CLIMBING THE UDL LADDER:
BUILDING A CULTURE OF INCLUSION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Wednesday 26th May 2021
Commencing at 09.30am

IT Sligo
An Institiúid Teicneolaíochta, Sligeach

CELT
Centre for Enhancement
of Learning and Teaching

WELCOME MESSAGE

Dr. Niamh Plunkett
Head of Teaching & Learning, IT Sligo

I am delighted to welcome you to our inaugural Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Conference. For those of you unfamiliar with our campus, IT Sligo is one of Irelands leading 3rd level institutions for 50 years with over 8,000 students across UG, PG & apprenticeships, the majority of whom are in the workforce.

In 2018 I established the Centre for the Enhancement of Learning & Teaching (CELT). Under this remit, a UDL Working group was formed in 2019 with academic and professional services staff from all three Faculties and functional areas with a common goal to create an inclusive culture in teaching, learning and assessment. Inclusion of UDL as an action in the Institute Strategic Plan 2017-2022 demonstrates a commitment to adopting a more inclusive curriculum design to suit the diverse needs of ALL learners.

Our UDL working group is actively involved in a number of projects to support understanding and implementation of universal design. Together with our CUA partners, GMIT & LyIT we are delighted to host this year's conference which will provide an opportunity to showcase all UDL developments within IT Sligo and across HEIs nationally and provide a platform to promote best practice in UDL.

We hope you enjoy the event!

Niamh Plunkett

IT Sligo UDL Working Group

Dr. Niamh Plunkett; Maureen Haran, Lecturer and UDL Project Lead; Dr. Geraldine Dowling, Lecturer; Cathy O'Kelly, Lecturer; Mairead McCann, Lecturer; Dr. Shelley Brady. Disability Officer and Dr. Ellen McCabe, Instructional Designer.

This CUA Universal Design for Learning (UDL) conference will investigate a myriad of approaches to UDL through an exploration of shared best inclusive practice. Through creating an awareness of a cross-campus approach to implementing a culture of inclusion and diversity, the Institute of Technology Sligo (IT Sligo) has made significant strides in climbing the UDL ladder to bring this vision to reality.

The teaching and learning framework that is UDL has guided this transition to provide for a high-quality educational experience. Together with our partners Letterkenny Institute of Technology (LYIT) and Galway Mayo Institute of Technology (GMIT), IT Sligo welcomes colleagues across all higher education institutions to examine and reflect on your UDL practices within your programme, to ensure the student learning experience provides for the unique learning needs of students in a changing world.

CONFERENCE THEMES

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE

Presenters will guide conference participants through the shift needed in the teaching dynamic to one of collaborative curriculum development and allowing students to engage in the process so that they can take control and ownership of their learning process. Presentations will discuss curriculum redesigns that facilitates students to set their own pace and goals and evaluate their own progress.

AUTHENTIC STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SHOWCASING UDL TEACHING APPROACHES

Presentations will showcase UDL teaching approaches that consider lecturers real world experience and prompt students to engage as the practitioner. Curriculum redesigns that increase student motivation through any of the following teaching approaches such as: work-based learning, enquiry-based learning, or problem-based learning approaches.

IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE THROUGH DIGITAL ENHANCEMENT

This segment provides a thorough discussion on the impact of digital enhancement using UDL principles. This includes curriculum redesigns that have sought to reduce student challenges by providing helpful relevant digital tools to aid understanding in their subject material.

ADOPTING ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES THROUGH A UDL LENS

Presentations will address alternative pathways to student success which remove potential barriers making learning goals attainable. Alternative representation examples of flexible options available in an assessment which can enhance access, support learner performance, and reduce possible perceived threats.

LEARNING THROUGH COVID-19: FLIPPING THE CLASSROOM USING UDL

Were your students feeling isolated in their learning due to Covid-19 restrictions? This segment focuses on curriculum redesigns that involve the use of the UDL framework to 'flip the classroom' to foster student engagement and peer collaboration.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

WELCOME & OPENING THE CONFERENCE

Dr. Brendan McCormack
President, IT Sligo

Minister Simon Harris T.D
Minister for Further and
Higher Education, Research,
Innovation and Science

GUEST SPEAKERS

Dr. Lisa Padden
Project Lead for UCD's
University for All Initiative, UCD
Access & Lifelong Learning

Trevor Boland
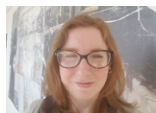Digital and eLearning Officer,
AHEAD

Less Snakes and More Ladders Please: Barriers and Enablers to create a UDL Ripple Effect

This session will give an overview of the Digital Badge for Universal Design in Teaching and Learning, developed by AHEAD and University College Dublin (UCD) as part of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning's open courses initiative. Last Autumn we conducted the first large scale national roll out of this course with over 550 participants being awarded the badge and over a hundred of those awardees also completing the facilitator's badge. We will give an overview of the impact of that roll out - highlighting some of the many redesigns and briefly exploring the outcomes of the National Forum's evaluation of this professional development programme. We will explore the perceived barriers and enablers to embedding UDL: what would enable you to engage in UDL professional development? How can we overcome any potential barriers together? We will also tell you how you can be part of the UDL ripple effect in the next large-scale national roll out in Autumn 2021!

IT SLIGO PRESENTERS

Maureen Haran
Lecturer, UDL Lead, IT Sligo

Dr. Ellen McCabe
Instructional Designer, IT Sligo

Dr. Shelley Brady
Disability Officer, IT Sligo

An Effective Institutional Approach to Teaching, Learning & Assessment through a Universal Design for Learning Lens:

This session will examine the findings of an effective institutional approach to teaching, learning & assessment through a Universal Design for Learning lens within a higher education institute in the Northwest of Ireland. The presentation will engage the UDL audience in conceptualizing a framework to incorporate best inclusive practice through; the streams of a strategic UDL workplan, using measurable inclusive assessment tools, inclusive curriculum design and effective instructional design technique. Presenters from different disciplines within one higher education institute come together to showcase how a cross- campus strategic approach to implementing UDL through a nationally funded project has contributed to a more inclusive educational student experience.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Frederic Fovet

Associate Professor within the School of Education and Technology & Program Head for the MA in Educational Leadership and Management at Royal Roads University, in Victoria, BC, Canada.

Keynote Overview: Devising Effective Strategic UDL Implementation for the Next Decade in a Post-Pandemic Higher Education Landscape.

While there have been bold developments in the use of UDL in the post-secondary sector over the last ten years on both sides of the Atlantic, much of these efforts have focused on showcasing the pedagogical benefits of its implementation. This discourse has remained a little naïve when it comes to management of change and organizational leadership. In the worst case scenarios, naivety has given way to actual clumsiness, which has been counter-productive in getting buy-in from faculty.

This session will explore the challenges and opportunities of UDL implementation across post-secondary campuses and give full consideration to the numerous organizational variables which impact this process. It will argue that many of the UDL initiatives witnessed in Higher Education over the years have been doomed to stagnation or to a process of slow death because there has been a lack of strategic reflection at the start of these processes. It is an opportune time to learn from these lessons, and to devise blue prints for the strategic

management of UDL integration that acknowledge the complexity of the post-secondary landscape.

A new dramatic set of variables now affects this process of implementation: the COVID-19 crisis has irretrievably changed the realities of Higher Education and its modus operandi. It would be unrealistic to hope to ever return to a pre-pandemic 'normal', and in many ways the COVID crisis has been the catharsis for radical changes which had been a long time coming in a destabilized, hyper-competitive, and mostly unsustainable landscape. This complex and charged climate will appear, to many, as rife with hurdles when it comes to UDL implementation. The last year and a half has indeed seen a shift back to medical model practices and a loss of ground for many inclusion advocates. It will nevertheless be argued in the presentation that the COVID pandemic has also offered unprecedented opportunities to position UDL as a sustainable framework well suited to the post-pandemic reality.

ADDITIONAL PRESENTERS

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT & CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE

What is UDL and how it can be embedded into our practice.

Laura Hegarty, GMIT

Laura is a lecturer in Technology and Design in the School of Business at GMIT with a specialist interest in UDL. Laura holds substantial experience having worked in IT industry and higher education for the past 20 years. Laura lectures at undergraduate, postgraduate, and executive levels.

Using the Power of Stars to Motivate.

Dr. Natalie Delimata, IT Sligo

Natalie lectures in Creative Practice, Community Development and Ethics in the Department of Social Science, IT Sligo. She has qualifications in Social Care Practice (TUD) and Design (NCAD) and has two decades of experience working in Social Care and Community Arts.

IMPROVING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE THROUGH DIGITAL ENHANCEMENT

Games in Moodle; a student view of what games offer.

Dr. Sheila Faherty, GMIT

Sheila has worked as a lecturer in biological science in third level institutions for over 16 years. Intrigued with student engagement and satisfaction with VLE activities Sheila was an early adopter of Moodle quizzes and worked for two years as a learning technologist in Athlone Institute of Technology in tandem to her lecturing role. Sheila moved to the School of Science in GMIT in 2015.

Providing multiple means of representation for physiology students through Moodle lessons.

Dr. Cormac Flynn, GMIT

Cormac is a lecturer in the Department of Mechanical and Industrial Engineering in GMIT. He previously was a lecturer and research associate in New Zealand and Canada.

LEARNING THROUGH COVID-19: FLIPPING THE CLASSROOM USING UDL

Backflipping and Somersaulting in the Online Environment – Having Students Create Their Own Learning Content.

Dr. Ailish Breen, IT Sligo

Ailish is a lecturer in Biopharmaceutical Science in the Faculty of Science, IT Sligo. She is a biomedical engineer and her primary research is in the field of tissue engineering and medical device innovation, supervising postgraduate research in these areas.

Pandemic Pedagogy! Designing and reviewing Moodle page.

Jennifer Gilligan, IT Sligo

Jennifer is an Instructional Designer in the Centre for Online Learning at IT Sligo. She holds a Masters in ELearning and Interactive Teaching Technologies. As an Instructional Designer she works to support and train academic staff in the use of appropriate technologies for teaching and learning.

AUTHENTIC STUDENT EXPERIENCE: SHOWCASING UDL TEACHING APPROACHES

Celebrating Inclusion and Diversity in the Classroom: Explorations with Pre-service Teachers on the Implementation of UDL Principles in School Placement.

Dr. Pauline Logue, GMIT

Pauline is a Lecturer in Education and programme chair of the MA in Teaching and Learning degree programme, GMIT. As an educationalist, she has wide experience, having worked in both mainstream education, at second and third level, and in alternative community-based educational settings.

Use of Home Experiments to enhance student experiential learning in Mechanical Engineering.

Dr. Gerard McGranaghan, IT Sligo

Gerard lectures in the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, IT Sligo. He began his career in Mechanical Engineering as a Fitter/Turner with the ESB, and as well as Trade Certificates, he holds Technician Certificates from City and Guilds and a BSc from the Open University.

ADOPTING ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT PRACTICES THROUGH A UDL LENS

Assessment Without Borders: Accessible assessment techniques and evaluation tools.

Paul Ferry, IT Sligo

Paul is an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering, IT Sligo. He holds a MA in Learning, Teaching and Assessment and a Professional Diploma in Education through the University of Limerick. He also holds Bachelor degrees in Engineering and Mathematics and a National Craft Certificate in Fitting/Turning.

Adapting to Covid-19, incorporating Universal Design into a first year assessment.

Lisa Cronin, IT Sligo

Lisa is a lecturer in water and wastewater science at IT Sligo and lectures across several programmes in the Dept. of Environmental Science and the Dept. of Civil Engineering & Construction. Prior to joining IT Sligo in 2018, she spent 20 years working in the water services sector in Ireland.

AGENDA FOR THE DAY

9.30AM — **OPENING OF CONFERENCE**
Dr. Niamh Plunkett – Head of Teaching & Learning, IT Sligo
Dr. Brendan McCormack – President of IT Sligo
Minister Simon Harris T.D – Minister for Further & Higher Education, Research, Innovation & Science

10.00AM — **OVERVIEW PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL FORUM PROJECT**
Universal Design for Learning at IT Sligo.

10.40AM — **THEME I PRESENTATIONS**
Student Engagement & Capturing the Student Voice.
Chair : Cathy O'Kelly, Lecturer, IT Sligo.

11.10AM — **THEME II PRESENTATIONS**
Improving the Student Experience through Digital Enhancement.
Chair : Dr. Ellen McCabe, Instructional Designer, IT Sligo.

11.40AM — **MORNING COFFEE BREAK**

12.00PM — **THEME III PRESENTATIONS**
Learning through Covid – Flipping the Classroom.
Chair : Dr. Geraldine Dowling, Lecturer, IT Sligo.

12.30PM — **THEME IV PRESENTATIONS**
Authentic Student Experience – Showcasing various teaching approaches through UDL case studies.
Chair : Mairead McCann, Lecturer, IT Sligo.

1.00PM — **LUNCH BREAK**

1.40PM — **THEME V PRESENTATIONS**
Adopting Alternative Assessment through a UDL lens.
Chair : Dr. Shelley Brady, Disability Officer, IT Sligo.

2.10PM — **AHEAD/UCD PRESENTATION**
Dr. Lisa Padden & Trevor Boland

2.40PM — **AFTERNOON COFFEE BREAK**

3.00PM — **KEYNOTE SPEAKER**
Frederic Fovet

4.00PM — **CLOSE OF CONFERENCE**

Dedicated Conference Webpage:
www.itsligo.ie/administration/
registrar/udl/udl-conference

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FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION