers to start, but all fully engaged and contributed to the programme. Suggestion for future; For a full project implementation we will need</p>																								

	<p>start earlier and put in more time and resources to invite students to attend.</p> <p>Peer volunteers: Sent out an email request and engaged 4 volunteer peers, which allowed a 1:1 ratio of participant and peer. Facilitators met individually with each Peer and explained; the project remit, gave overview of autism, outlined possible scenarios and examples of behaviours. Future - to look at training programme and create peer handbook.</p> <p>Lecturers: workshop deliveries went well and addressed-communication, meditation, going out for coffee and conversation process. Future - Opportunity to invite more lecturers to participate and engage with AS student</p> <p>Facilitators: Facilitation went well; students engaged and gave feedback on the programme. Future – more in-depth evaluation and need to consider a dedicated person to develop the program. Create Resource manual to disseminate to other colleges</p>
<p>Next stage(max (max 200 words)</p>	<p>Create in depth evaluation questionnaire for funders, participants, peers, promoters and academics. Ask each cohort their opinion of what worked and what needs improvement/changes/</p> <p>Short evaluations were carried out each week.</p> <p>We applied to Pobal for funding under the Dormant Account fund supporting students with ADHD. We were successful and have been granted € 29K. The €1k from TU4 was used as leverage, making the total project value €30k.</p> <p>This will allow the project to buy hours for a facilitator. The facilitator will develop the program by encouraging participant attendance (to include 1st – 4th years), developing peers, increase training, prepare and provide 4 hand books; students, peers, lecturers and trainers. The project is now funded for 18 months via the Dormant account fund.</p>