Digital Education Conference

DEC24 Paper Abstracts

SEERLab South East Education Research Lab
Faculty of Education and Lifelong Learning, SETU

Conference Introduction

The Digital Education Conference brings educators, researchers, tech/student support and industry professionals together to share and discover innovative uses of technology in an ever-changing teaching and learning environment. This conference will stimulate dialogue and debate in our education landscape as we move through learning and teaching to utlise the technology suitable and relevant to our needs whether its immersive XR, VR applications or the myriad that is Gen AI and opportunities and challenges therein related to academic integrity, ethics, efficiency, engagement and creativity. How we navigate through the emergent developments in a human-centric manner cognisant of our values, beliefs and vision illuminates the transformative opportunities of education in our society to be inclusive, exciting journey for all.

This event provides an opportunity to present your research and practice-related projects, extend your network and dive into new collaborative ideation with practical and theoretical contributions. The conference will take place over two days, 10th and 11th December. The 2-day rate for 10th and the 11th December is €70 (incl. daily refreshments and the Conference dinner in the Tower Hotel on 10th December). The 1-day rate is €20.The conference schedule starts on Day 1:9:30am to 5:30pm, and Day 2: 9:00am to 4:00pm.

This event aims to showcase the excellent work that the Faculty of Education and Lifelong learning in SETU and many other schools within our university and across our partner universities MTU, ATU, TUD, TUS, DKIT and the wider Education communities are actively engaged.

The ethos of DEC24 is converging critical areas of research in education that stems from quality education in a digital world enabled through the linking of SDG 3, 4,11,13,17 – health, education, sustainable communities and partnerships.

We are keen for change for impact: digitisation is a part of our world but many still grapple with understanding its complexities, the teaching communities were forced into a digital space during COVID but now in the face of assessments and AI the landscape has changed significantly.

Our aim for DEC24 is to showcase existing initiatives and collaborations with visionaries leading the way to a credible future for all that puts people, innovation, technology, and education entrepreneurship together. This conference is an avenue for multi-disciplinary practice and research, including projects/research using VR in nursing, student engagement, AI ethics in classroom, and transformative learning in an era where challenges for students include housing, poverty, and caring responsibilities. These abstracts are an excellent example of the quality and diversity of Digital Education practice and research.

Paper Abstracts

Neill Wylie (SETU). Gathertown: Meeting the Post-Pandemic Students' Engagement Needs.

Abstract. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a reimagining of traditional Learning Management Systems, underscoring the critical role of social presence in education. Feelings of isolation among students in online and blended courses have been shown to adversely affect learning outcomes and student motivation. Research has demonstrated a positive correlation between virtual worlds and educational outcomes, with student collaboration in these environments enhancing motivation and learning effectiveness. Further, providing students with a virtual space to inhabit outside of teaching hours has been shown to boost feelings of belonging.

Gathertown, a virtual world incorporating game-based learning elements developed during the pandemic, has significantly contributed to digital transformation in education. Its intuitive user interface, minimal learning curve, and accessibility have made it an effective tool. Unlike traditional web-conferencing software, Gathertown allows students to see and interact within a virtual "room," enabling movement and location-based interaction. It allows students to design their own avatar including gender neutral designs.

This platform enriches the student experience by offering a more engaging alternative to standard video conferencing tools, facilitating digital engagement, collaboration, and content access. Teachers can create objects in their virtual space that students can interact with thus facilitating staff to work with their students as part of the learning environment, to seek their feedback and input, and to foster a sense of inclusion. Additionally, In Gathertown, spontaneous movement and interactions are possible, and students can move their avatar around the classroom to do assigned activities, form groups easily, or speak privately. This promotes student autonomy and allows students to play a meaningful role in the decisions that affect their learning experience.

Feedback from pilot programs conducted among SETU students has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting its innovation, engagement, sense of connection, exploratory enjoyment, reduced screen fatigue, easy access, and overall fun and distinctiveness. This paper will explore the development, implementation, and impact of Gathertown on student learning outcomes and experiences at South East Technological University as well as its integration in several accredited modules.

Tracey Dermody (South East Technological University) and Charmaine Scallan (HSE NMPDU Dublin and South East). *Mentoring Engaging Nurturing Translating Our Regional Research Programme - Bridging the gap for regional research.*

Abstract. Background:

• Based on a service needs assessment a collaborative academic-clinical partnership designed, developed and delivered a bespoke research education and training programme.

• Programme design focused on: Fundamentals of clinical inquiry, EBP and research and was underpinned by the theory of Community of Practice.

Aim:

• To support point of care nurses and midwives in meeting their research and evidence-based practice (EBP) competency requirements

Objectives:

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• Develop nurses and midwives' knowledge, skills and attitudes in taking a research idea from initial idea conceptualisation to a working proposal.

• Develop role models in each clinical setting to encourage, motivate, engage and support peers in research/EBP activity.

• Raise the profile and capacity for nurse/midwife led research activity.

Description of Innovation:

• Design, development delivery and evaluation of a bespoke EBP/ Research education and training programme.

• Participants self-reported knowledge, practice, and attitudes towards EBP/Research skills were measured pre programme using Upton & Upton (2005) EBPQ.

Implementation of Innovation:

• Programme was delivered by two expert clinical facilitators using a blended learning approach, four face to face sessions with nine online sessions.

• The digital platform Padlet was utilised to share resources and scaffold participants learning.

• Preparation and presentation of a "5 min pitch" oral presentation and an academic poster at a regional Research Event.

Conclusion/Impact

• Access and provision of a shared learning space utilising digital technology.

• Identification and awareness by clinicians of the benefit of 'protected time' to engage with the skills and tools required to initiate clinical nurse/midwife led research projects.

• Organisational recognition of the impact of participation in the programme on individual staff engagement with EBP, Research, CPD and PDP.

• Enhance staff knowledge, skills and attitudes of research process, digital technology, peer to peer support and mentorship.

Karen Bunyan (South East Technological University). Using podcasting to enrich student learning and cultivate collaborative teaching.

Abstract. Authors: Karen Bunyan, Sarah Bates Evoy, Valerie Brett, Lana McCarthy, Caroline McGarry, Eleanor Neff, Edel Ni Ghrainne, Clare Power, Catriona Warren

This presentation will explore podcasting as a pedagogical resource to enrich student learning. Podcasts have been shown to enhance student engagement and motivation allowing them to access learning resources in their own time and learn at their own pace (Bolliger, Supanakorn, and Boggs 2010). The Literacy Development Centre (LDC) in SETU uses podcasting to connect students with their studies in flexible ways that suit the needs of our unique learners. As our programmes are delivered through blended methods, we are continually investigating ways to meet the needs of non-traditional, distance learners.

Podcasting is also aligned with UDL principles. King and Kusch (2023) found that listening to podcasts can help overcome challenges such as cognitive overload, equity and accessibility. The LDC is committed to these principles and has always been at the forefront of innovation, equity and accessibility in adult education. Podcasting in the LDC began before the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and became even more critical to connect with students. Research shows that podcasting is very favourable to students as a way of learning (Gunderson & Cumming, 2022).

Podcasting also lends itself well to collaborative teaching. We use podcasts to connect students with module content while also ensuring that we are working as a team, producing content that is relevant across modules and programmes. This allows learners to connect their learning from one module to another while ensuring we build on each module sustainably. In this presentation, we will discuss how we engage with one another in the creation of suitable podcast episodes that inform our teaching.

The presentation will discuss the original pedagogical considerations for using podcasting, the students' experience of podcasts as a learning resource, and the collaborative work involved in creating this resource for our students.

References

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John Meegan (Maynooth University) and Keith Young (Maynooth University). 'It's a tool, not a crutch' A Generative AI scenario-based learning intervention in Pre-Service Teacher Education.

Abstract. This research aims to design and evaluate the impact of a Generative AI (GenAI) scenario-based learning (SBL) intervention on pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and AI literacy in both primary and post-primary teacher education in Ireland. The project explores whether GenAI can generate suitable SBL vignettes that encourage student teachers to engage with these scenarios from multiple perspectives. By interacting with GenAI, participants can explore how AI technologies function, their limitations, and develop AI literacy alongside teaching efficacy.

Research questions guiding this study include:

How can a GenAI SBL intervention be designed to enhance pre-service teachers' self-efficacy and AI literacy?

Does such an intervention impact pre-service teachers' self-efficacy?

Does the intervention affect pre-service teachers' AI literacy?

The study employs an explanatory sequential mixed methods approach (Cohen et al., 2017), collecting quantitative data first and qualitative data later (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Ethical approval was obtained from Maynooth University in February 2024. The intervention consists of workshops integrating SBL and the GenAI platform, CoPilot, informed by research on self-efficacy (Klassen & Tze, 2014; Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001) and AI literacy (Wang et al., 2022). Participants were 12 primary and 6 post-primary pre-service teachers. Data collection involved pre-post surveys using the Teacher Self-Efficacy Scale (Klassen et al., 2009) and AI Literacy Scale (Wang et al., 2022), followed by focus groups for qualitative insights.

Findings showed that the intervention significantly improved self-efficacy, particularly in classroom management and student engagement, although the increase in instructional self-efficacy was not statistically significant. Pre-service teachers' AI literacy also significantly improved.

interventions can boost pre-service teachers' confidence and preparedness for school placement, potentially reducing the "reality shock" often experienced during placements (Dicke et al., 2015). Embedding GenAI into initial teacher education (ITE) programs could enhance AI literacy, including ethical considerations. Additionally, these interventions are scalable, making them cost-effective and low-risk alternatives to real-life work environments (Baddie & Kaufman, 2015).

Arthur Kearney (SETU) and Sharon O'Brien (SETU). Beginning to innovate teaching of place: pedagogic boundary spanning and signature pedagogies.

Abstract. Arguments that the teaching of place can play an important role in the contemporary classroom emerge from indications that place is central to the appreciation of and engagement with sustainability (Shrivastava and Kennelly, 2013), regional development (Collits and Rowe, 2015) and social enterprise (Elmes et al. 2012). Following Hess et al. (2008: 468) we define place as 'a nested collection of human experiences, locations with which people and communities have particular affective relationships'.

Our interest in innovating teaching of place emerges from considerations that existing ways of teaching place are limited by implicit assumptions with place assumed into everyday pedagogy in a non-reflective manner (Deringer, 2017). Such assumptions lead to struggles to to articulate how enterprise is embedded in place (Munoz and Kimmitt, 2019), and such struggles are augmented when one considers that economic and social development is underpinned by resources interpreted and developed in a place context (Muller and Korsgaard, 2018). Our research is focused at the level of the lecturer as one seeking to support student articulation of novel perspectives on place (Elmes et al. 2012). For us the classroom supports the opportunity to develop novel perspectives through cycles of engagement with students who are embedded in social and economic mores (Herodotou et al. 2019).

As business school lecturers we both have move outside the business school to teach in other faculties. In this paper we reflect, using a form of action learning, on our teaching of place. In ongoing work (Kearney and O'Brien, 2024) we have adapted the theory of pedagogic practices to indicate how six specific practices can be honed to innovate teaching of place. For the present study we propose using the theory of signature pedagogies (Shulman, 2005). Our aim for the conference is to develop an initial framework of how the lens of signature pedagogies can support our efforts to begin to innovate our teaching of place. Specifically we reflect on the innovating potential in working at the intersection of the boundaries of business, construction and agriculture disciplines, where we are exposed to, engage with and are challenged by different signature pedagogies.

Looking to the future we hope to progress the framework into a conference paper. From a practitioner perspective our work continues to create insight for teachers seeking to contemplate and indeed integrate place into the contemporary classroom.

Frances Boylan (TU Dublin) and Ciara Bell (TU Dublin). HyFlex on the go: The Mobile HyFlex Project at TU Dublin .

Abstract. Background:

Under Stream 3 of the N-TUTORR project and work package 3.2 Digital Campus, the Digital Education Team at TU Dublin worked closely with the N-TUTORR Digital Campus Lead to fund and establish a number of HyFlex related projects. The Mobile HyFlex Project was one of these and set out to explore and evaluate the provision of quality delivery in teaching spaces traditionally ill-equipped for such a flexible mode. The project attracted the attention of staff from across all three campuses with 90 applying to be involved. In May 2024, 50 staff were issued with a MS Surface Pro and a Panasonic IT360 360° camera and speaker device to bring with them from room to room.

At TU Dublin, we are aware of the complexities involved in such a mode. Studies show that there is a higher cognitive load placed on a lecturer during the delivery of a HyFlex class and that student engagement can drop substantially when they are online, and so these project participants were provided with some training in the use of the equipment and group discussions were had about the pedagogical challenges associated with presenting content and engaging students in this flexible environment. By tracking the progress of these lecturers, the engagement levels of their students, trialling these technologies, and building a bank of case studies, TU Dublin will be better situated to design our university's approach to HyFlex delivery into the longer term and offer valuable research informed support and guidance to lecturers who deliver in this way.

Rationale:

According to the European Commission in their Digital Education Action Plan (2020), recent global events have shown that "digital education is not a marginal issue but a central component of learning, teaching and assessment in the 21st century". For TU Dublin, Digital Education is a key strategic focus that runs across all three pillars of our Strategic Intent 2030 and we are committed to providing the kinds of flexible, high-quality digitally-enhanced and inclusive educational opportunities that our students require to reach their full potential in our changing world, including our students that commute long distances, are dealing with illness, and/or are undertaking caring duties etc.

Conclusion:

This presentation will explain the details of the project and set out why those mobile devices were chosen over alternative options. It will also describe and show the supports that are being provided for the staff involved in the project, discuss some of the issues that have arisen for them this semester and how we have been trying to address those. Presented also will be some interesting observations and unforeseen challenges that have arisen that will need further attention going forward if this flexible approach to delivery is to be successful.

Chrysostomos Lefteratos (Educator at Athens College, Ph.D. (c)). Reimagining History: A Journey through Athens and Sparta with AI-Driven Student Plays.

Abstract. The pupils, 14 boys and 10 girls aged 10, are invited to follow the paths of ancient Athens and Sparta in a different way to the way they have been taught history. Divided into groups of 5, formed on the basis of their interests, performance and level of cooperation, they will be responsible for teaching each lesson (Bencsik, Noszkay & Marosi, 2009). A lesson by the students for the students, using new technologies and, more specifically, artificial intelligence software (Akgun & Greenhow, 2022). Each team is responsible for teaching one chapter. Each lesson is delivered in an innovative and clearly more engaging way, using dramatization techniques (Partain, 2024). The students have uploaded their chapter to the AI programme and, with the guidance of their teacher, they ask for it to be returned to them in the form of a play with prepared dialogues. The teacher checks the appropriateness of the text given in response by the AI programme and, with appropriate interventions, gives the children the final "product" (Baidoo-Anu & Ansah, 2023). The pupils, having divided the roles, study their lines and present them to the plenary the next time Wu & Yu, 2024). The whole class is involved in the lesson and the level of participation is very high. This approach is based on the reconfiguration of traditional education techniques that all teachers want to achieve, which should be based on the words of Benjamin Franklin: "Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn".

Antoinette Jordan (South East Technological University (SETU)) and Brian Ogilvie (South East Technological University (SETU)). Cross-border bilingual Digital Entrepreneurship Education with the BUCANIER project - Building Clusters and Networks in Innovation Enterprise and Research in Ireland and Wales.

Abstract. Background

The BUCANIER EU project (Building Clusters and Networks in Innovation Enterprise and Research) delivered innovative entrepreneur digital education in a bilingual environment to 130 SMEs across Ireland and Wales. Focussing on cross-border innovation and targeting smart specialisation in regional innovation systems, the project targeted the key growth sectors of food and drink, life sciences and renewable energies, as identified by the Ireland-Wales EU Programme. The project facilitated cross-border and bilingual entrepreneur education in English and Welsh, using both online and in-person facilitation, on design thinking and innovation topics, with EDI and sustainability as cross-cutting themes.

Rationale

Entrepreneur education included the design and deployment of bespoke tools including an Innovation Masterclass Video Series hosted on YouTube, a printed Entrepreneur Innovation Masterclass Workbook to support the Masterclass series, a printed Mentoring Workbook, a cross-border network Facebook group, worksheets, plus in-person and online workshops across the cross-border region (both before and during COVID-lockdowns). In addition, traditional one-to-one business mentoring and consultation with higher education institutions and local authority supports was provided. The combination of digital entrepreneurship education with face-to-face traditional elements provided a tailored suite of supports, which gained overall excellent feedback from participating SMEs.

Conclusion

Smart specialisation in regional innovation systems (RIS) is an approach that can support economic development and competitiveness in regions (Davies et al, 2020). With the inclusion of digital education for entrepreneurs, ideally suited to a cross-border maritime area but also supported by in-person contacts, this facilitation resulted in 301 new connections between 173 stakeholders (Davies et al, 2020). Participating SMEs were assisted in creating 15 full-time equivalent jobs, 22 new to market products, 62 new to firm products, 2 cross-border clusters and 5 cross-border collaborations between participants (BUCANIER Legacy Video, 2021). The research showed that entrepreneurship education, clusters and networks must be carefully managed with respect to the time required, preferred language and suitability of delivery mechanisms for interventions, for it to benefit SMEs. Digital entrepreneur education formed a key part of this benefit, particularly for rural microenterprises with limited resources and time.

Keith Byrne (SETU) and Brendan Murphy (WWETB / Impact Training). Augmented Reality Innovation in Life Sciences Education: Enhancing Learning In Industrial Process Controller (IPC) Training.

Abstract. This practice paper explores the use of Augmented Reality (AR) as an innovative tool to improve teaching practices for further education students learning to operate an Industrial Process Controller (IPC) unit. Referencing Manga (2017), who noted technology's ability to redefine tasks and create new learning opportunities, Keith Byrne and Brendan Murphy share their experiences developing an AR-based learning experience using Microsoft HoloLens 2 and the 3spin-Learning software. This AR integration aimed to shift from traditional presentation methods to an immersive, hands-on approach, fostering students' active engagement and deeper understanding of IPC functionalities.

Guided by ADDIE instructional design principles first developed by Dick & Carey (1978) and driven by curiosity and research, the authors developed a series of AR touchpoints that overlay digital assets onto the IPC in a classroom setting. These touchpoints enable students, working individually or in groups, to explore the complexities of the IPC's actuators and sensors through self-guided discovery, transforming the learning experience into a more interactive and engaging one.

This paper details the motivations, methodologies, and personal insights gained throughout the creation and implementation phases of this AR experience, highlighting its impact on both educators and students as a dynamic approach to technical learning.

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Suzanne Ul (University of Limerick). The Yin and Yang of digital technologies: the impact of a digital wellbeing initiative on staff wellbeing.

Abstract. Research paper

A growing focus on the concept of 'digital wellbeing', has emerged over the last decade in the literature across a range of sectors ranging from human-computer interaction (Calvo & Peters, 2018), sociology (Gui, Fasoli & Carradore, 2017) and education (JISC, 2019; Biggins & Holley, 2020). While there are many variations across the various definitions of the term, 'digital wellbeing' is generally understood to be the influence of technology on the user's wellbeing. The literature to date suggests that this influence can be positive and negative, and emerging research demonstrates the benefit of digital wellbeing training interventions to provide users with the skills to minimise the negative impact and maximise a positive effect.

This research paper will discuss a case study exploring the impact of a digital wellbeing intervention on staff in higher education. The study was conducted as part of a doctor of education (EdD) programme, in response to observations by the author working with staff to expand and enhance their use of digital technologies in their work practices. The paper will begin by presenting a brief background to the topic of digital wellbeing and an overview of the rationale and methodology for the study. The findings of the study will be discussed including:

evidence of the impact of an intervention on behaviour change;

an analyses of the contextual factors impacting digital wellbeing;

insights on remote working during the specific context of the Covid-19 pandemic, which can inform future support for staff engaging in remote and hybrid working; and

the need to support all staff (teaching and non-teaching roles) in higher education in respect of digital wellbeing.

Finally, the digital wellbeing intervention materials which are now available through creative commons for use and/or adaptation to support digital wellbeing will be presented.

Suzanne Ul (University of Limerick). Artificial intelligence - can we protect the good, while managing the bad and the ugly?

Abstract. GASTA submission

Education for Sustainable Development has been identified as a key area of focus for the Irish Higher Education sector and inclusive learning environments are at the core of this concept (Government of Ireland, 2024). Universal Design and Universal Design for Learning have been widely adopted as inclusive frameworks in the Irish context, with over 4,000 practitioners completing the digital badge in recent years and the introduction of the ALTITUDE charter to support the embedding of universal design strategically in the Irish further and higher education sectors (Healy, Banks & Ryder, 2024). Digital technologies have long been used to support the development of inclusive learning environments and to remove barriers to learning in line with the principles of Universal Design and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Tools which draw on artificial intelligence such as Grammarly and the MS 365 suite are now commonly used to navigate barriers to learning for students by offering an alternative pathway to success including the assessment process. The challenges to assessment design presented by generative artificial intelligence have taken centre stage in higher education across the globe since the introduction of Chat GPT in November 2022. The current propensity to focus on the negative aspect of generative AI in higher education could potentially mask the benefits of artificial intelligence tools. How do we, as higher education practitioners, ensure that the benefits of such technologies are not expunged from conversations around inclusive learning environments and inclusive assessment practices?

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Mark Power (South East Technological University), Alberto Huertas Celdrán (University of Zurich), Sharon Kinsella (South East Technological University), Ian Mills (Walton Institute), Frances Cleary (Walton Institute) and Sara Kennedy (South East Technological University). *Technical Evaluation of the AFUN Platform: Assessing Performance, Usability, and System Efficiency for AR-Based Motor Skill Interventions in Autistic Children.*

Abstract. The AFUN platform is an augmented reality (AR) based intervention that was developed to improve motor skills in autistic children by targeting their fundamental movement skills (FMS). It offers an accessible and immersive approach that does not require body-worn sensors, allowing the intervention to avoid potential sensory issues. This research fills the gap in the technical specifications evaluation of extended reality (XR) treatments, where this type of analysis is frequently disregarded.

seldom investigates technical performance, usability, or system efficiency, which are crucial for practical application. This research evaluates AFUN's performance, demonstrating it as a feasible, cost-effective, easy-to-use intervention that operates efficiently in small spaces and can be implemented by non-technical caregivers and educators.

The AFUN platform uses Unity and integrates ARKit on iOS devices for real-time body tracking without external devices. The AFUN platform features a modular microservice design with an API and a NoSQL MongoDB database. The AFUN platform was evaluated in terms of its CPU usage, memory usage, energy impact, frames per second (FPS), GPU hardware utilisation, and the device's thermal state to ensure the platform's reliability and ensure it performed within expectations.

Preliminary results indicate that the AFUN platform performs well, is cost-effective and is easy to use. The study supports AR's potential to enhance motor skill interventions and informs future XR research on performance-focused, technically sound interventions for neurodivergent populations.

Tom Farrelly (MTU), Hazel Farrell (SETU), Mohammed Cherbatji (IADT), Larkin Cunningham (MTU), Jj Quinlan (DkIT), Jacqueline Toal (DkIT), Annette Cosgrove (ATU), Angela Wright (MTU), Noelle O'Connor (TUS), Denise Macgiollari (TUS) and Bryan Duggan (TU Dublin). *From Experiment to Impact: The GenAI:N3 Project's Journey in Educational Transformation.*

Abstract. This presentation highlights a recent initiative within N-TUTORR: the GenAI:N3 project. While some in higher education have voiced concerns about the potential disruption that generative AI could bring to teaching, learning, and assessment, this initiative has taken the metaphorical red pill with the intention of going down the GenAI rabbit hole. As such, GenAI:N3 embraced the challenge, aiming to explore the possibilities of generative AI in education. This project was designed to create a supportive space where individuals from various disciplines and institutions could experiment with AI tools, ultimately generating resources and insights for the broader academic community. Launched in September and coordinated by Dr. Hazel Farrell of SETU with representatives from each of N-TUTORR's seven partner institutions, GenAI:N3 has produced significant outputs in a relatively short period, and these contributions are expected to continue to impact academic practices even after N-TUTORR concludes in December 2024. DEC24 offers an excellent platform to showcase these achievements and share them widely.

The project's main outputs include an interactive eBook, a dedicated website, and an assessment redesign framework, each collaboratively developed by project members. The interactive eBook serves as a dynamic resource, integrating contributions from participants to provide valuable insights into the use of generative AI in education. Meanwhile, the project website acts as a comprehensive repository, offering access to resources, updates, and findings from various project activities, including the hackathons and workshops hosted across the seven institutions. These hackathons and workshops were central to GenAI:N3's hands-on approach, giving educators and students opportunities to explore generative AI applications in assessment, actively tackling both the benefits and challenges it presents. Together, these outputs reflect the project's commitment to fostering AI-informed educational practices and contributing to a thoughtful, constructive adaptation to the changing conditions in higher education.

Shama Siddiqui (DHA Suffa University), Anwar Khan (Millennium Institute of Technology and Entreprenuership) and Indrakshi Dey (Walton Institute for Information and Communication Systems Science). *IoT for SDG-4: Leveraging Heart Rate Sensors for Exam and Presentation Stress Detection.*

Abstract. In today's academic environment, the pressure to perform well in exams and presentations can lead to significant levels of anxiety among students. This challenge becomes critical during the presentations/viva exams, particularly for the students who have insufficient communication skills. Recognizing the importance of mental well-being in education, this paper explores the innovative use of pulse rate sensors as a non-intrusive tool for detecting and managing exam and presentation anxiety. By monitoring subtle changes in heart rate, these sensors offer valuable insights into students' physiological responses to stress, enabling early intervention and personalized support strategies. Moreover, this approach aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) - Quality Education, by promoting inclusive and equitable access to education while fostering students' holistic development.

We conducted experiments on students while they were presenting their final year projects during the final year of their undergraduate study at DHA Suffa University, Karachi, Pakistan. Each student was asked to wear a pulse oximetry sensor while they presented in front of a 3-member panel for 5 minutes. The live data was transmitted to the mobile app of each panel member, and the same along with the consolidated data was also transmitted to a web-based dashboard. During the experiments, students with lower communication skills were found to have higher pulse rates, indicating a greater level of anxiety. In the light of these findings, we propose that while scoring the students, relaxation should be given to students in proportion to the anxiety they faced. This would lead to offering equal opportunities to students belonging from diverse social/linguistics backgrounds. Hence, the findings demonstrate how technology can empower educators and support staff to create supportive learning environments that prioritize the mental health and academic success of all students. Similar systems could be developed in the future for job candidates, as they also experience pressure during interviews

James Egan (SETU) and Deanna Santoro (SETU). Taught Masters dissertations: How are they evolving in the era of Generative AI?

Abstract. Taught Master's (TM) degree programmes are a common way for people to pivot into a new discipline or to further their knowledge in their chosen field. The largest component of these TM programmes is the Taught Master's Dissertation (TMD). Macleod, Barnes and Huttly (2019) discuss that researchers 'largely ignore' TM programmes, despite increasing enrolment to these programmes.

The advent of Generative-AI presents new challenges and potential changes for Programme Directors (PDs) of TM programmes. This study investigates how eight PDs of TM programmes are responding to these changes, specially focusing on their perceptions of Generative-AI's impact on the assessment processes of TMDs. The primary research question (RQ1) explores the extent to which PDs believe Generative-AI may alter the nature of these assessments.

The individual experiences of PDs with Generative-AI were explored, discussing both the challenges and benefits of these tools to the students. PDs were asked to consider the future of the TMD and identify any changes that may be necessary to the assessment processes as a result of the use of these Generative-AI tools.

The findings reveal that the PDs interviewed are adopting various strategies to adapt or even redesign the outputs of the dissertation module in response to Generative-AI tools. Notable adaptations include adding a "Viva voce" component and a shift away from the traditional 15,000-word dissertation towards shorter research papers, as already implemented by several PDs in their programmes.

Fionnuala Brennan (South East Technological University), Laura Doyle (South East Technological University), Neill Wylie (South East Technological University), Cathal Ryan (South East Technological University) and Emmet Cullinane (South East Technological University). *Closing the digital divide.*

Abstract. This practice paper presents a case study of a programme team approach to online module design and layout. It follows up on a paper delivered at DEC23 presenting staff and student feedback of their experience of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) on a blended learning programme - the Higher Certificate in Custodial Care (HCCC). The HCCC is a bespoke two year applied learning programme for all recruit officers to the Irish Prison Service (IPS). It is co-designed and co-delivered by SETU and the IPS. Supported by an NTutorr-funded project entitled Optimise, the team identified a lack of consistency across module design as a significant barrier to student learning. Those findings were presented at DEC23. This paper presents the actions taken in 2024 as a result of those findings by the programme team and Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning at South East Technological University (SETU) Waterford. We share our experience of embedding a module template and provide an update on student feedback taken in November 2024 to compare with twelve months earlier.

Rob Lowney (Dublin City University). Developing critical data literacy with undergraduate students.

Abstract. This session will share findings which emerged from a research study with undergraduate Education students. The research centred on learning analytics (LA) and critical data literacy (CDL), seeking to explore participants' experiences of an educational activity to develop their CDL. Part of this educational activity included sharing students' own LA data from the virtual learning environment (VLE) with them.

The two areas of learning analytics and critical data literacy are growing in focus in higher education. This is because both society and higher education are becoming increasingly 'datafied' (Atenas, Havemann and Timmermann, 2020; Verständig, 2021), particularly through collection of learner data to inform learning analytics. Critical data literacy for individuals has emerged as a way to counter datafication's effects (Sander, 2020). Critical data literacy is an important part of a person's wider digital literacies.

The educational activity drew upon Pangrazio and Selwyn's (2018) domains of personal data literacy, and provided a space for students to come together and reflect on their technology use and data practices. The educational activity involved facilitated discussion, after which students explored a personal dashboard of their VLE data; a tool to prompt further reflection, "an object to think with" (Papert, 1980). Opening up students' institutional data to them is a form of data transparency (Prinsloo & Slade, 2015). Qualitative interviews were held after the activity to explore students' experience and if their critical data literacy has been fostered. Themes which were generated through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021) include agency, fairness and the value of CDL. The findings indicate an interest among students for further CDL development and recommendations for institutions to engage in data transparency with their students.

Jeremiah Spillane (MTU) and Oonagh O'Brien (MTU). Building Capacity for Digital Wellbeing Education Across Europe: Insights from the INGENIUM University Alliance.

Abstract. As students and staff increasingly engage with digital platforms, the need for educational programs addressing digital wellbeing has never been more urgent. With corporate entities vying for our time through the attention economy, it is essential that we tackle this and empower staff and students to navigate digital environments, foregrounding mindfulness and wellbeing. Moreover, as our students will go on to become future business leaders, understanding the ethical implications of digital design and development is crucial for them to create meaningful digital futures.

To address these challenges, this presentation introduces the Digital Wellbeing module, a blended intensive programme (BIP) led by MTU and delivered across the INGENIUM European University Alliance. The module introduces foundational and advanced concepts spanning from understanding the cognitive and emotional impacts of technology use to developing strategies for sustainable development of, and engagement with, digital tools. In this multi-disciplinary, multi-national collaboration experts from across INGENIUM contributed lectures on areas such as cyberpsychology, online culture, ethical development, digital legislation, misinformation, disinformation, recommender algorithms, artificial intelligence, and bias. The module also supports learners in developing practical skills such as setting healthy boundaries in digital spaces, managing digital distractions, and utilising virtual resources to maintain mental and emotional balance.

Once we've introduced the module, we will then present the train-the-trainer initiative, a key component of the module which is aimed at openly promoting widespread takeup of the core concepts and various module components across the alliance. This initiative leverages video and other resources and the Moodle platform to facilitate localised delivery of the Digital Wellbeing module across INGENIUM partner institutions. Moodle provides open access to video lectures and instructional materials for all teaching staff across the alliance, supporting widespread adoption in line with open education principles. In doing so, the presentation highlights the first phase of the project, reflecting on lessons learned from the delivery of the module, both online and in-person components, as well as outlining the next steps which include developing the materials into an open educational resource (OER) to be used beyond INGENIUM.

Tom Rickard (Foróige), Eoin Dolan (Foróige) and Jen Hesnan (GRETB). Practice Paper: Music Making in Virtual Reality, A partnership project developed to support young people facing barriers to engage with in-person music making. .

Abstract. This pilot education partnership programme by Music Generation Galway City, Foróige's GoVirtual and GoSonic programmes, and TUSLA Family Services in Galway, harnesses virtual reality (VR) technology to deliver an innovative music education programme designed to engage socially isolated young people that are facing barriers to access. Responding to this need, this VR-based music initiative creates a safe and immersive digital environment where young people can collaborate in music-making, reducing the physical and social barriers to participation.

Foróige GO Youth Workers spent over 6-months of this program supporting the Music Educators, to build on their VR facilitation skills in music education practice and share amongst a peer network. This led to the development of a programme that provides accessible and adaptable music education experiences in VR spaces, where students can explore various aspects of music.

Implemented through a devolved model of partnership, key to the successful implementation of local music education partnership involved the Galway Roscommon Education and Training Board (GRETB) Music Generation programme, local TUSLA family support social care networks in Galway, and local youth clubs with support from specialised youth workers in Foróige GO. The program's six objectives focus on fostering local collaborations, developing technical skills of Musician educators, sharing insights with leadership networks and partners, delivering VR-based youth services, building a shared understanding of digital youth work, and establishing European connections. As VR technology advances, new applications in music education present both opportunities and challenges.

With the program's focus on best practices in VR-based youth work, the collaboration promotes adaptability to evolving technologies while ensuring effective music education and youth work delivery. Through this VR music-making initiative isolated young people who are seldom heard can develop new avenues for social connection and creative self-expression, underscoring Music Generation's mission to make performance music education accessible to all young people. This pioneering approach not only addresses the immediate needs of socially isolated youth but also exemplifies how digital transformation can expand opportunities for learning and social connections in ways that differ from traditional educational settings.

Clare Power (Literacy Development Centre - SETU), Catriona Warren (Literacy Development Centre - SETU), Eleanor Neff (Literacy Development Centre - SETU), Tracey Anderson (Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board - LWETB) and Joan Slevin (Longford Westmeath Education and Training Board - LWETB). *Breaking Down Barriers to Bring About Educational Change.*

Abstract. Abstract

This research is situated within the Irish tertiary educational space, between Higher Education (HE) and Further Education &Training (FET). The higher education organisation within this research is the Literacy Development Centre (LDC) – South-East Technological University (SETU) and the further education organisation is the Longford Westmeath Education Training Board (LWETB). The researchers are representative of both organisations whereby, this study focuses on the provision of a 30 Credit NFQ Level 6 qualification entitled Certificate in Adult Literacy Studies. This programme, as an example of educational creativity, was delivered over an academic year, 2022 / 2023, using a blended approach, where the face-to-face delivery occurred in a centralised location within LWETB.

Methods of research used within this study include multiple focus groups to capture the differing accounts of experience, Connelly and Clandinin [1]. The findings of this research present a unique 360 degree view of experiences of the blended delivery of this curriculum programme Markovitch [2]. Voices reported include all stakeholders, specifically the people who logistically managed the programme from both the HE and FE perspectives, the lecturers and their students. The research focuses specifically on the opportunities, the positives, the challenges and the lessons learned for all of the research participants involved in the bespoke delivery of this programme within this tertiary space. The research concludes with a discussion on the impact of this type of academic delivery upon the students and other respective organisational stakeholders from both the HE and the FE perspectives as a model of educational creativity.

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Noëlle O'Connor (Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)) and Trevor Prendergast (Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)). *The Influence of a National Digital Transformation Initiative on the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS): A Student-Centered Approach.*

Abstract. Ireland's National Technological University Transformation for Recovery and Resilience national project (N-TUTORR) is supported by the Higher Education Authority (HEA) and co-ordinated by the Technological Higher Education Association (THEA). The N-TUTORR project is an innovative collaboration that sought to harness the learnings in the sector during the Covid 19 pandemic, across the Technological Higher Education (THE) sector. The intention was to transform the student experience through technology and staff/student collaboration, in alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The N-TUTORR thematic areas include six core themes: Academic Integrity, Digital Transformation in Teaching and Learning, Education for Sustainability, Employability, Equality Diversity & Inclusion and Universal Design for Learning which are subsequently divided into three streams; Student Empowerment, Staff Capabilities and Digital Ecosystems.

This paper will introduce the N-TUTORR project, a €40 million national project across the Technological University (TU) sector within Ireland. This project has significantly advanced Ireland's Higher Education (HE) landscape by leveraging innovative pilot projects and practical implementations by empowering students, developing staff and implementing new infrastructure, both physical and digital. The paper will be anchored around key examples from the project, illustrating its impact through the lens of its six core themes on the students of the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS). In addition, actionable suggestions for future research which enhance the impact of such initiatives as the N-TUTORR project and progress the future of HE in Ireland and beyond particularly for our students will be investigated.

Noëlle O'Connor (Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)), Sean Connell (Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)), Nicola Ryan (Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)) and Gayle Tarmey (Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)). *Advancing Education for Sustainable Development at the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS): Exemplary Practices.*

Abstract. Ireland has continuously demonstrated international leadership in addressing sustainable development and human rights issues. Notably, Ireland played a pivotal role as co-chair in the final negotiations that culminated in the historic adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. By developing and implementing an ambitious, adequately resourced, and diligently monitored National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) up to 2030, Ireland can further underscore its global leadership while rallying stakeholders towards the attainment of common goals (HEA - National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development to 2030). The Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development underscores sustainability and the creation of sustainable learning environments as its fundamental pillars.

The Higher Education Authority (HEA) has recommended enhancing staff capacity to embed ESD across the curriculum and adopt pedagogical approaches conducive to ESD. This will be achieved through targeted Continuing Professional Development (CPD) provision, informed by collaboration with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Additionally, there is a focus on strengthening institutional leadership capacity to support the mainstreaming of the ESD agenda across HE institutions, ensuring its recognition at all levels within them (HEA - National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development to 2030).

enables them to explore and assess sustainable alternatives within an educational context while honing key skills necessary for managing and marketing innovative teaching methodologies. These methodologies not only promote lifelong learning in sustainability issues but are also locally relevant, serving as agents for positive societal change and the orientation of future generations towards sustainable development (Bartella, 2020). Hence, this project aligns seamlessly with the core themes outlined by the National Forum, which encompass ESD, digital transformation in the tertiary sector, and best practices in upholding and fostering academic integrity.

While taking a cross-institutional (TUS and our RUN-EU partners) approach is essential, it is important to bear in mind that the embedding of any educational imperative throughout our teaching and learning infrastructure requires time, space and adequate resourcing. The paper aims to develop a symbiotic approach between TUS campuses through the development of practical guidelines for lecturers on how to embed ESD into their module learning outcomes.

Niamh O Brien (SETU), Welsey O' Brien (University College Cork) and John Goodwin (University College Cork). *Wellbeing is Everybody's Business in Higher Education: Lessons Learnt from Irish Post-Primary Teachers.*

Abstract. This abstract is a dissemination piece extracted from a forthcoming article in the Springer Journal, Discover Education, titled Wellbeing in Education Unveiled: Teachers' Insights in Irish Post-Primary Education. The research, funded by The Irish Teaching Council's John Coolahan Fund, explores how insights from post-primary teachers in Ireland can inform the promotion of wellbeing in higher education settings.

Wellbeing is a critical focus of discussion in education globally, whether explicitly recognised or indirectly addressed under related themes and actions. It is deemed essential for personal development, resilience to life's challenges, and academic success. In Ireland, recent Education reforms have highlighted the importance of a whole-school approach to wellbeing, however, systemic challenges exist that prevent the effective enabling of wellbeing in education.

The transition to higher education for young adults jeopardises the resilience resources available to outweigh their challenges. In addition, worldwide, it is recognised that young adults (18-25-year-olds) are the most vulnerable to mental illness with levels of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation on the increase. Examining the practices, barriers, and enablers expressed by post-primary teachers, this study offers a foundation for higher education to adopt a whole-institute approach that values the wellbeing of all stakeholders.

Using a mixed-method design, self-report questionnaires (N = 60) and semi-structured interviews (N = 10) were used with a sample of post-primary teachers to illustrate how wellbeing is encapsulated in post-primary settings in Ireland and shaped by socio-ecological factors.

The findings emphasise the critical role of leadership, teacher wellbeing and collaborative strategies in fostering a unified, inclusive approach to wellbeing within higher education. The research proposes a multi-method model response to the successful adoption of a whole-institute culture of wellbeing and outlines practical, promotional, and protective pathways that enable positive mental health for the entire academic community.

Laura McGibney (South East Technological University). Experiences in community building and engagement for online students.

Abstract. The Covid 19 pandemic prompted a rapid expansion of online emergency education, which in turn created new opportunities in higher education.

This practice paper shares the experiences of the Online Engagement Advisor for the fully online Higher Diploma in Computer Science programme in SETU Waterford for the period stretching from Jan 2020 to today. Online learners often face unique challenges, such as isolation and time management, however, this paper also addresses other aspects, such as supporting the learner mindset and perspective.

In addition to these challenges, this paper delves into the strategies employed to foster a sense of community among online learners, highlighting the importance of peer interaction and collaborative learning environments. The role of suitable technology is obviously crucial in this environment to facilitate these interactions and encourage active participation.

Importantly, this paper explores whether coaching in areas such as time management can increase learner outcomes. This paper also focuses on the Digital Toolbox used to support online student engagement as well as, how having a dedicated role such as the Online Engagement Advisor has helped improved retention in a fully online programme. Finally, it outlines current steps being taken to expand these supports to reach more learners.

Noëlle O'Connor (Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)) and Anthony Johnston (Technological University of the Shannon (TUS)). *Innovative tourism as a catalyst for sustainability and community empowerment: Exploring social and technological resilience through the Epic Stays, Dark Sky Ecotourism, INSPIRE, UPLIFT and FoodTuristic projects.*

Abstract. Tourism, as a driver of economic growth and development, has the potential to transform rural and marginalised communities while addressing broader sustainability goals, such as access to decent labour and ending poverty. This paper explores the intersection of social and technological resilience in tourism through four innovative projects in which TUS is participating: EPIC Stays, Dark Sky Ecotourism, INSPIRE, UPLIFT EU and FoodTuristic. Together, these projects offer practical and diverse, but complementary strategies, for supporting inclusivity and social and environmental change in tourism.

Epic Stays reimagines alternative tourism accommodation in rural areas with a focus on how communities in Italy, Iceland, Slovenia, the Netherlands and Ireland, can take ownership of their tourism industry by developing unusual accommodation -e.g. converting churches, lighthouses, old castles, farmhouses into tourism accommodation. By encouraging creative reuse of cultural and natural heritage, Epic Stays demonstrates how small-scale tourism can thrive sustainably without compromising authenticity. The second project, Dark Sky Ecotourism addresses the critical issue of light pollution, advocating for the protection of the night sky to benefit rural small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This project not only supports environmental conservation but also creates job opportunities in ecotourism, astronomy-based activities, and education, thereby driving local economic growth. INSPIRE takes a humanitarian approach, training refugees to establish post-conflict tourism entrepreneurship ventures, focused primarily on Syrian and Ukrainian people in refugee like situations. By equipping displaced individuals with the skills and resources to rebuild their livelihoods, INSPIRE integrates inclusivity into the tourism sector, developing resilience and giving participants the skills and knowledge to start their own businesses. UPLIFT will innovate and sustain the European film and literary tourism sector by implementing extended reality skills for those in VET by integrating immersive tourism practices into VET curricula, promoting VR/AR/AI readiness for SME's. Finally, FoodTuristic is focused on how technological innovations can localise food production and minimise waste within the tourism supply chain. Through the use of digital tools and sustainable practices, this project supports students in VET to reduce the environmental footprint of tourism, demonstrating how technology can align with sustainability goals.

Marc Mbanda (School of Education and Lifelong Learning, SETU, Waterford). The Effective Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Irish Tertiary Education System .

Abstract. This research examines the Integration of Adult Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Tertiary Education System in Ireland, by investigating the welcoming and unwelcoming aspects of pursuing higher education for international protection applicants and their counterparts who have been granted refugee status. Using cases studies and questionnaires, our research plans to identify motivating aspects that push individuals to pursue Tertiary Education. It will also look at influential factors that assist asylum seekers and refugees in studying and completing their education successfully. A particular focus will be on previous studies and comparing policies across high-income countries, along with conducting one –on- one interview with some service providers in higher education who have experience in interacting with students from disadvantaged backgrounds. In investigating the economic integration of refugees in developing countries, Kuhlman (1990) found that tangible evidence of social integration occurs when the arrival of refugees in the country does not affect the living standards of the locals and when the levels of happiness or unhappiness in the host country is almost similar to those in the newcomers' community. Similarly, under the 2030 Agenda regarding the inclusivity and the well- being of immigrants, the United Nations International Organisation for Migration (2018) suggests that to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals, each country should design policies and legislation on social inclusion for migrants in every aspect of social life so that 'no one is left behind' (IOM, 2018). Indeed, Mahatma Gandhi (1869 -1948) said that "A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest member". In this context, our research attempts to contribute to the understanding of the above-mentioned concepts regarding, equal opportunity and equity in Irish society by looking at various interrelated factors on the Effective Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the Tertiary Irish Education.

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Yvonne Sarsfield (Atlantic Technological University). Leveraging Immersive Technologies to Amplify UDL Principles and Student Empowerment.

Abstract. Background

The emergence of immersive technologies, including Virtual Reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR), and Mixed Reality (MR), has revolutionised the potential to transform traditional education into dynamic, student-centered experiences. These tools provide unprecedented opportunities to implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles - a framework designed to optimise teaching and learning for all. By integrating immersive technologies, educators can provide diverse means of engagement, representation, and action/expression creating opportunities that were previously unattainable. These innovations not only enhance accessible but also foster creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving among learners.

Rationale

This presentation will explore how immersive technologies align with UDL to empower students and amplify engagement. Unlike traditional teaching methods, VR enables students to step into otherwise inaccessible environments through immersive, interactive experiences tailored to individual learning needs. AR transforms physical spaces by layering contextually relevant digital information, allowing students to interact with content in meaningful and personalised ways.

These tools not only accommodate diverse learning preferences but also nurture interdisciplinary collaboration, critical thinking, and innovative problem-solving.

Specifically, immersive technologies support:

• Engagement: Interactive, gamified simulations that cater to a wide range of interests.

• Representation: Multimodal, sensory-rich experiences that deepen comprehension.

• Expression: Creative platforms for students to demonstrate understanding through digital storytelling and other innovative methods.

Through case studies and practical examples, the session will demonstrate how immersive applications align with UDL principles to:

• Engage students with diverse interests through interactive simulations.

• Represent content through multimodal experiences.

• Empower learners to express their understanding creatively via digital platforms.

Beyond accessibility, immersive technologies create unique pathways for interdisciplinary learning enabling students to collaborate on projects that blend science, arts, and technology. They provide learners with the tools to tackle real-world challenges, such as designing sustainable solutions, in ways that are both tangible and inspiring.

Conclusion

Immersive technologies are redefining the educational landscape by merging inclusivity with innovation. By leveraging these tools, educators can cultivate equitable, engaging, and future-focused learning environments. This presentation will provide actionable strategies and real-world examples to inspire attendees to integrate immersive technologies, transforming their teaching practices and empowering all learners to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

John Wells (School of Health Sciences, South East Technological University), Florian Scheibein (School of Health Sciences, South East Technological University), Keith Byrne (School of Education and Lifelong Learning, South East Technological University), Frances Cleary (Walton Institute for Information and Communication Systems Science, South East Technological University), Daniel Hickey (Walton Institute for Information and Communication Systems Science, South East Technological University), Frances Finn (Department of Nursing and Health Care, South East Technological University), Martina Gooney (Department of Nursing and Health Care, South East Technological University), Jimmy McGibney (Department of Computing and Mathematics, South East Technological University), Ian Mills (Walton Institute for Information and Communication Systems Science, South East Technological University), Ciaran Malone (Walton Institute for Information and Communication Systems Science, South East Technological University), John Sheppard (Department of Computing and Mathematics, South East Technological University), Laura Widger (School of Education and Lifelong Learning, South East Technological University) and Helen Murphy (School of Education and Lifelong Learning, South East Technological University).
Dynamic Digital Resilience for Medical and Allied Professions in Health Services (DDS-MAP) European healthcare training: A Pan European module design, translation, piloting, digital badges and micro-credentials .

Abstract. Background

The Dynamic Digital Resilience for Medical and Allied Professions in Health Services (DDS-MAP) project is the first EU4Health funded project led by an Irish university (SETU) and consists of 60 plus researchers across nine EU member states. DDS-MAP has developed four healthcare modules, available in 9 European languages, on Moodle Cloud. Learners are issued a digital badge for module completion and the all four modules may be accredited as micro-credentials.

Rationale

The EU4 Health Programme was established in 2021 to improve pan European health services' resilience referenced to events such as COVID-19, cyberattacks and conflict on the European healthcare ecosystem. An emphasis on adaptation to rapid digitalisation, digital resilience, surge management fore sight planning challenges and associated health care workers wellbeing healthcare workers form the core of DDS-MAP. Thus DDS-MAP aims to increase digital competency, enhance healthcare system resilience and adaptability and contribute to the improved well being of healthcare workers.

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Design

Four modules were developed using a learning design approach. The modules were informed by a pan European survey of healthcare workers (n=2028), mapping of existing training, a gap analysis referenced to the EU Pact for Skills, co-creation workshops and co-designed learning personas. Wireframes and content were developed for each of the micro credentials reflecting EQF 6-7 and 2.5 ECTS. The modules include a range of interactive media types and are implemented in virtual learning environment. Extended reality applications, based within a digital twin of a Spanish hospital, were developed to aid in teaching and assessment.

The modules are being piloted in 6 EU countries. A digital badging system has been developed for accrediting learning.

Conclusion

It is concluded that short tangible, interactive and personal work relevant content perceptions improve engagement, completion and post module content application.

Hayette Bellakehal (PhD Student at the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, SETU), Dr. Niamh O'Brien (PI and Lecturer at the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, SETU) and Dr. Carol O'Byrne (Co-supervisor and Lecturer at the School of Education and Lifelong Learning, SETU.). *Exploring Learners' Perspectives on Education for Sustainable Development in Irish Higher Education.*

Abstract. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has become one of the most important methods to foster deep behavioural transformation and responsible societal practices. Subsequently, many world-renowned universities have pursued initiatives to integrate the 17th Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These goals were established by the United Nations in 2015 to foster environmental protection, social inclusion, and economic prosperity around the world. Despite the efforts to embed sustainability on-campus and outside, the concerns and perspectives of Irish learners remain underexplored, particularly when planning for a whole-campus sustainability strategy. The main goal of this study is to investigate learners` voices to inform a whole-institutional approach to ESD in SETU. It is the first study of its kind in Ireland and will recommend practical solutions to improve student's learning experience, offering stakeholder-informed guidance for policymaking in higher education. The study also explores the influence of social capital on learners` perception, by comparing the collective representation of ESD against the individual one. The study applies an Exploratory Sequential Mixed-methods Design, starting with qualitative data to inform the development of a survey instrument. The research initially focuses on undergraduates on the SETU Waterford Campus, and later generalises findings across SETU campuses (i.e. Waterford, Carlow, and Wexford). Pursuing a constructivist grounded theory methodology, this research unfolds in three phases. First, two focus groups and five interviews will be conducted to gather diverse perspectives and encourage personal storytelling on ESD. Aspects of social capital will be explored by comparing insights from focus groups and interviews. Insights from this phase will guide the development of survey items, linking key themes to participant quotes, which will then be validated in a third focus group. Finally, the survey instrument will be piloted to test reliability and then deployed across all SETU campuses to generalise findings across the student population. In conclusion, this research sets the stage for the gathering of valuable data on ESD in Irish higher education, which could shape future studies in this field. This research bridges the gap between the student learning experience and institutional sustainability strategies by investigating collective student perspectives. Once data collection is complete, we will share detailed findings to inform policy and practice for Irish Higher Education.

John Balfe (SETU) and Susan Barnes (SETU). Cultivating Inclusive Playgrounds: Fostering Digital, Inclusive, and Experiential Education - GASTA presentation .

Abstract. This presentation explores the ongoing "Cultivating Inclusive Playgrounds" project, which brings together third lever Early Childhood and Education students, primary school children, and local communities to design inclusive and universally accessible playgrounds. Anchored in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and aligned with the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Framework, the project addresses the dual challenges of promoting inclusivity and integrating digital technologies in education.

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Through interdisciplinary collaboration across psychology, sociology, and outdoor play modules, students use innovative digital tools like podcasting and AI-assisted peer evaluations to document and reflect on their learning. These methods bridge theory and practice, fostering digital literacy, ethical collaboration, and social responsibility. The project also emphasizes child participation, employing the Lundy Model and Mosaic Approach to ensure children's voices influence tangible outcomes.

While significant progress has been made, including creative assessments and the co-creation of playground designs, the project is now entering its infrastructure phase, with materials being procured for implementation in early 2025. Plans for expansion include scaling the initiative to additional schools, enhancing its digital aspects, and disseminating findings through academic publications and conferences.

This presentation will highlight the project's key learnings, successes, and future potential, illustrating how digital innovation and community engagement can redefine education to be more inclusive, collaborative, and impactful.

Emma Holden (South East Technological University), P.J White (South East Technological University), Brian Casey (South East Technological University), Aisling Tuite (South East Technological University), Antoinette Jordan (South East Technological University) and Ray Griffin (South East Technological University). *PEStech: Making the Labour Market Visible.*

Abstract. Background: Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) are critical in supporting jobseekers, policymakers, and Public Employment Services (PES) by providing insights into labour market dynamics. However, conventional LMIS tools often fail to meet the needs of diverse users (Cathro et al., 2022), particularly those with limited digital literacy or experiencing socioeconomic disadvantages (Attwell & Hughes, 2020). As labour markets grow increasingly unstable and diverse, the traditional concept of lifelong employment has become outdated (Barnes et al., 2020). This shift exposes the need for accessible, user-friendly tools that empower individuals to navigate career transitions while addressing structural disparities in digital services.

Rationale: Building on the HECAT Horizon 2020 project, which highlighted the importance of income transparency in labour market decision-making, this research leverages Design Thinking (DT) with co-design to address gaps in labour market data accessibility and transparency. By repurposing data from CSO and Eurostat, the study seeks to develop a tool that simplifies complex labour market data, empowering stakeholders, including jobseekers, policymakers, and PES staff, with actionable insights tailored to their needs.

Design: The project employed a four-stage co-design process involving 64 participants, including jobseekers, policymakers, recruiters, and PES staff. Using the Double Diamond framework (Design Council, 2005), the study integrated discovery interviews, benchmarking activities, co-design workshops, and iterative user testing. The resulting tool prototype

provides personalised, searchable insights into income trends across sectors, regions, and experience levels, using intuitive visualisations to bridge digital and social inequalities.

Conclusion: This study demonstrates the transformative potential of DT with co-design to revolutionise digital public services by prioritising user participation early on in the design process. It highlights how user-centred design can empower informed decision making among jobseekers, enable policymakers to address skills mismatches and regional disparities, and enhance PES responsiveness. The research provides a replicable framework for developing equitable digital tools. Future work will explore marginalised young adults' experiences with digital-first government services to deepen this approach's impact.

Grainne Mulvey (South East Technical University), Greg Doyle (South East Technical University) and Oisin Cawley (South East Technical University). *Dynamic Temperature Monitoring Using Machine Learning and Thermal Imaging to Drive Efficient Cooling in a Data Centre .*

Abstract. The more electricity used within the world, the more greenhouse gas emissions there are and as a result, other air pollutants are released into the environment. Data centres are large power consumers due to the large amount of energy required for computation as well as cooling, which is necessary to prevent servers and equipment from overheating. If the temperature is not regulated and maintained to the manufacturer's stipulated temperature range, the electronic devices will likely malfunction and potentially damage or even destroy them (Greenberg et al. 2006).

Ireland's data centres use 18% of metered electricity, the equivalent of every urban house in Ireland (Traynor 2024). The utilisation of predicted thermal images to forecast the temperature within a modular data centre could help change and potentially reduce the cooling duration to only when necessary, rather than all the time. Capturing thermal images of servers and using machine learning to process and forecast predicted thermal images of these servers within a modular data centre could aid in reducing the activation of cooling only when necessary, rather than constant active cooling twenty-four-seven. This reduction of cooling time would help reduce the negative environmental impact. It is intended to utilise the environmental temperature combined with machine learning's image prediction to predict the temperature of active servers. Using the predicted temperature to reduce the cooling activation to only when necessary. This target cooling is expected to reduce the data centre's Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) and balance the required energy amount to maintain its functionality by using this target cool. Reducing the PUE would positively impact the environment by reducing electricity usage.

By integrating environmental temperature data with predictive thermal image models, this research aims to improve a maintainable and sustainable practice within a data centre. This predictive model has the potential to be applied in other areas, such as in food and medication storage, which both require cooling and also the identification of gasses via image rather than seeing them.

Steve Welsh (Dublin City University Teaching Enhancement Unit), Rob Lowney (Dublin City University Teaching Enhancement Unit) and Seamus Campau (Dublin City University Teaching Enhancement Unit). *Looping in GenAI: Initial Findings from an AI Quiz Generator Pilot Study.*

Abstract. This presentation of research in progress explores the impact of artificial intelligence (AI) tools on teaching practices within higher education, focusing on the pilot rollout of an AI-driven question generator integrated into Dublin City University's virtual learning environment. Implemented by the Teaching Enhancement Unit (TEU) and powered by OpenAI's large language model, the tool allows lecturers to generate quiz questions directly within Moodle, aiming to streamline quiz creation, enhance assessment practices, and support innovative teaching methods. In alignment with DCU's 2023-2028 strategy to advance digital education through AI, this project seeks to enhance faculty capabilities in functional and critical AI literacy.

In a climate of heightened anxiety around the threats to academic integrity posed by student adoption of AI technologies, the researchers seek to resituate the conversation by asking how the ethical adoption of AI tools can potentially benefit lecturers. The research involves a longitudinal evaluation of lecturer experiences with the AI tool, capturing how it supports or challenges their teaching approaches, as well as how effectively the structured support promotes the tool's adoption. Specifically, the study is examining the affordances and limitations of the AI question generator, the effectiveness of staff support in guiding its use, and additional resources lecturers may need for successful integration of AI tools in their teaching.

In this practice paper, the researchers will outline the components of the mixed methods research study, as well as some initial thematic analysis of data from lecturers' feedback. They will also reflect on the ethical considerations of embedding AI technologies within the virtual learning environment. This research underscores the importance of continuous support, evaluation, and what's required for the successful and responsible adaptation of AI-driven tools in teaching and learning.

Blaithin Nichathain (SETU). Degress of Separation; teaching digital film making skills digitally and remotely.

Abstract. Bláithin Ní Chatháin, MA, Grad Dip in Digital Comms. SETU, Wexford campus.

SETU lecturer, teaching on the joint SETU and JNLU China Visual Communications programme. Former director of the WIT, Higher Diploma in Television 2012-2016

As developing creativity and problem solving skills are becoming more and more important than imparting knowledge to our students with the advent of AI. Film making is a practical subject and it is also a collaborative endeavour while a key feature of the learning experience on a film making course is that students learn by doing through physical interaction with equipment as well as working in teams. This talk shares a lecturers experiences of teaching creativity and film making online and remotely to third year art and design classes in Jilin Normal University, China in recent years. It will evaluate the effectiveness of a selection of digital artifacts, synchronous and asynchronous participation in creating an authentic and relevant learning experience.

Catherine Fitzgerald (RCSI), Nicola Pagnucci (RCSI), Thomas Kearns (RCSI), Michael Hallissy (H2 Learning, The Digital HuB), Niamh Walsh Niamh Walsh (RCSI), Carmel Kelly (Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet), Clodagh Killeen Clodagh Killeen (Leading Healthcare Providers Skillnet), Mark White (RCSI) and Giuseppe Aleo (RCSI). *The experience and attitudes of long-term care workers with teaching and learning modalities for the delivery of continuing professional development activities: a mixed-methods study.*

Abstract. Aim

to develop a better understanding of the attitudes and experiences of healthcare workers and managers with face-to-face, online asynchronous (pre-recorded), and online synchronous (live) modalities for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) working in the Long-Term Care (LTC) sector.

Background

The recent global pandemic significantly interrupted the delivery and organisation of education and training for healthcare professionals internationally. As a result of the restrictions, healthcare professionals' access to CPD was limited, consequentially education and training activities were mostly delivered online. Research into the experiences of healthcare workers with the various teaching and learning modalities in the LTC setting is limited.

Design

An explanatory mixed methods study using an exploratory sequential design.

Methods

A two-phase study conducted from January 2022 to September 2022, in the Republic of Ireland. In phase one, researchers conducted four focus groups and in phase two 168 participants completed a survey to explore the results of phase one.

Results

From the focus groups interviews five themes emerged regarding participants' experiences, attitudes and preferences with the three modalities of CPD education and training in the field of LTC: 1) Flexibility, 2) Networking, 3) Resources and Support, 4) Engaging and meaningful learning, and 5) Balancing online and face-to-face learning through Blended Learning. Results from the survey found the preferred modality was face to face (n = 54, 32.1%), followed very closely by blended learning (n = 51, 30.4%). Most of the respondents reported that synchronous online CPD education was convenient, flexible, offers the opportunity to interact with peers, and that its quality depends on educators' skills. The majority of respondents (n = 155, 92.3%) declared that they would require support in the workplace to implement their new knowledge and skills.

Conclusions

This study revealed the significance participants place on 'engagement' when taking part in education and training. Engagement was described as a key factor to improve the delivery of CPD in the LTC setting. In addition, regardless of the mode of delivery, participants reported that they need to be supported in the workplace to implement their new knowledge and skills. This requires the support and endorsement of employers and managers, who could ensure more protected time for learning, technical support and championing facilitators and mentors in the workplace to enhance the translation of new knowledge into clinical practice.

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Brian Casey (SETU). AI as a tool to support academic research (or where does it stop and I begin).

Abstract. Background:

The emergence of generative AI, marked by ChatGPT's launch in November 2022, sparked debates about academic integrity. Undergraduate use often uninformed and focuses on assessment avoidance. This paper explores the experience of a skilled user taking a structured approach to integrating AI tools in academic research, from literature search to analytical tool creation.

Rationale:

Moving beyond academic integrity concerns, this research examines how informed AI usage can enhance research capabilities. The study focuses on six key areas: discovery of relevant literature and patterns; organization of data; analysis of literature/data; relation of citation networks and theoretical linkages; synthesis of multiple sources; and generation of synthetic data. The paper investigates how AI tools might transform research methodologies and knowledge acquisition and seeks to open a discussion on how this may shift our basic relationship with knowledge, particularly for early-career researchers.

Design:

The study employs two case studies conducted by a non-expert but well-informed AI user with strong subject expertise. Using paid versions of major models (GPT-01, Claude Sonnet 3.5, Gemini), the research examines AI application in two distinct tasks:

1. Literature review on design research in Ireland

2. Re-analysis of X-ray diffraction and image data from 2003 PhD research

The methodology involved iterative design, test, and improve cycles, with continuous researcher direction and feedback to the AI models.

Conclusion:

Literature Review Task:

- AI enhanced literature discovery but raised trust and bias concerns

- Improved efficiency in organizing literature and creating custom analysis tools

- Required significant researcher intervention to maintain focus

- Open search LLMs excelled at overviews but showed increased hallucinations in niche topics

- Closed dataset, large context window models such as Notebook LM proved effective for summarizing researcher-curated information

- Noted reduced researcher command of knowledge area and decreased confidence and ownership of research output

Data Analysis Task:

- Achieved in one evening what previously took weeks in 2003

- Required researcher intervention to correct AI assumptions

- Demonstrated significant improvement in programming task iteration

- Enhanced debugging and code explanation capabilities

- Showed order-of-magnitude improvement in data analysis and visualization speed

The study concludes that while LLM-based AI models can significantly enhance research productivity, they may impact knowledge internalization and skills acquisition crucial for early-stage researchers. However, these tools could substantially boost productivity in established research projects with large datasets requiring analysis.

Daire O Broin (SETU), Damien Raftery (SETU), Denise Earle (SETU), Aoife Hennessy (SETU) and Alison Hearne (SETU). *StatsSkills web app: a tool for systematically practising statistics skills.*

Abstract. Dr Daire Ó Broin[1], Mr Damien Raftery[1], Dr Denise Earle[1], Dr Aoife Hennessy[2], Dr Alison Hearne[3]

[1]SETU Carlow Campus, [2]SETU Waterford Campus, [3]SETU Wexford Campus

StatsSkills is an accessible, open-access web app through which learners systematically build statistics skills. StatsSkills contains exercises targeting specific skills, on which learners receive immediate, automated feedback, and through which they can track their progress to master specific areas and so increase their self-efficacy (if they could master one particular skill, they could master the other ones too, one at a time).

Since DEC2023, StatsSkills has been scaled to be able to handle more learners and multiple different groups. Around 260 learners used StatsSkills alongside three modules (Quantitative Techniques, Introduction to Data Analysis for Digital Marketing Marketing, Statistics for Land Management). We present an updated demo of StatSkills and student outcomes.

Daire O Broin (SETU), Jenny O'Connor (SETU), Ken Power (SETU) and Niamh Mc Crea (SETU). *Can AI Help Solve the Assessment Problem it has Caused? .*

Abstract. With the advent of Generative AI (GenAI), academic institutions are facing a pressing need to adapt assessment strategies to ensure that assessments genuinely reflect students' own work, rather than the output of AI tools. A promising approach to address this challenge is frequent, small-scale, in-class assessments. However, this approach significantly increases the assessment workload, quickly making it unmanageable. To mitigate this, our project proposes leveraging AI itself to assist in evaluating some of these assessments.

Specifically, we aim to investigate the effectiveness of AI in grading a selection of in-class assessments across three distinct academic disciplines. The AI's feedback is compared against human evaluations using the same assessment instrument to assess its accuracy and reliability. Furthermore, to ensure that students' work is not used in training commercial AI models like GPT-4, without student consent, we use open-source Large Language Models (LLMs), such as Llama2, and other models that do not store inputted data or use it for training.

This talk presents work-in-progress results from our explorations here this semester with a variety of assessment tasks.

Sue Meehan (South East Technological University). *HELP- A multi-format Study Skills Programme.*

Abstract. This practice paper explores the effectiveness of delivering study skills information across multiple platforms, particularly in response to the growing diversity of students entering Higher Education (Keane, 2013). Institutions must meet the varied educational needs of this student population and cannot assume prior academic preparation.

Higher education institutions have a responsibility to support students in developing the skills required for effective study. While embedding study skills within the curriculum is considered the most effective method (Gibbs, 1994; Cottrell, 2001), this is not always feasible due to time and resource constraints. As an alternative, study skills resources should be made accessible and engaging to all students, ensuring they are perceived as a valuable part of their education, even if not mandatory.

In response, South East Technological University (SETU), through its Teaching and Learning Centre, developed the Higher Education Learner Programme (HELP), an online initiative aimed at demystifying HE and providing essential study skills. A key element of the programme's development was to incorporate the student voice. Students were consulted from the beginning to help shape the content and formats for delivery. They also contributed to weekly 'live' elements, helping to promote the programme and gathering feedback to inform content distribution. Short videos featuring students were shared on social media and integrated into the programme, proving to be particularly effective at creating a sense of community. Dissemination of content elements through social media, as well as through the VLE, also helped to raise awareness of existing supports across the Institution.

Sue Meehan (South East Technological University). *GRAD - Online Support for Research Postgraduates .*

Abstract. This Gasta will focus on the themes of innovation, technology and pedagogy, as well as educational creativity.

As SETU's Strategic Plan 2023-2028 calls for an increase in the number of postgraduate students, consideration has been given as to how best to support these students as they transition to postgraduate studies.

With this in mind, SATLE funding has been allocated to design, develop and deliver the GRAD (Graduate Resource and Development) Programme, an online, self-directed programme specifically for postgraduate students. The resource will include valuable insights into academic, practical, personal, and professional skill development at postgraduate level to support research students. GRAD will serve as a wraparound support in conjunction with existing support offerings but, given its online nature, will be flexible in its provision. Equally, in terms of its development, GRAD will adopt a collaborative and inclusive approach, with input from students and staff from across a range of faculties and functional areas within the university. This collaborative approach will ensure that students can offer their feedback on the programme and can input into its ongoing design and delivery.

The 4 pillars that will be covered by the Programme are Academic Selves, Personal Development, Navigating the System, and Next Steps.

Laura Widger (South East Technological University), Keith Byrne (South East Technological University) and Dr Madelon Van Oostrom (Hanze University of Applied Sciences). *Empowering Digital Transformation in Higher Education: The Erasmus+ IGNITION Project for Inclusion, Collaboration, and Innovation.*

Abstract. Digital transformation continues to significantly impact higher education institutions, where faculty, students, lifelong learners, and external stakeholders face the challenge of adapting to digitalization and avoiding exclusion from digital spaces. Higher education plays a crucial role in the development of individuals, supporting their academic, professional, and personal growth through innovative pedagogies aimed at fostering professional, future-ready, and digital skills. The IGNITION project, funded by Erasmus+, seeks to strengthen the efforts of project partners to enhance the digital literacy of teaching staff, students, and external collaborators through innovative pedagogies such as challenge-based learning. Project partners include higher education institutions from The Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, and Portugal. The aim is to create a European Digital Literacy Coalition for Inclusion, Collaboration, and Innovation, enabling the involved institutions to address their digital transformation challenges while developing and delivering innovative, future-proof education. Collaboration is a core component of this process, driven by regional engagement. This presentation will provide an overview of the project and share initial results from key deliverables, including the development of a Digital Literacy Framework and Agenda, an Online Self-assessment Tool, and a Transnational Teachers' Community of Practice for Digital Literacy and Inclusion, where educators can inspire each other with best practices, share experiences, and organize teaching and learning activities focused on digital literacy for inclusion.

Michael Kinsella (Department of Science, SETU Waterford, Cork Road, Waterford). Digital Transformation from lab reports to digital blogs and e-books for Laboratory Assessment.

Abstract. The traditional and still widely used method for assessment of lab practicals at 3rd level is the writing of a lab report. Typical lab reports contain sections such as Aim, Introduction, Method, Results, Discussion and Conclusion. The average science student completes 3-5 lab sessions per week, often involving 1 lab report to be written for each lab practical. The overuse of lab reports can be tedious and repetitive for students and staff. In this work, for one lab experiment, the assessment was changed to an online blog for 1 year and into an e-book for 2 subsequent years. The use of these digital alternatives lent themselves to the use of imagery, videos and was more suited to multiple learning styles. The students were surveyed close to the end of the module and the feedback was extremely positive towards the replacement of conventional lab reports into more modern, electronic and digital variants

Angela Stewart (National Learning Network), Rosario Ryan (Maynooth University) and Suzanne McCarthy (National Learning Network). *Click, Learn and Thrive with Milo: A Platform of Psychology-Led Supports for Student Success and Well-Being.*

Abstract. Background:

The number of Access Students—students with disabilities and those from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds—participating in higher education is increasing rapidly (AHEAD, 2023; HEA, 2022). These students encounter significant academic, social, and well-being barriers that necessitate targeted support and inclusive policies (Arday et al., 2021; Kim & Kutscher, 2021; López & Taveras, 2023). Milo (Maynooth Inclusive Learning Online) is a digital platform designed to transform student support through psychology informed, evidence-based resources. Milo offers universal resources for all students, alongside tailored group and one-to-one interventions for Access Students with complex needs, focusing on enhancing well-being, academic, and social skills.

Rationale:

In today's dynamic digital education landscape, students face increasingly complex

challenges that require flexible, scalable solutions. Milo addresses this need by offering a platform of psychology-led supports. Available 24/7 via the Milo website, its resources include eLearning modules, downloadable interactive eBooks, specialist tools, and prerecorded sessions led by Assistant Psychologists. Assistant Psychologists also deliver group and one-to-one interventions using Milo's resources to support students with complex needs. This tiered approach ensures each student receives appropriate support, fostering well-being, resilience, and academic success. Milo incorporates Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles to provide flexible, accessible, and engaging resources tailored to diverse learning

needs.

Design:

Milo was developed through a collaborative effort led by the Maynooth University Access Programme (MAP) and the National Learning Network (NLN), with support from MU Student Services, IT Services, the Office for the Dean of Teaching and Learning, the Centre for Teaching and Learning, and the MU Library. Key external partners included AHEAD, UCD University for All, and Inclusive UCC. The initiative was initially funded by the Fund for Students with Disabilities Strategic Initiatives Fund and subsequently by the PATH 4 Universal Design Fund, fostering a collaborative, long-lasting impact. Central to Milo's development was student engagement. Three student interns and 70 MU students collaborated to co-design content that accurately addressed their needs, enhancing academic, well-being, and technological skills. The Milo development team—comprising MU students, NLN psychologists, MAP staff, and UX specialists—identified areas where students required additional support and developed practical, student-centred solutions. These challenges were transformed into eLearning topics supported by eBooks, interactive activities, group sessions, and digital tools aimed at building relevant skills and addressing individual needs. Workshops gathered student feedback to refine the Milo website and eBooks, resulting in interactive, flexible, and accessible resources aligned with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Continuous professional development (CPD) workshops enabled MAP student advisors to effectively adopt and integrate Milo's resources

into their advisory practices.

Conclusion:

Milo showcases the transformative potential of digital platforms in redefining student support within higher education. By offering a flexible, tiered structure that includes universally available, group-based, and individualised resources, Milo empowers students to address their well-being and academic challenges effectively. Its psychology-informed, evidence-based approach provides a scalable model that reduces reliance on one-to-one support, offering a forward-thinking framework for institutions aiming to enhance student success and well-being.

Clare Martin (SETU Waterford) and Clare Martin (SETU Waterford). Practice paper Creating a podcast for Wellbeing in Digital Education: A Pan-European Approach .

Abstract. The rapid rise of technology in education, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, has fundamentally transformed teaching and learning worldwide. However, as technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace, a critical question arises: How can we foster a positive relationship between digital education and wellbeing?

This presentation highlights a practical initiative under the European Digital Education Hub (EDEH): the creation of a podcast dedicated to exploring wellbeing in digital education to promote sustainable practices and mindsets. Designed to amplify diverse perspectives, the podcast features contributions from educators, students, and experts across Europe, each sharing unique insights on maintaining wellbeing in a digitally driven educational landscape.

Why a podcast? As a flexible and inclusive medium, podcasts offer accessibility, cost-effectiveness, and alignment with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. They support asynchronous engagement, making them ideal for diverse audiences. Leveraging freeware tools, the project ensured that participation was both inclusive and scalable.

In this session, I will share the project's development journey, including insights into the technical and collaborative processes, challenges faced, and key lessons learned. Additionally, it will highlight future aspirations, including integrating the podcast with the newly founded Digital Wellbeing Week to expand its reach and impact. This presentation explores how this initiative demonstrates the potential of podcasts as a tool for fostering collaboration, accessibility, and innovation in digital education.