#Openteach: professional development for open online educators

#OPENTEACH: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR OPEN ONLINE EDUCATORS

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BOOK DETAILS

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community.

FOREWORD

Teaching Online Beyond the Shadows

By Professor Mark Brown

Professor Mark Brown is Ireland's first Chair of Digital Learning and Director of the National

Institute for Digital Learning (NIDL) at Dublin City University. Mark is an EDEN Fellow and serves on the EDEN Executive Committee. He also serves on the Supervisory Board of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) and is

Vice President of the Open and Distance Learning Association of Australia (ODLAA). In 2017, the Commonwealth of Learning recognised Mark as a world leader in open and distance education. Only months before the start of the COVID-19 crisis, in November 2019, Mark was Chair of the ICDE World Conference on Online Learning hosted in Dublin.

The opportunity to introduce this book comes when there has never been more interest in teaching online—for better and worse. Over the past 18 months, the COVID-19 crisis has generated unprecedented interest in both the potential and pitfalls of online education. The growing level of interest in learning how to teach more effectively online is evident over this time by the thousands, if not millions, of worldwide educators downloading handy checklists, joining webinars, and signing up for free online courses.

To their credit, the #OpenTeach team quickly responded to this demand by designing and facilitating two free online professional development courses on teaching online. Many Irish educators participated in these courses. Some of the ideas, examples and valuable resources in this book were refined and validated through a rich online community of practice. Also, in 2020, members of the #OpenTeach team helped develop

the NIDL Online Teaching Resource Bank and contributed to the design of several professional development MOOCs on the FutureLearn platform, which collectively attracted over 100,000 learners.

While understandably, this book is framed from the perspective that the Pandemic has been a game-changer for online education, evidenced by a significant increase in the number of people now registering for MOOCs, the truth is that the impact of COVID-19 on higher education is a twisted tale of two cities. After all, in most cases, the MOOC remains outside of the mainstream of Irish education, and the Government recently unveiled plans to support colleges and universities so they can return to offering traditional lectures. Simon Harris, T.D. and Minister for Further and Higher Education, announced with delight that "College by Zoom is coming to an end" (cited in Devane, 2021). The return to campus plan demonstrates the future of online education beyond the Pandemic depends on who is telling the tale.

By analogy, imagine for a minute that two North American tourists have taken advantage of the lifting of travel restrictions. They are standing on opposing banks of the River Liffey in Dublin, looking upstream to the future. Because of their different vantage points, one sees sparkling water reflecting off the bright sunshine; the other, dark shadows and a dirty, polluted river. Both are right.

On the one hand, for example, Eric Mazur, a high-profile Harvard University professor, claims the results are in, and online teaching is better. Mazur pronounces:

> "I have never been able to offer a course of the quality that I'm offering now… I am convinced that there is no way I could do anything close to what I'm doing in person. Online teaching is better than in person" (cited in McMurtrie, 2021).

On the other hand, a week or so after Mazur came to this bold conclusion, another North American educator, a Professor from the University of Waterloo, caught the headlines by claiming that the problem is "… online learning doesn't teach people to think" (Danisch, 2021). Robert Danisch believes the Pandemic has reduced teaching to nothing more than knowledge dissemination where the emphasis is on "knowing-that" as opposed to "knowing-how". Using a music analogy, he describes this difference as between:

> "…knowing what pitch means, what notes are or the other aspects of music theory that help explain how to play — and knowing how to play an instrument like the piano really well" (Danisch, 2021).

Essentially, the opinion piece argues that a real university

education needs to develop proper teacher-student interactivity and a type of "practical wisdom" which can only be embodied through live practice in the traditional classroom. It goes on to caution other educators by proclaiming:

> "Remote learning is well suited to the kinds of education that focus on abstract theoretical knowledge and not "know-how." And this is exactly the problem with those forms of learning — and why we ought to resist being seduced by them" (Danisch, 2021).

Unfortunately, both viewpoints fall into the trap of making sweeping generalisations and treat online teaching as a single monolith entity. This problem has permeated debates about online education throughout the Pandemic and continues in thinking about recent plans to return to campus. Importantly, online education is polylithic with many variations, mutations and modifications. Indeed, defining online learning is not a straightforward task, with Singh and Thurman (2019) identifyng 46 definitions in their literature review. Irrespective of your preferred definition or the one you have to work with, the central thesis of this book is that "teaching online is different". Therefore, we need to stop talking as if teaching online is a single thing and challenge assumptions that by default imply it offers an inferior experience to traditional campus-based education.

For that matter, we need to recognise that in-place education also has many different faces and accept the reality that not all of them warrant "Gold Standard" status for the

quality of teaching and learning. More to the point, we need to stop making naïve comparisons between offline and online delivery modes with no consideration of the pedagogical design. This book illustrates how you intentionally design for teaching, learning, and assessment is crucial to the quality of the online student experience. Moreover, as we discovered in a study of first-time online distance learners well before the Pandemic, learning support is another crucial factor in promoting student success (Brown, et al., 2015). The book has a section devoted to this issue.

While few would disagree that teaching online requires different pedagogical approaches to traditional lecturing, as demonstrated throughout the book, the question of what constitutes the good educator in the post-pandemic era is implicit in future efforts to design relevant professional development. This question raises deeper and more fundamental questions about the definition of good pedagogy—irrespective of the delivery mode. Hence, we need to be careful in the future not to overemphasise the craft of designing for online teaching at the expense of the art and science of good pedagogy. The previous notion of "practical wisdom" could be applicable here, although pedagogy is also intertwined with the politics of the curriculum by its nature.

The crucial point is that you cannot reduce good online pedagogy to a simple checklist of handy hints. While curated playlists in a time of 'panic-gogy' (Kamenetz, 2020) were undoubtedly helpful for many educators, we need to

remember that good pedagogy is a creative, critically reflective and deliberative cognitive process that needs to go hand-in-hand with learning the practical craft. Extending the above analogy, learning lots of music theory and how to play the piano really well will not be enough for Ireland to produce a winning performance at the next Eurovision Song Contest. If we want a truly standout world-class performance, then we need to foster the flair, creativity and capacity of our chosen musician(s) to learn how to think, feel and groove to the beat like our previous eight winning Irish performers. The key lesson is that a great musician does not just borrow or follow someone else's score!

In summary, good online teaching involves making intentional decisions as you navigate your way through both the light and dark patches of an increasingly diverse and challenging learning landscape. There is no one path or definitive map to good teaching online that takes you beyond the shadows, as this depends on your instructional context. Moreover, debates about the future of online education are far more complex than simple dichotomies of good or bad, as they are entangled in much bigger issues about who will shape and influence the future of higher education. Against this backdrop, the book presents readers with a clear philosophy of online teaching anchored in the concepts of presence and interactivity. It illustrates the art of the possible by drawing on a carefully selected mix of research, theory, and practice. In so doing, the authors challenge educators to move

beyond the shadows and the deficit language of emergency remote teaching to better harness the potential of online education, particularly as we endeavour to build a more future-fit higher education system.

Finally, I hope you find the book thought-provoking and practical in helping you steer your own path through some of the debates and dilemmas concerning how to teach online. On a personal note, I would like to congratulate the #OpenTeach team on this book and their wider contribution throughout the COVID-19 crisis. They have a wealth of expertise in teaching online, and hopefully, this will be put to good use in building back better over the next few years.

1. INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the #Openteach: professional development for open online educators book. In this book we aim to share the knowledge, resources and research generated by the [#Openteach project](). The aim of the project was to create an evidence-based and open professional learning approach to support educators to teach online.

Why this book?

Teaching online is different, in this book we explore this

difference with the aim of supporting educators to develop their online teaching practice and knowledge of online pedagogy.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has been a game changer for online education, impacting 1.5 billion students worldwide and thrusting the majority of schooling and higher education online (Bozkurt and et al. 2020). Additionally, the pandemic has thrust most higher education staff into teaching online, the majority without previous experience of this mode of education (Bozkart et. al., 2020; Farrell, 2020) However, teaching online requires different pedagogical approaches to traditional lecturing, therefore institutions need to support educators transitioning into online teaching to ensure quality (Gurley, 2019). Effective online teaching supports student engagement and success, this is key as online students are more vulnerable to attrition (Coker, 2018; Woodley & Simpson 2014).

This book aims to address this need for professional learning opportunities for educators to upskill in the area of online teaching practice and pedagogy. The intended audience for the book is any educator interested in learning more about effective practice for teaching online and online pedagogy.

1.1 ABOUT THE BOOK

Features of the book

The book combines the theory and practice of teaching online and contains examples and ideas, drawn from the voices of online educators and online students. Each chapter starts with a section outlining the key literature for the topic, then scenario activities, take-away downloadable resources, online educator videos, H5P interactive activities and participant generated teaching ideas.

Overview of content

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter one sets the scene for the book. It provides an introduction to the book and contextual information about the #Openteach project and the authors biographies.

Chapter 2: What does the literature say about teaching online?

In chapter two, the literature related to teaching online. The chapter explores the literature about online pedagogy, starting off teaching online and the roles and competencies of an online educator.

Chapter 3: The role of presence in online teaching

Chapter three explores the importance of creating and maintaining a presence in online courses.

Chapter 4: Synchronous online teaching

In chapter four, the literature and strategies for synchronous online teaching are explored. Also ways to promote interaction in the synchronous environment are presented.

Chapter 5: Facilitating asynchronous discussion

Chapter five looks at incorporating communication in online courses with discussion forums and best practice for prompting interaction, monitoring engagement and using forums effectively.

Chapter 6: Facilitating collaboration

Chapter six looks at ways to include collaborative opportunities for students to work together asynchronously in online courses.

Chapter 7: Supporting online students

Chapter seven explores how to best support students in online courses, including orientation, engagement and interaction and creating a caring supportive atmosphere.

Chapter 8: Eighteen activities for teaching online

Chapter 8 contains eighteen practical activities for teaching online crowdsources from participants of the first run of the #Openteach course in March 2020.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

Chapter nine brings the book to a close and shares some

final thoughts from the authors about supporting the professional learning of online educators.

1.2 ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr Orna Farrell is Assistant Professor specialising in online and blended education in Dublin City University (DCU). Orna holds a PhD in Education from Trinity College Dublin.

Currently, Orna leads the Digital Learning Design Unit, created to support DCU's pivot to hybrid learning due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Previously, she was Chair of the DCU Connected Online Humanities programmes for four years. Working within DCU's National Institute for Digital Learning. Orna's research interests include online pedagogy, online student success and engagement, eportfolio and open educational practice. She has a growing publication record in her fields of interest, including a range of book chapters, journal articles, invited presentations and conference papers. She has published in high ranking journals such as Distance Education, the Journal of Interactive Media in Education, Research in Learning Technology, and the International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher

Education. Dr Farrell was principal investigator of the recent National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education funded project #Openteach: professional development for open online educators.

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Dr James Brunton is Assistant Professor and Programme Chair of the DCU Connected Psychology Major programme at Dublin City University, which is an online, open education programme accredited by the Psychological Society of Ireland (PSI). James is a Chartered Psychologist (C. Psychol., Ps.S.I.; C. Work & Org. Psychol. Ps.S.I.; CPsychol BPS) and an EDEN (European Distance Education Network) Fellow.

Working within DCU's National Institute for Digital Learning James' research interests include the psychology of identity formation, socialisation/orientation processes for 'off-

campus' higher education students, online learning design, open pedagogy, and digital assessment. James is available to supervise doctoral students in any of these areas of research interest. James is currently the principal investigator/DCU principal investigator on a number of locally and EU funded projects, including the Opengame (Promoting Open Education through Gamification) project and BUKA (Advancing Equity and Access to Higher Education through Open and Distance Learning) project. James is a member of the editorial team for the open access journal, Research in Learning Technology. James' research has been published in journals such as Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning, Open Praxis, Educational Media International, and Studies in Higher Education, and he is a member of the editorial team for the open access journal, Research in Learning Technology.

Dr. Caitríona Ní Shé is currently working in Trinity College Dublin as an Academic Developer. In her previous role she worked on the National Forum's

Professional Development of All Those Who Teach priority. Caitríona has worked on a number of online teaching and technology enhanced learning projects including the #Openteach (online teaching) and the Assessment for Learning (Mathematics resources) projects. In addition, she has worked in a variety of roles across the higher education sector both in supporting academics enhance their teaching skills and students achieve their learning goals. Caitríona worked previously on the first iteration of the PACT short course and is now, along with the National Forum team, supporting the roll out of the Open Courses platform across the sector.

Dr Eamon Costello is Head of Open Education Unit at Dublin City University. Dr Costello holds a BA (Hons) in English Literature (I) and History (II.I) from Trinity College Dublin, a higher Diploma (Distinction) in Computer Science from University College Dublin, an MSc (I) in Software and Information Systems from National University of Ireland Galway and a Doctorate from Trinity

College Dublin. His Doctoral study analysed the implications of massively distributed collaborative development processes for education and educational technology and focused on the community of the Open Source VLE Moodle. Eamons research interests include Open and Distance Learning, Educational Technology including Virtual and Personal Learning Environments. Computing Education. Open Source Software in Education. MOOCs. eAssessment. HCI Design. Eamon also helps to coordinate the [Digital Learning Research Network](#) which includes over 50 staff with research interests, and range of [scholarly outputs](#), in this area. His [Doctoral study](#) analysed the implications of massively distributed collaborative development processes for education and educational technology and focused on the community of the Open Source VLE Moodle.

1.3 THE #OPENTEACH STORY

About the project

The [#Openteach](#): professional development for open online educators project aimed to develop a flexible and evidence based approach to support professional learning for those who teach online. The #Openteach: Professional Development for Open Online Educators project, was funded by the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in Ireland from 2019-2020 and was based in Dublin City University (DCU) in Ireland.

#Openteach Project Team

The #Openteach project aimed to develop a flexible and evidence based approach to support professional learning for those who teach online. The project targeted two groups of educators in particular: part time educators and online educators. The rationale for this was Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is recognised as crucial to the upskilling of educators to enhance the student learning experience. However, an important gap exists in the provision of CPD for part-time and online teachers. As they rarely have the opportunity to avail of campus-based resources they may consequently have limited access to professional development. The #Openteach project sought to address this gap by creating a flexible online open access course about teaching online which was grounded in evidence based practice.

The project had four phases, see the diagram below:

1. • Conduct needs analysis

2. • Synthesis of the literature

3. • Design, develop and pilot online course and resources

4. • Deliver online course
   • Evaluate and iteratate online course and resources
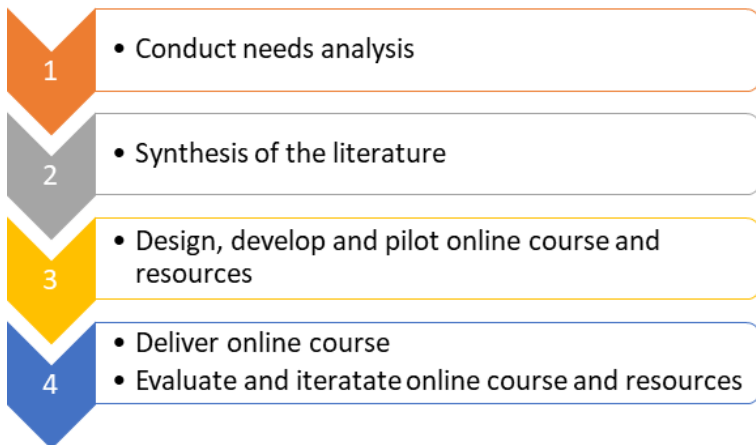
Phase 1

In phase one, we conducted a needs analysis of online educators and online students based in Dublin City University. Data was collected through online focus groups and several questionnaires. We then produced a report detailing our findings called *An investigation of effective online teaching: a needs analysis of online educators and online students* (Farrell, Brunton, Costello, Donlon,Trevaskis, Eccles, Ní Shé, 2019). Principal findings from this report were five key areas that educators identified to enhance through professional development:

    1. Technical skills for teaching online;

    2. Online learning & teaching pedagogy;

3. Online facilitation skills/approaches;

4. Encouraging online interaction;

5. Community of online educators.

Further, the findings indicated that both online educators and online students found that interpersonal professional skills and clear communication were key features of effective teaching online.

Phase 2
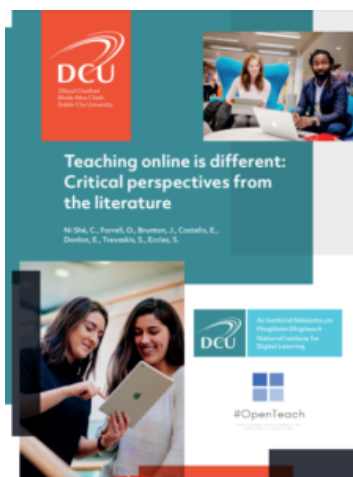
In phase two, we examined the literature around teaching online and conducted a literature synthesis. Following this we published our literature report called Teaching online

is different: critical perspectives from the literature (Ní Shé, Farrell, Brunton, Costello, Donlon, Trevaskis, Eccles, 2019). The report examined the literature about online teaching since 2010 and examined the roles and competencies which characterise effective teaching online, as well as approaches to supporting the professional development of online educators.

Phase 3

In phase three, we used the information from the needs analysis report and literature report to begin design and developing the #Openteach open online course. The course was designed following the ABC Learning design approach, which resulted in a ten hour, fully online professional development course (Ní Shé, Farrell, Brunton, Costello, Donlon, Trevaskis, Eccles, 2019). You can read more about the design process in our ABC case study. The course focused on five aspects of teaching online:

1. Presence
2. Collaboration online
3. Synchronous teaching
4. Asynchronous teaching
5. Supporting online students

The course was designed and delivered on the DCU moodle site called Loop, and followed a largely asynchronous approach.
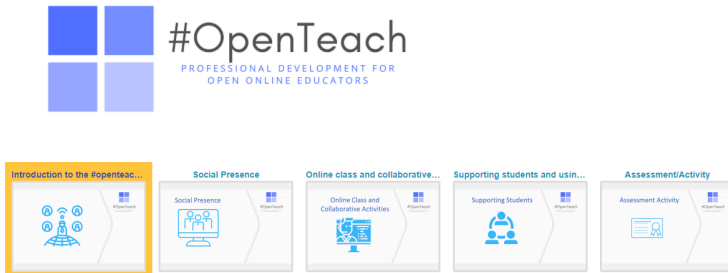
Phase 4

Phase 4 involved running the course. The #Openteach open course ran for the first time in March 2020 and the second time in September 2020. The first run coincided with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in a much higher number of participants than we had expected, 450 (we had originally expected less than 80 participants). Following the

first course run, we conducted an evaluation study to explore and understand participants learning experiences of the course. An evaluation report was produced called *The Openteach Pilot Evaluation Report* (Farrell, Brunton, Costello, Donlon, Trevaskis, Eccles, Ní Shé, 2020).

Now that the #Openteach project is finished, we aim to continue to share the knowledge, resources and research generated by the #Openteach project through this open textbook.

2. WHAT DOES THE LITERATURE SAY ABOUT TEACHING ONLINE?

"Learning – human learning – isn't an algorithm. The problems we face surrounding education cannot be solved simply by technology….Education is a human endeavor – profoundly human. We cannot, we should not automate these processes with teaching machines. Because we are tasked with teaching people after all."

(Audrey Watters in her keynote conference speech at the 2014 EdTechTeacher iPad Summit in. San Diego)

The above quote from Audrey Watters highlights the central role that educators play in shaping the learning environment for our students whether it be face to face or online. Online learning has its origins in what was traditionally known as distance education. Distance education has been defined as "the practical subset of education that deals with

instruction in which distance and time are the criterial attributes; that is, student and teacher and other students are separated by distance and/or time" (Yacci, 2000, p. 1). Today many providers of distance education have become fully online where all teaching and learning materials are made available to students online, generally via the institution's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Contact between the student, the educators, and the university is mainly electronic, educators provide asynchronous communication via VLE's, emails and other messaging systems, and teaching is provided synchronously over the web, perhaps with recordings available for those students unable to attend. Additionally, technology is often used to enhance teaching through the provision of interactive tasks and technology supported learning materials such as videos and screencasts. Online learning is still distant, in that the student and teacher are separated, however what the term means can depend on both the institution involved and the course being pursued by the student, in other words the context.

> **"online teaching and learning means teaching and learning that takes place over a computer network of some kind ... and in which interaction between people is an important form of support for the learning process. .... It includes both synchronous and asynchronous forms of interaction as well as interaction through text, video, audio, and in shared virtual worlds" (Goodyear, Salmon, Spector, Steeples, & Tickner, 2001, p. 68).**

This book focuses on fully online courses, where "all course activity is done online; there are no required face-to-face sessions within the course and no requirements for on-campus activity" (Sener, 2015).

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=102

This four minute Educause video gives a nice overview of some key concepts related to teaching online, it was created in 2013 by: Joanna Dunlap, Assistant Director for Teaching Effectiveness, University of Colorado-Denver and Patrick Lowenthal, Instructional Designer, Boise State University

Online Teaching and the Covid-19 Pandemic

The #Openteach project was conceived prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, to meet a locally identified need for professional development for our DCU cohort of adjunct online educators. At the time, online education was a niche but growing area in Ireland. The Covid-19 pandemic changed this context radically, shifting online from the periphery to the mainstream. The pandemic has impacted on 1.5 billion students worldwide and precipitated a move to emergency remote learning (Bozkart et. al., 2020). Since March 2020 in Ireland, higher and further education has largely been delivered online to 233,973 students without prior experience of online learning (Bozkart et. al., 2020). Additionally, the pandemic has thrust 17,521 higher education staff into teaching online, the majority without previous experience of this mode of education (Bozkart et. al., 2020). The chaos of the pandemic changed the path of of the #Openteach project. The course suddenly became a support not just for our staff, but for educators from across Irish and international higher education institutions.

2.1 WHAT IS ONLINE PEDAGOGY?

Pedagogy can be defined as the method and practice of teaching. As an academic subject, pedagogy is the study of how knowledge, skills and professional practices are imparted in an educational environment. Online pedagogy refers to how teaching is practiced using the internet and associated tools.

> 🖥 *An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:*
> *https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=724#h5p-29*

Learning theories

In order to be able to put effective online teaching strategies into practice it is useful to have a basic understanding of the theories behind these practices.

In this section the following two topics will be briefly examined.

1. Learning theories
2. Learning centred teaching

Theories of how humans learn, and how they should be taught, have been put forward and discussed since the time of the early philosophers; Socrates, Plato and Aristotle .

- Philosophers, such as Descartes, Locke and Kant, continued to discuss the meaning of learning until the early 19th century.
- As scientific methods developed the study of how humans learn was undertaken by psychologists such as Thorndike, Skinner, Piaget and Vygotsky.
- In the late nineteenth and early 20th century progressivists, such as Dewey, Montessori and Bruner, combined many of the earlier theories that had been developed by both the philosophers and psychologists.

There are many different learning theories and models in use today. These are illustrated in the Learning theory model developed by the Holistic approach to technology enhanced learning (HoTEL) project in 2013. For an interactive version of the model please see Learning Theory HoTEL map – interactive version.

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https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=724#h5p-30

2.2 STARTING TO TEACH ONLINE

"So, at the start I found it a very lonely process, I was very unsure about whether I was doing things correctly or not, so the more I did it, the more I gained experience, to finding it very enjoyable and a very interactive space to work" (Online Educator, Farrell et. al, 2019).

Getting started teaching online can be very challenging for those new to online education. Transitioning from the traditional modes of face to face teaching to online is difficult, as teaching online requires different pedagogical approaches to traditional lecturing. Therefore effective teaching online requires both an understanding of online pedagogy and the underlying technology used to facilitate online education.

Tips from the Coalface

#Getting started with teaching online

#OpenTeach
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR
OPEN ONLINE EDUCATORS

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=943

What does the literature say?

Educators who move from traditional teaching to the online environment often bring their traditional pedagogies with them, which may not be as effective in the online environment; hence they need professional development on using online pedagogies (Baran, et al., 2011; Bezuidenhout, 2018; Meyer, 2013). In addition, educators who are confident in their abilities in face to face teaching may not bring this confidence with them to online teaching (Northcote, Gosselin, Reynaud, Kilgour, & Anderson, 2015). The quality of online learning

is firmly linked to the professional development and support received by educators for teaching in the online environment (Adnan, 2018; Englund et al., 2017; Kibaru, 2018; Vaill & Testori, 2012). Resistance by educators to online teaching is often attributed to the lack of understanding of pedagogies and learning theories in online education, professional development is essential in helping educators engage in online pedagogies (Adnan, 2018; Kibaru, 2018; Kilgour, 2018).

For those new to teaching online, they should focus on developing three key elements of effective practice:

1. Establishing and encouraging presence
2. Facilitation of interaction and active learning
3. Supporting students (Ni She et. al., 2019).

2.3 WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ONLINE EDUCATOR?

In the #Openteach report on the literature around online teaching: _Teaching online is different: perspectives from the literature_ we looked in detail at the different roles that an online educator adopts, a synopsis of the key literature is presented in this section (Ní Shé, Farrell, Brunton, Costello, Donlon,Trevaskis, Eccles, 2019).

There have been many different roles considered for the online educator. In addition, there have been many different approaches to defining those roles. One of the earliest attempts to define the roles and competencies of online educators was by Paulsen (1995), who drew from earlier work on the moderation of computer mediated communication. Three roles were defined; organisational, social and intellectual (Abdous, 2011). One of the articles most referenced within our search on roles was Berge's "Facilitating Computer Conferencing: Recommendations from the Field" (1995) who defined four roles. The first three, managerial, social and pedagogical, are similar to those defined by Paulsen (1995) and the fourth is the technical role.

Goodyear and colleagues used a form of 'crowdsourcing' to investigate the competencies required for online teaching (Goodyear et al.,2001). During a practitioners' workshop in the UK in June 2000 participants were initially asked to identify and describe what they considered as the main roles of online teachers. Eight roles were identified: process facilitator; adviser-counsellor; assessor; researcher; content facilitator; technologist; designer; manager-administrator. For example, Gómez-Rey, Barbera, and Fernández-Navarro (2018) used a 69 item Likert scale survey, administered to students, to complete a bottom up approach to compiling the online educator role descriptions. A new role, the life skills promoter role was identified by the students in this study. This role requires transversal skills such as teaching values and empathy. Badia et al., (2017), examined the roles of online educators with respect to different approaches to teaching in a survey of part-time online educators. They identified a new role, the learning support role. When acting in the learning support or the social role online educators often use a collaborative learning approach.

#Openteach model of online educator roles

Synthesizing the online educator role from the literature, #Openteach proposed a model of online educator roles, using the following seven roles: facilitator; content expert; managerial; pedagogical; social; technical; and assessor. In addition, there are three roles that may be taken on by other staff involved in the provision of the online course: instructional designer; researcher and evaluator (Ní Shé, Farrell, Brunton, Costello, Donlon,Trevaskis, Eccles, 2019).

Role	Definition
Managerial	This encompasses all managerial, administration and organisational functions that an online educator must perform.
Pedagogical	This role relates both to the interactive pedagogies used by the educator and the cognitive support given to the students.
Social	The social role includes providing a friendly environment, mentoring and supporting students pastorally.
Technical	This role covers all aspects of technology, including that of supporting students use of technology and using technology both pedagogically and administratively.
Assessor	This role includes both the assessment and feedback that is given to students.
Facilitator	In this role the online educator creates a student centred learning environment and encourages students to take ownership of their learning. The facilitator monitors and guides student interaction.
Content expert	The educator must take on the role of a knowledge expert
Instructional designer*	In this role the educator designs the course for the online environment.
Researcher*	In this role the educator researches the course content and ensures it is up to date.
Evaluator*	In this role the online educator evaluates their actions and the course material and content to suggest improvements

* May be provided by other personnel within a team

The #Openteach model of online educator roles: Definitions

2.4 WHAT ARE THE COMPETENCIES OF AN ONLINE EDUCATOR?

In the #Openteach report on the literature around online teaching: _Teaching online is different: perspectives from the literature_ we looked in detail at the competencies of an online educator, a synopsis of the key literature is presented in this section (Ní Shé, Farrell, Brunton, Costello, Donlon,Trevaskis, Eccles, 2019).

An early study on the characteristics of effective online educators was Chickering and Gammon (1987) who distilled seven principles for good practice in undergraduate education and their implementation in technology enhanced education. These principles are: (1) encourage student-faculty contact; (2) encourage cooperation among students; (3) encourage active learning; (4) give prompt feedback; (5) emphasise time on task; (6) communicate high expectations; (7) respect diverse talents and ways of learning (Gorsky & Blau, 2009).

To some extent these characteristics are summarised in the quote from Gorsrky and Blau (2009), "teaching effectiveness may be defined as how an instructor can best direct, facilitate and support students toward certain academic ends, such as

achievement and satisfaction" (p. 1). In their study, Gorsky and Blau (2009) compared two instructors' facilitation of an online course using the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model as a research framework. They found that the instructor who was most highly rated by the students had a greater teaching and social presence and a faster response time. Timely responses by educators in all aspects of the teaching and learning process leads to better outcomes (Martin, Ritzhaupt, Kumar, & Budhrani, 2019). According to Coker (2018) student engagement and interaction needs to be supported to ensure effective facilitation of online courses.

Much of the literature on the competencies required by an online educator refers to the functions or skills required to complete a specific role. Abdous (2011, 2011, p. 64) used the definition of competency as being the "knowledge, skills, ability, and attitudes required to effectively perform roles". Competencies are intrinsically linked to roles. Goodyear et al. (2001) documented roles, the main tasks associated with each role and the competencies required to carry out those tasks. However, the literature on roles and competencies considers that competencies are context specific or socially situated (Alvarez et al., 2009; Baran et al., 2011; González-Sanmamed et al., 2014). In addition, educators may share responsibility for the delivery of the online course with other staff such as instructional designers, and thus need not necessarily be skilled in the associated competencies (Alvarez et al., 2009; Baran et al., 2011).

From the literature, we distilled the following competencies:

Competencies for effective online teaching.

Feature	Effective online teaching	Competencies
Social Presence	Encourages student-faculty contact which establishes presence that will encourage a supportive learning community (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2018; Edwards et al., 2011).	Communication skills, written and oral; modelling of good online behaviour; maintain a cordial learning environment.
Facilitation	Encourage cooperation among students.	Promoting interactivity within the group; facilitation of interaction; managing group work and building communities; advising/ counselling skills; facilitating participation among students; resolving conflict in an amicable manner.
Supporting students	Encourage active learning which supports students success and becoming a more agile educator (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2018).	Creates and facilitates novel reflective pedagogically sound activities; utilises teaching strategies/models and general education theory; Uses internet tools for instruction; accesses various technological resources; selects the appropriate resource for learning; suggest resources to the students.

Supporting students	Gives prompt feedback and timely responses which supports students success (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2018; Martin et al., 2019).	Provides opportunities to perform and receive feedback; monitors individual and group progress; assesses individual and group performance; Suggests measures to enhance performance.
Facilitation	Emphasise time on task.	Time manage activities to provide student time efficiencies; Manages the time and course; Establish rules and regulations.
Facilitation	Challengers, communicates high expectations, which will provide clarity and relevance (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2018; Edwards et al., 2011).	Creates significant real life problems with rubrics for guidance; demonstrates commitment and favourable attitude; sustains students' motivation, demonstrates leadership qualities; establishes rules and regulations.

Supporting students	Affirmers, respects diverse talents and ways of learning and provides clarity and relevance through course structure and presentation (Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2018; Edwards et al., 2011).	Acknowledges when students are succeeding in their work and treat them with respect; provides different types of learning activities; addresses universal design for learning (UDL) principles in all created materials; comply with ethical and legal standards; suggests measures to enhance performance; provide guidance based on student needs.
Teaching Presence	Administering the online learning environment(Metz & Bezuidenhout, 2018).	Managerial skills; structures online learning resources so materials are one click away.
Cognitive presence	Content expert which provides clarity (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2018).	Content knowledge; library research skills; undertakes efforts to update knowledge; suggests resources to the students; conducts research on classroom teaching; interprets and integrates research findings in teaching.

#Openteach competencies for effective online teaching

Drawing on the literature discussed above, the #Openteach project emphasizes three key elements for effective teaching online:

- Presence
- Facilitation
- Supporting students

Effective online teaching	Competencies
Presence	Communication Modelling online behaviours Cordial learning environment Expectations Listen to students
Facilitation	Facilitate interaction Promote interactivity Encourage cooperation Resolve conflict Encourage active learning Implement instructional strategies
Supporting students	Feedback Monitor student progress Time management Manage learning environment Content knowledge Responsiveness

#Openteach: Effective online teaching and competencies

2.5 HOW TO FACILITATE AN ONLINE COURSE

In this section, we give a brief overview of how to effectively facilitate an online course, drawing on the literature. One of the first theories with respect to distance education was the theory of transactional distance put forward by Moore (1991) which highlighted the importance of the dialogue and interaction to mitigate against the separation of the student and the educator. Promoting interactions between students and educators has positive impact on student outcomes (Walters, Grover, Turner, & Alexander, 2017). Facilitating online courses is mainly concerned with supporting these interactions. Martin et al. (2019) put forward an interpretation of online course facilitation, in which it ".. broadly refers to how, what, when, and why an online faculty member makes decisions and takes actions to help students meet the learning outcomes" (Martin et al., 2019, p. 36). However, the pedagogical approaches to online teaching may differ between online educators as they bring different perspectives, personal beliefs, attitudes and dispositions to online teaching and the use of technology (Borup & Evmenova, 2019; Coker, 2018).

Online course design

Clear, consistent and systematic online course design is a very important for effective teaching online. Student engagement can be supported by a well-designed online course which promotes interaction, presence and creates a clear, purposeful learning journey (Farrell & Brunton, 2020). Organising the course into weekly topics or assignments, chunking content and providing clear signposting are elements of course design that facilitate student learning (Martin et al., 2019; Meyer & McNeal, 2011; Peacock & Cowan, 2019). Consistency in structure from week to week allows students to know where they are within the learning process (Martin et al., 2019; Trammell & LaForge, 2017).

In order to engage students, and "make the materials alive" (Martin et al., 2019, p. 39) in the online environment it is recommended that consideration is given to the type and variety of the learning activities and to include experiential learning, real word or job related experiences, and online scenarios (Gómez-Rey et al., 2018; Martin et al., 2019; Meyer & McNeal, 2011; Shattuck et al., 2011; Trammell & LaForge, 2017). The selection and use of a variety of tools, approaches and media such as providing audio and visual resources or using discussion forums, blogs or wikis for discourse will also influence how effective the learning activities are. Further, integrating online collaborative activities and opportunities for reflection will enhance the student learning experience.
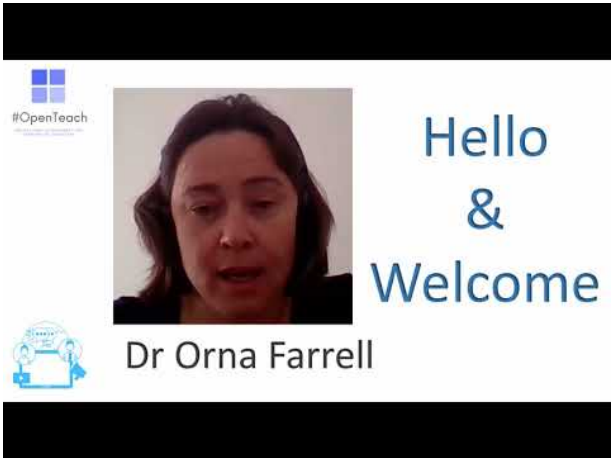
Online course design approaches vary considerably, but most fully online courses use a combination of:

1. Asynchronous activities such as quizzes, interactive content, and short videos
2. Asynchronous communication channels such as discussion forums and chat groups
3. Online collaborative activities like wikis, blogs, glossaries and web quests
4. Synchronous classes using platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft teams

At the start of the course

One of the important aspects to emerge from the literature is the requirement for the online educator to present the nature of the interaction required in the online course to students. Clarification of expected participation, standards of contributions and interactions and deadlines need to be explicit. (Abdous, 2011; Peacock & Cowan, 2019; Trammell & LaForge, 2017). Using an introductory video, getting in early in discussions and having icebreaker activities are all key to success (Coker, 2018; Peacock & Cowan, 2019). Award winning online educators use weekly announcements with reminders of the learning activities for the coming week (Martin et al., 2019).

Here is an example of a course introduction video from the #Openteach course.

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https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=946

Facilitating discussion

Asynchronous discussion forums are often the primary means of communication within an online course. Therefore, online educators need to take a proactive approach to the facilitation of these forums. The job of the online educator in facilitating discussions is to "take it outwards, to bring in a new idea, to ask a question and in some cases to share opinions" in order to avoid the early termination of a discussion (Coker, 2018, p. 136). Online educators should post regularly on the course

discussion forums, acknowledging student contributions, giving feedback and prompting further interaction.

2.6 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

The overarching conclusion of this chapter is that teaching online is different. This difference is evident in the roles, competencies and professional development approaches required to equip online educators to teach effectively in the online higher education environment.

This evident in the reflections described by online educators in the video below:

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https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=258

3. THE ROLE OF PRESENCE IN ONLINE TEACHING

"Social presence is important, get it going right from the start, it helps with interaction, make sure the students think of you as a person" (Online Educator, Farrell et. al, 2019)

In this chapter we consider the role of presence in teaching online. Both educators and students can feel isolated when teaching and learning online. Establishing a sense of a learning community is important to help overcome this sense of isolation, and enables meaningful and in-depth interactions where learning experiences can be shared. In order to build a learning community, it is important that both educators and students establish a social presence in the online course. Presence is generally considered to be the ability of the individual to project themselves as a 'real person' in the online environment. The idea of online educator and student presence was discussed extensively within the Community of Inquiry (CoI) model, as put forward by Garrison, Anderson and Archer (1999). Students are more likely to be satisfied with

their online courses when they get to 'know' their educator, and are more likely to engage in online interactions when their educator is regularly present in the course (Abdous, 2011; Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2018). In the context of online education, presence promotes student to student and student to educator relationships that, hitherto, required physical classrooms.

What does the literature say?

While research into specific roles for online educators began with Berge (1995), the work of Garrison, Anderson and Archer (1999) sparked discussion on the idea of online educator presence. Within the CoI Model it is considered that learning occurs within the intersection of cognitive, social and teaching presence (Garrison et al. 1999).

The community of inquiry model

Teaching Presence refers to the design and provision of cognitive and social activities that support
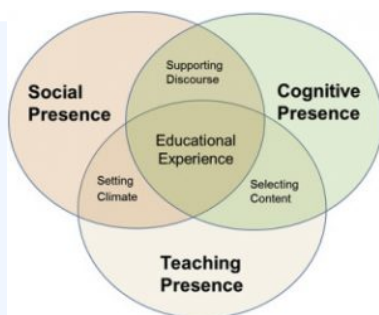
Garrison, Anderson, and Archer (2000)

students in achieving the desired learning outcomes.

Cognitive Presence is established when participants in a community of inquiry successfully construct meaning through continued communication.

Social presence is generally considered to be the ability of the individual to project themselves as a 'real person' in the online environment.

Educational experience occurs at the intersection of the three presences; cognitive, social and teaching in the CoI model. In other words, all three presences are thought to be required for successful learning to occur.

History of the CoI Framework

In an interview for the Reflective Teaching in a Digital Age podcast, Dr. Randy Garrison describes the history of the CoI framework, including its role in the thoughtful design of online education, and practical ways of helping students learn through active participation and shared meaning making.

Click here to listen to the interview on the history of CoI

Social presence, which focuses on the building of student and teacher relationships, has been found to be an important aspect of online teaching. When online educators model and promote good social presence this has a positive impact on student engagement in the online course (Corfman & Beck, 2019). Getting social presence right from the beginning of the online course is important. Feng et al (2017) found that effective scaffolds for social presence at the beginning of the course ensured students social presence was maintained throughout the course (Feng et al., 2017). In the next section, we will consider how to apply the theories of presence in a practical manner when teaching online.

Interaction and presence in online courses

Related to the community of inquiry model is the concept of interaction in online courses. The concept and theory of interaction was first proposed by Moore (1989) in his article about "*Three Types of Interaction*" in distance education. Moore thought that interaction in distance education courses followed three distinct patterns: student–content, student–teacher, and student–student. Andersen (2003) extended and applied Moore's model to the online context in his Modes of Interaction (2003) theory, see diagram below:

Student/Student

Student

Student/Content
Student/Teacher

Deep and
Meaningful
Learning

Content
Teacher/Content
Teacher

Content/Content
Teacher/Teacher
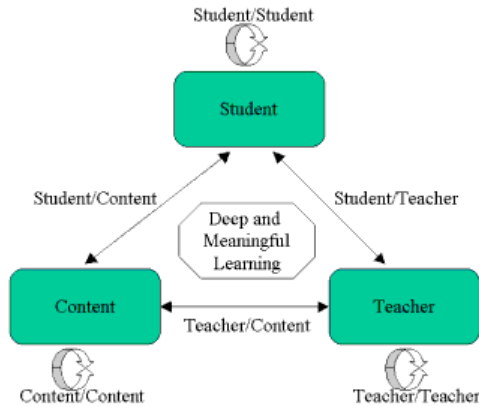
Modes of Interaction (Andersen, 2003)

Terumi Miyazoe has written a very nice blog post about this topic: Getting the Mix Right Once Again: A Peek into the Interaction Equivalency Theorem and Interaction Design

Andersen argues that deep learning is facilitated as long as long of the three forms of interaction. Therefore when designing an online course, you must consider the modes of interaction and approaches to promoting presence and community in the course.

3.1 HOW TO PROMOTE PRESENCE IN YOUR COURSE

As we have already explored, students and educators can feel isolated while learning and teaching online. Encouraging students and educators to engage socially right from the start of the course is one way to help overcome this. In this section we explore a number of ways that educators can start and maintain presence. Once students and educators get to know a little about each other, and in particular about their desires and expectations from the course, it can be easier to find common ground and connect socially.

Getting started

Key to success is engaging students right from the start of the course. Make sure they know that you are a 'real' person and that you are available to respond to their queries.

Welcome message – Post a short welcoming introduction video, audio or text that includes a brief bio and a snippet of personal information. If using text or audio, post a picture of yourself.

Student response – Ask students to post a similar message about themselves and their desires/expectations of the course.

Responding to students –Respond to the students' initial posts as soon as is immediately possible and include individualised feedback. Let them know you have read/listened to their post and that you care about them and their requirements.

Icebreaker activities – Run an icebreaker activity prior to the first teaching and learning

activity that will encourage student to student interaction, ensure everyone gets involved.

How are they getting on? – Ask the students how they are getting on, have they found everything, and have they been able to figure out the technology.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=168#h5p-9

3.2 MAINTAINING PRESENCE

Social presence needs to be maintained throughout the course in order to ensure all students actively participate in the course and do not find themselves isolated. One key to success is responding to students in a timely fashion. Get to know your students' names and use them.

Response times – Establish, and agree with your students, the response times for any queries and/or postings, and stick to them.

Know your students – Get to 'know' your students by listening to what they have to say both in online classes and online interactions such as discussion forums or emails.

Check in with students – Regularly check if your students are on track and gently probe those who are in difficulty.

Online collaborative activities – Organise an online collaborative activity and engage with each group, use verbal as well as textual communication.

Online educators' perspectives

Meet our online educators: <u>Dr. Helen Coker</u> from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh and Dr Sinead Eccles from the <u>Open Education Unit</u>, DCU. In this three minute video Helen and Sinéad explain why social presence is so important in online education and how they have managed to achieve it.

Tips from the Coalface

#1.Social presence

#OpenTeach
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR
OPEN ONLINE EDUCATORS

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=1052

3.3 PRESENCE IN LARGE ONLINE CLASSES

With online classes of greater than 20 to 30 students it is not possible for one educator to respond individually to all students. In this section we will explore ways of encouraging social presence in large online classes.

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https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=171#h5p-14

Establishing presence in large online classes

For student cohorts larger than 30 students the best advice is to have more than one educator to respond to the students online

and to help manage the chat and other features during your live online classrooms. Key to success is creating groups within your class. Empower the students to create and maintain social presence within their groups.

Group responses – Randomly allocate each student with two others and ask them to respond to each other's posts. Give them a deadline. Then, if possible, respond yourself to students who haven't received a response yet.

Group the icebreaker – Run an icebreaker activity between groups. For example, group your class into groups of 5 to 6 students and ask them to each post an image, meme or gif that best describes how much they like this particular subject. Group members are then required to guess the particular emotion or feeling invoked

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Use online polls – Use online polls to ask your

students relevant questions on the course materials. Careful wording of questions should allow students select different, but valid, responses. Open up a comparison/critique of the possible answers to the students who have partaken in the poll.

Set up mentor groups – Group students into groups of 5 or 6 and ask them to become mentors for each other during the course. You may wish to allow them self-select the groups. Ask them to allocate a chair who can then come to you with queries that they are unable to answer. Suggest initial postings such as 'when is the first assignment due? Incentivize this by allocating a percentage of their grade towards continuous participation in this forum.

Themed Forums – Set up three or four themed query forums, based on your past experience of this or other similar courses. For example, you

may have one for assignments and another for referencing. Put FAQ's into each forum. Allow students query in here, but only respond to those that fall outside your FAQ, and then add this query/response into the FAQ. Inform students of the process and the expected response time. Stick to your guns!

In this chapter we looked at how to encourage social presence in large online classes.

You can access a downloadable copy of the material here (link opens a new window):

- Social Presence in Large Classes

3.3 INTRODUCING EIMEAR

Presence scenario

In this part you will be presented with a scenario that confronts many educators as they move to online classes for the first time. Consider Eimear's dilemma, how would you respond?

Meet Eimear

Eimear is thirty-three years old and has been working in the Open Education Unit (OEU) of DCU, as an educator for nearly three years. She completed a masters in IT applications about 7 years ago, on a part time basis, while working in IT, in a private firm. The course was mainly delivered face to face, but she did do one module that was partly online.

Eimear tutors both to enhance her CV, and because she enjoys it. Of course, the money helps pay the mortgage!

She never reports any problems with the technology, she sorts them out herself. When she has issues with the VLE, or needs more information on assignments she will consult the Open Education Unit team in DCU.

Eimear has attended some of the Open Education

Unit of DCU introductory online sessions, she is always willing to implement any new teaching techniques suggested. But her time is precious.

Eimear's dilemma

Eimear is moving to fully online classes for the first time. She is concerned about how she will get to know her students without meeting them in person.

Watch Eimear's dilemma as she considers her first online class.
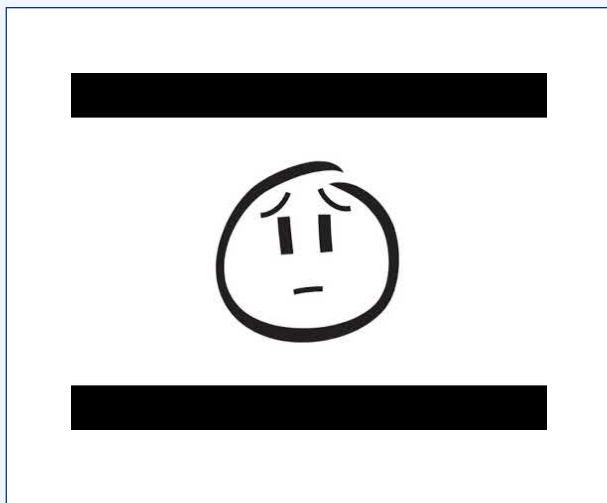
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An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=161#h5p-28

#Openteach Takeaway Resource

In this part, we looked at presence in online teaching. You can access a downloadable copy of the material here: Presence.

3.4 PRESENCE TOOLS AND RESOURCES

Resources

Faculty Focus: **Tips for building social presence in your online class**

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eLearning industry: **Social presence in online learning: 7 Things Instructional Designers Can Do To Improve It**

Faculty Focus: **Tips for Teaching Large Classes Online**

Duke University: [Building communities in online courses](#)

Duke University Learning Innovation : [Building Community in Asynchronous Online Courses](#).

Tools

A [Twitter](#) chat is a public Twitter conversation around one unique hashtag. This hashtag allows you to follow the discussion and participate in it. Twitter chats are usually recurring and on specific topics to regularly connect people with these interests.

Flickr is a photo sharing platform and social network where users upload photos for others to see. Students can create and share individual images or entire collection of images using Flickr.

Slack is a cloud-based tool purposely designed for collaboration that is built for discussion based activities. It can facilitate persistent chat rooms (channels) organized by topic, private groups, and direct messaging. Content, including files, conversations, and people, is all searchable within Slack.

LinkedIn has two main ways to facilitate discussions; the commenting feature on LinkedIn posts and the discussion groups. The amount of expertise that is willingly shared via LinkedIn discussion groups is excellent and literally endless when it comes to topics covered by the discussion

groups.

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social networking service. Use this to engage with students through the media of pictures. Student work can be showcased, educational memories recorded, and unique projects created.

4. SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE TEACHING

"It can sometimes feel like you're just talking to a screen as opposed to talking to people and you probably need to pedal a bit harder than you might in a classroom because nobody wants to leave long awkward pauses." (Online Educator, Farrell et. al, 2019)

In the previous chapter we considered the importance of both student and educator presence in establishing a learning community in an online environment. In this chapter we will examine how the online classroom can be used to further develop the online course's learning community. Online classroom technology allows an educator to hold synchronous, or real time, sessions with students. These sessions generally replace the face to face classes delivered in a traditional teaching approach. Online classes can be recorded, capturing audio, video, text chat, and content, for access and review by students who could not attend. Online classes are delivered using video conferening platforms such as Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Blackboard Collaborate.

A Zoom online classroom from the Openteach course

What does the literature say?

The major benefit of online synchronous classes for students is the opportunity to interact in real time with peers and to build a learning community (McBrian and Jones, 2009). Synchronous teaching can build teacher presence and student presence and humanize the experience of teaching and learning online (Martin, Ahlgrim-Delzell, Budhran, 2017).

In some ways the synchronous online classroom is essentially traditional face-to-face teaching "moved into a technological format with little change to the overall design principles" (Bates, 2019, p.159). This is described as an "old

wine in new bottles" approach by Bates (2019), therefore it is important to design synchronous teaching that makes the most of the affordances of videoconferencing technology and that doesn't just replicate the face to face environment. This can be done through using polls, breakout rooms and designing interactive online sessions, ensuring that activities that aren't focused on passive content delivery are integrated into the online class.

Synchronous teaching during the Covid-19 Pandemic

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of education shifted online and adopted some form of emergency remote education. Synchronous online teaching using videoconferencing tools such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams were widely used to support the emergency remote education (Bozkart, et. al., 2020). In the space of a year, teaching online moved from a niche to a mainstream activity. This massification of synchronous teaching and learning due to the pandemic has highlighted some challenges such as zoom fatigue, equity issues around camera usage, and access issues related to broadband and devices, and has shone a light on the importance of digital competencies for both educators and students to engage effectively in online education (Bozkart, et. al., 2020; Bali, 2020). Those who were immersed in online education prior to the pandemic, emphasised the differences between the emergency remote education which was adopted

and a typical systematically designed online course. Online educators feared that the rushed unplanned online education delivered during the early months of the pandemic would tarnish the broad perceptions of online education.

> "**There was a lot of head shaking about emergency online learning, with many experts trying to "distance" quality online learning from emergency online learning" ([Bates, 2021](#)).**

One of the earliest articles on this topic ["The Difference Between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning"](#) coined the now ubiquitous phrase "emergency remote teaching".

> **"Well-planned online learning experiences are meaningfully different from courses offered online in response to a crisis or disaster. Colleges and universities working to maintain instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic should understand those differences when evaluating this emergency remote teaching" ([Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, Bond, 2020](#)).**

In the post-pandemic era, it will be interesting to see which online practices and pedagogies are kept by educators and which are discarded and whether there will be a post-pandemic backlash for online education.

4.1 GETTING COMFORTABLE WITH THE ONLINE CLASSROOM

Meet our online educators Dr Pauline Rooney from TU Dublin and Richard Bolger from the Open Education Unit (OEU) in DCU. Pauline and Richard explain how to prepare and use the online classroom to support student interaction.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=817

When starting off, many educators and students may find the class atmosphere very different than the face to face environment. The online classroom can be daunting to begin with, many educators report that their first feeling in the online class is of isolation and wonder 'is there anyone out there?' This chapter will offer some suggestions for online educators to help overcome the initial feelings of isolation and the technical problems you can encounter, when starting to teach online. The key to success is trying out the technology in advance of the online class. Both you and your students need to be familiar with the technology. Schedule an introductory class where you can all try out the technology.

Familiarisation

Familiarise yourself with the online classroom technology, and its features. Ask a colleague or a

friend to join a test class and make sure you can use all the features, and that they work!

Technology check

Make sure your mic, camera and all other technology features you will be using are working properly, prior to every class. Gremlins do exist. Get students to check their audio, camera and chat facilities as they log in. You can add this to the welcome message in the online class.

Prepare material in advance

Upload any document or slide you plan to use. Prepare a welcoming message in advance of the class for any early attendees. Log in 10 to 15 minutes prior to the class. You can be on mute but let the students know you are there if they want to check the technology.

During the class

Remind students to turn off their mics, to avoid feedback, during the class and to use the Raise the hand feature if they want to join in. Check the chat box and the raise the hands feature regularly. You can paste a reminder onto your slides or set a timer.

Record the class

Don't forget to record the online class. Set a reminder on your welcome page and students may also help in this regard!

4.2 PROMOTING INTERACTION IN THE ONLINE CLASSROOM

"I think tutors who have a dynamic class... there's a mixture of discussion and lecture and maybe ... a video or something like that" (Online student, Farrell et. al., 2019)

"as well as their ability to multitask and monitor the chat section to make sure that ... everyone is included and that they're answering questions." (Online student, Farrell et. al., 2019)

There are a variety of interactive online activities available within the online classroom. It is important to vary the activities but not to have too many different technical tools in use. The key to success in an interactive online classrooms is to prepare and plan the activities that you will use. Make sure you and your students know what is expected.

Synchronous activities

Use the chat feature

Keep an eye on the chat throughout and maintain social presence by using students' names when referring to their responses. You can also ask students to type in a response to a prompt you might have but, remember that if you have a large class it will be difficult to view and respond to all questions – see Raising hands.

Raising hands

With a large group it might be best to ask students to raise their hand, particularly when they are either responding to a question you pose, or asking one of their own.

Using Polls

They can be prepared in advance or made on the fly. Consider their use for both:

- Administrative activities, such as asking the students if they can hear you or see your shared screen.
- Checking students' knowledge and understanding, multiple choice question, or open questions are available.

Breakout rooms

Start with a simple activity, that will help students become familiar with the technology. Use as an icebreaker. Ask the students, in groups of 2 or 3, to tell each other where they are from. Back in the main room they can report this information. Always make sure to plan an activity, give clear instructions in advance of the breakout and keep it short. Remember that classroom breakout technology does not generally record the breakout sessions.

Flipped Classroom Approach

In a flipped classroom students are required to engage constructively with the content, prior to coming to class. For example, request students to prepare a learning artefact, such as a short screencast or document, related to the learning material, and discuss these in the class. The synchronous class provides time for feedback. You may need to tie an incentive into this activity, such as a grade or structured output that serves can be used in a subsequent assignment.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=391#h5p-31

4.3 TIPS FOR BREAKOUT ROOMS

This section will offer some tips for using breakout rooms in your online class.

Preparation

As with any online activity it is very important to plan the activity in advance and to be prepared. Practice the breakout rooms with the students in advance.

Groups

Depending on your software the names students use when they join the class may not match the student username that the educator is familiar with. Having students allocated to groups in advance can be useful, but be aware that all students might not attend.

Preparing the breakout rooms

Set up the breakout rooms in advance with the tools you want the students to use, ensuring the tools have been enabled for student access. Have one slide with the exercise available in each breakout room in advance which explains what tools the students are expected to use and what exactly they will do.

Visiting the groups

Remember to visit each group in turn so you know who you have visited. Make notes in each rooms of things that come up that are relevant for the whole class and need to be brought back into the main class. You may need to set a timer for yourself so you know when to call them back from the rooms.

Timing

Use notifications to inform students of the time, 3

minutes to go before breakouts over. Warn them just before you pull them back to the main room.

Frequency

Like any other activity, don't do this too often!

Using Zoom for breakout rooms

Short video on <u>how to use Zoom for breakouts</u>. (Link opens in a new window).

4.4 MÍCHEÁL'S DILEMMA

In this part you will be presented with a scenario related to synchronous online teaching, called Mícheál's dilemma. Take a moment to read about Mícheál, then watch the video below to find out more about his dilemma and consider possible solutions.

Meet Mícheál

Mícheál has been working in the Open Education Unit in

DCU, as an online educator, for more than 10 years. He teaches in a couple of different institutions, as well as carrying out research work in his discipline, History.

Motivation

Mícheál is invested in teaching, he really loves it. He gets involved in both the writing and tutoring in the Open Education Unit modules.

Educational Background

Mícheál completed a PhD in History and is very knowledgeable in his field. While he initially worked in the public sector, he also has extensive academic experience.

Technical Skills

Mícheál found the move to online challenging, particularly the use of the technology. When he has issues with the technology, he generally seeks help.

Pedagogical Outlook

> Mícheál is willing to implement any new techniques suggested, but he may need some help.

Mícheál's dilemma

Mícheál ran breakout sessions last week in his online classroom. It didn't work out quite as he expected.

Watch Mícheál's dilemma unfold in the video below, and then consider what you would do if you were Mícheál.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=96

What do you think Mícheál should do?

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You

can view it online here:

https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=96#h5p-4

4.5 SYNCHRONOUS TEACHING RESOURCES

Follow the links below for some tips on how to create engaging online classes.

- [eLearning Industry: 5 Online Group Collaboration Ideas For Your Next eLearning Course](#)
- [Learning Solutions: Addicted to Virtual Classroom Breakout Rooms? Get Help Now!](#)
- [Equity unbound: Online Teaching resources](#)

#Openteach Takeaway Resource

In this part, we looked at synchronous online teaching. You can access a downloadable copy of the material here: [Online Class](#)

5. FACILITATING ASYNCHRONOUS DISCUSSION

**"And not that I'm looking for an answer to the question I'm asking – my main goal
and purpose has always been to just to try and talk to the students through the
forum. Just to try and get some discussion going, trying to figure out who the
Students are, what they're interested in"**(Educator quoted in [Farrell et. al, 2019, p. 21](#))

In this chapter, we will look at how to use asynchronous discussion forums effectively. Discussion forums are a key asynchronous approach to teaching online. Facilitating discussion forums effectively is an important online educator role and competency. Discussion forums are used in online courses to encourage student discourse that may have been provided in the classroom in face to face courses. It can be challenging to meaningfully engage students in online forums, but careful design and management of the forums will result in success. Key to success is ensuring that the discussion forums are meaningful and that students

understand, and agree with, the benefits of participation.

What does the literature say?

According to Abdous (2011) online educators "... need to share, listen, answer questions, and show enthusiasm, while paying careful attention to students' needs, providing direction, and drawing students toward active engagement and participation in the discussion" (p. 66). Corfman and Beck (2019) found requiring participation and providing grades in discussion activities promoted better discussions.

One of the challenges faced by online educators is the difficulty in getting students to post online. Kibaru (2018) interviewed online educators about challenges they faced in online teaching and they found that educators claimed that even when students had clear questions they were sometimes afraid to post this to a discussion forum. One way to overcome this difficulty may be to make sure that the online educator themselves posts early in the class as well as responding individually to students when they post (Peacock & Cowan, 2019; Smits & Voogt, 2017).

Smits and Voogt (2017) recommend that online educators post regularly, at least three times a week, acknowledge individual contributions and include pedagogical feedback. Martin et al. (2019) quoted award-winning educators who said they check their discussion boards every day. Responding to all discussion forums posting may become onerous, particularly

in large classes (Kibaru, 2018; Setlhako, 2014). Trammel and LaForge (2017) suggest that "encouraging peer-to-peer interaction will help manage an instructor's workload in a large class while also meeting student's preferences". Additionally, dividing large classes into groups and using grading rubrics will contribute to reducing the load. However, many online educators recognise the value of their work in responding to the forums. "Although this is more work for me I still find this very rewarding as the students are the ones who excel and I feel motivated to further assist them" (Mbati & Minnaar, 2015, p. 280).

Meet our two expert online educators Dr. Helen Coker from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, and Dr Pauline Rooney from TUDublin.

Tips from the Coalface

#Facilitating discussion forums

#OpenTeach

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In this short video Helen and Pauline outline how they use discussion forums.

Student perspective on learning with discussion forums

"Be proactive, not just from our side but also on the teacher side. Like put something up, put some interesting article or some facts or something on the discussion forum".

5.1 ÁINE'S DILEMMA

Exercise scenario: Áine's dilemma

In this chapter, you will be presented with a short exercise scenario.

- Take a moment to read about Áine.
- Watch the video below to find out more about Áine's dilemma.
- Consider possible solutions.

Meet Áine

Personal Details:

Áine is a business manager in a production company. She has been working as a part-time educator with the Open Education Unit of DCU for five years.

Motivation:

Áine really enjoyed attending the online Masters programme she completed in the Open Education Unit of DCU and has since relished the opportunity to teach on that programme as a part-time, online educator. She works diligently as an educator in the Open Education Unit, taking a keen interest in her students.

She likes to keep in touch with academic life and

is interested in the research aspect of the Masters programme.

Educational Background:

Áine completed an online Masters programme in her discipline with the Open Education Unit of DCU 6 years ago.

Since graduating, she has returned to teach on the programme.

Technical Skills:

Áine is skilled at using both the institution's VLE and classroom technology. She used these as a student while attending the online course.

However, she hasn't tried the newer features,

such as polling and sharing screens. She feels that these might enhance her teaching.

Pedagogical Outlook:

Áine is not too happy with how she manages to engage and support students in the online environment. She is not really familiar with the pedagogical aspects of online teaching and learning.

She is willing to attend training sessions, as long as they fit in with her schedule.

Áine's dilemma

Áine is using group discussion forums for the first time, and she has encountered a sticky issue.

Watch Áine's dilemma unfold in the video below, in which Áine explains how her problem with the discussion forums emerged.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=188

What do you think Áine should do?

- Call the student and try to resolve the issues
- Pass this issue onto the course or programme manager
- Tell the other members of the group to get on with the project and ignore the other student
- Or is there something else Áine should do?

5.2 HOW TO MANAGE ONLINE DISCUSSION FORUMS

As we have seen from Áine's dilemma, managing discussion forums within an online course can be very demanding. In order to mitigate against the problems that Áine faced it is very important to establish the netiquette for your course from the start and to have clear guidelines for engagement. Establishing netiquette through having clear guidelines, sometimes called ground rules, that students sign up to, is very important.

Take a look at the [15 rules of Netiquette that Touro College are using](#).

15 Rules of Netiquette for Online Discussion Boards

that means "etiquette for the net"

"Netiquette" refers to rules of etiquette that apply to online communication.

Follow these 15 rules of netiquette to make sure you sound respectful, polite, and knowledgeable when you post to your class's online discussion boards.

RULE OF THUMB

If you wouldn't do or say something in real life, don't do it online either.

1
Before posting your question to a discussion board, check if anyone has asked it already and received a reply. Just as you wouldn't repeat a topic of discussion right after it happened in real life, don't do that in discussion boards either.

2
Stay on topic - Don't post irrelevant links, comments, thoughts, or pictures.

3
Don't type in ALL CAPS! If you do, it will look like you're screaming.

4
Don't write anything that sounds angry or sarcastic, even as a joke, because without hearing your tone of voice, your peers might not realize you're joking.

5
Always remember to say "Please" and "Thank you" when soliciting help from your classmates.

6
Respect the opinions of your classmates. If you feel the need to disagree, do so respectfully and acknowledge the valid points in your classmate's argument. Acknowledge that others are entitled to have their own perspective on the issue.

7
If you reply to a question from a classmate, make sure your answer is accurate! If you're not 100% sure when the paper is due, DO NOT GUESS! Otherwise, you could really mess things up for your classmates and they will not appreciate it.

8
If you ask a question and many people respond, summarize all answers and post that summary to benefit your whole class.

9
Be brief. If you write a long dissertation in response to a simple question, it's unlikely that anyone will spend the time to read through it all.

10
Don't badmouth others or call them stupid. You may disagree with their ideas, but don't mock the person.

11
If you refer to something your classmate said earlier in the discussion, quote just a few key lines from their post so that others won't have to go back and figure out which post you're referring to.

12
Before asking a question, check the class FAQs or search the internet to see if the answer is obvious or easy to find.

13
Check the most recent comments before you reply to an older comment, since the issue might have already been resolved or opinions may have changed.

14
Be forgiving. If your classmate makes a mistake, don't badger him or her for it. Just let it go - it happens to the best of us.

15
Run a spelling and grammar check before posting anything to the discussion board. It only takes a

Please include attribution to the **Online Education Blog of Touro College** with this graphic.

5.3 USING DISCUSSION FORUMS EFFECTIVELY

It can be challenging to meaningfully engage students in online forums, but careful design and management of the forums will result in success. Key to success is ensuring that the discussion forums are meaningful and that students understand, and agree with, the benefits of participation.

Participation in forums is higher when it is required and graded. But it is not always feasible to allocate grades, thus the benefits for posting in non-graded discussions must be explicit. For example, create a discussion forum for students to ask questions about an upcoming assignment, encourage them to answer each other's questions and intervene to inform them if they are on the right/wrong track.

In order to avoid last minute posting by students, make the post a two-stage process. Ask students to post an initial answer to the prompt in the first week and then a more substantive response that will be graded in the second week.

Contact students who are not engaging, individually via email or by phone. Some students may lack the confidence to put their ideas in an open discussion forum, consider using private forums that only you and the students sees as a scaffolding mechanism. At the end of the discussion

summarise the main points of the discussion thread towards the end of the period before requesting any final thoughts.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=497#h5p-15

#Openteach Takeaway Resource

In this part, we looked at how to set up and manage effective forums.

You can access a downloadable copy of the material here: Using Discussion Forums.

5.4 TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR DISCUSSION FORUMS

Tools

Standard VLE Tools	The chat or forum tools can be used to create effective discussions. The forum tools allow many different formats, select the one most appropriate to your learning activity.
YouTube	The commenting feature available in Youtube can facilitate a lot of discussion about particular videos and is a very useful feature from a learning perspective.
Meet	(Google) Meet while it does not offer as much functionality as Zoom or Connect it is still a very useful tool for discussion based activities.
slack	Slack is a cloud based tool purposely designed for collaboration that is built for discussion based activities. It can facilitate persistent chat rooms (channels) organized by topic, private groups, and direct messaging.
Glossary	Use a glossary to encourage discussion. Students can comment on each entry and even rate entries, both of which can facilitate "discussion" between learners.

Resources

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:

https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=212#h5p-18

6. FACILITATING COLLABORATION

"In the three modules I studied last year, I was satisfied with tutor – student interaction. Some tutors really nurtured and allowed for group interaction, encouraging a sense of belonging within the class. They also fostered an environment where questions and queries were welcomed"

(Student quoted in [Farrell et. al, 2019, p. 12](#))

In this chapter we will explore the role of collaboration in the context of online teaching and learning. Students are more likely to engage with the course and achieve the learning outcomes when they have interactions with other students both through synchronous activities in the online classroom and asynchronous activities on the virtual learning environment. Collaborative learning involves students working together in small groups toward a joint goal or output ([Mihai](#), 2021). Co-creation of a joint output is at the heart of collaborative activities. Group or team-based activities reinforce social presence in the online course and enable the sharing of skills and the co-construction of knowledge. Collaborative activities can be used effectively to support student engagement in an online course.

What does the literature say?

Group work in an online environment is not the same as in the face-to-face classroom. It requires careful consideration and needs to be contrived, highlighting the importance of the educator in a mediating role (Coker, 2018). Students need clear and practical guidelines to support successful collaboration and larger groups than normal are required as absences can be greater in the online environment (Gómez-Rey et al., 2018; Trammell & LaForge, 2017). The use of collaborative activities will increase student interaction which promotes social presence in the online course and allow an opportunity for students to share experiences (Martin et al., 2019; Meyer & McNeal, 2011; Trammell & LaForge, 2017). The focus needs to be on collaborative rather than cooperative activities to ensure the students interact (Trammell & LaForge, 2017).

Benefits of collaboration

Watch the video below where some of the benefits of collaborative activities are articulated.

1-
Essential skills for the 21st Century

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=107

This video was created by the [Center for the Advancement of Learning (C.A.L.)](#) in the University of the District of Columbia.

6.1 EFFECTIVE PRACTICE FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

While the idea of group work sometimes instils fear in students and educators alike, this need not be the case. There are a number of effective practices that can ensure successful online group work.

Key to successful group work is to ensure:

- the project and deliverables are clearly defined.
- team rules are agreed to and maintained (download a sample team contract).

👉

Planning

- Careful planning and alignment with learning

outcomes can ensure successful group work.

☛

Criteria for success

- Provide explicit criteria for success – check that students understand the goals of the project and how you intend them to be achieved.

☛

Teamwork skills

- Allocate time for the development and management of teamwork skills – ask students to create a team contract right from the start, make this one of the project outcomes.

☛

Interdependence

- Create interdependence – make sure the group project goals necessitate the sharing of knowledge, skills, resources and goals.

Recognise individual contributions

- Ensure individual contributions are recognised. Have an individual as well as a group grade or create a related assignment that captures an individual's learning from the project.

6.2 IDEAS AND EXAMPLES OF COLLABORATIVE ACTIVITIES

In this section, we share some ideas and examples of online collaborative activities that you can try in your practice, these activities can be done using tools within your virtual learning environment or using external web tools.

Create Wikis or Blogs

Ask the groups to design and develop a wiki or blog that defines one or more key concepts from the course, along with links to relevant information sources.

> The Open Psych blog illustrates an online and open pedagogy assignment undertaken by students of an educational psychology module at Dublin City University. Following the open pedagogy principle of empowering students to create and share information, the module team,

Dr. James Brunton @DrjamesBrunton and Megan Gaffney (Dublin City University, Ireland) designed an assignment that supported students to produce a communication that is openly shared with the public. The student-designed resources are available at https://openpsych.home.blog.

Online debate

Select a motion relevant to the course material and divide the class into For and Against. Set up Discussion threads where groups post their opening statements and rebuttals. For large classes add more motions.

Create a collaborative mind map

Ask groups of students to create a mind map of key characteristics of a phenomenon, that they have identified, and that relate to the course material. Here is an example of a collaborative mind map created by participants in the #Openteach course about Eimear's dilemma, we used a tool called MindMup.
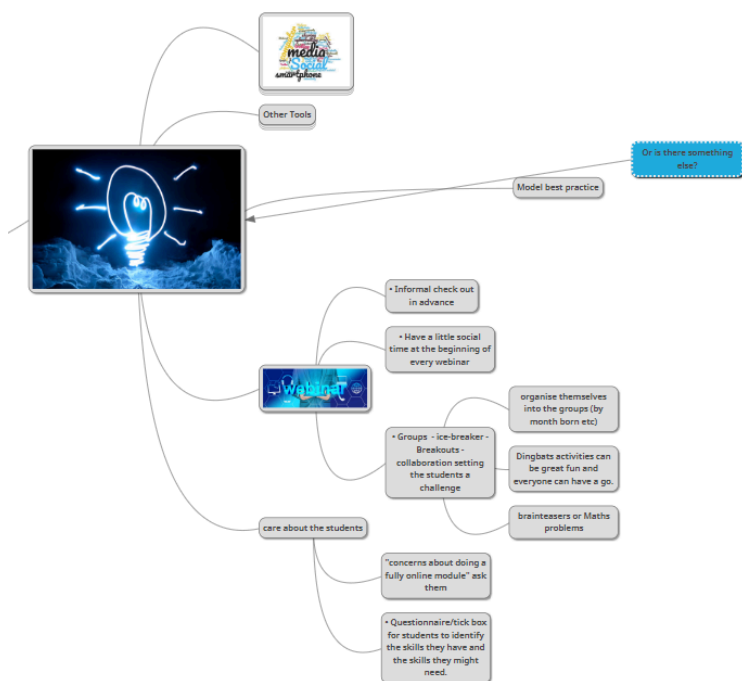
Create a learning artefact

Ask students to develop a video or audio podcast that can be used in future courses as a resource to explain key concepts.

Create a class glossary

Ask students to collaboratively develop a glossary of key terms related to a module topic.

6.3 AINE'S DILEMMA: GROUP ROLE PLAY ACTIVITY

Do you remember Aine's dilemma from the previous chapter? This scenario activity can be done as an online group role play activity and is a good example of an online colloborative activity. In this section we detail the activity plan for this group role play, which you can try this out with your colleagues or students.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=882

In this activity you are required to work with the team members in your group. Your task, as a group:

Choose your group response to Aine's dilemma from the following options:

1. Call the student and try to resolve the issues
2. Pass this issue onto the course or programme manager
3. Tell the other members of the group to get on with the project and ignore the other student

There are three possible role play scenario activities based on your group choice, these are detailed below:

1. Call the student – Activity Role Play

In groups of four, form a team and allocate the following roles:

- Conor, the student
- Áine, the online educator
- Two observers (own names)

Team contract resource: Sample Team Contract

Role play: The activity requires you to act out what would occur in the call between Áine and Conor.

Observer 1 – Coordinator of the group. Obtain agreement of who is who within the team, arrange discussion of the team contract and get all to sign it, set and agree schedule of group work with the team.

Observer 2 – This person takes on a role as an observer of the process. This person should consider what she/he would say if she/he were Áine and create a tick box list. This tick box can used as part of the observation, i.e. is this what actually happened? In addition, the observer should make notes on how the group work element of the project works out, i.e. was the team contract adhered to?

Conor (Student) – You are aggrieved, you expected more support in the form of synchronous classes, and you are unhappy that the educator, Áine, pointed

you to more 'online resources' and 'rubrics' when you complained. There is too much left to the students and Áine, the educator, does not teach you. She runs one tutorial every three weeks, which is far too few as far as you are concerned. For this discussion forum project, you want more instruction on how design factors are implemented in practice in order to be able to weigh them up. You have agreed to this call as you want to give voice to your concerns. You are going to be prepared, you will be armed with all the problems you have identified with this course. You are under pressure at work, you need to get the certification associated with the course, and you have a particularly busy home life at the moment.

Áine (Educator) – Áine hasn't come across this situation before, students are usually happy once they receive a response to their complaints, and they like getting extra resources. Áine is not really sure what this student's problem is. Áine is very unhappy that this seems to have split the group, though she suspects that part of the negativity from other students is to do with their current personal workload. And most of the other students seem to be getting on OK. Áine has reluctantly arranged to call the student, Conor, as she dislikes confrontation.

Suggested timings

Activity	Duration	Outcome
Form the groups	10 minutes	Agree roles and team contract
Prepare for the role play	15 minutes	Individual work, examine #openteach resources and plan what to say
Role Play	15 minutes	Enact the call
Review	15 minutes	Discussion on what happened.

Activity deliverables:

Team Contract, agreed and signed

Role Play video recording

Observers notes

Aines's dilemma **[Áine – Suggested Response](#)**

2. Pass this issue onto the course or programme manager

In groups of four, form a team and allocate the following roles:

- Niall the manager
- Áine the online educator
- Two observers (own names)

Role play: The activity requires you to act out what would occur in the call between Áine and Niall.

Team contract resource: Sample Team Contract

Observer 1 – Coordinator of the group. Obtain agreement of who is who within the team, arrange discussion of the team contract and get all to sign it, set and agree schedule of group work with the team.

Observer 2 – This person takes on a role as an observer of the process. This person should consider what she/he would say if she/he were Áine and create a tick box list. This tick box can used as part of the observation, i.e. is this what actually happened? In addition, the observer should make notes on how the group work element of the project works out, i.e. was the team contract adhered to?

Conor (Student) is aggrieved, he expected more support in the form of synchronous classes and is unhappy that the tutor pointed him to more 'online

resources' and 'rubrics' after the initial complaint. There is too much left to the students and Áine, the educator, does not teach. She runs one tutorial every three weeks, that is far too few as far as Conor is concerned. For this discussion forum project, Conor wants more instruction on how design factors are implemented in practice in order to be able to weigh them up. He will wait until he hears back from Áine, the educator, before he engages with the project and the team.

Niall (Manager) – Áine has asked Niall to deal with one of her students, Conor, who has been using the course forums to complain about the course. Niall is too busy to deal with this issue at the moment, and anyway Áine should deal with it herself. Niall thinks that the best way to approach this is to speak with Áine and help her plan out how she should proceed with Conor. Niall wants to have a few ideas ready and an idea of how they might work out.

Áine (Educator) – Áine hasn't come across this situation before, students are usually happy once they receive a response to their complaints, and they like getting extra resources. Áine is not really sure what this student's problem is and hates confrontation. Most of the other students seem to

be getting on OK and Áine would like to see this issue resolved. Áine has decided to pass this onto her manager Niall, so Áine emailed him and asked him to contact Conor.

Suggested timings

Activity	Duration	Outcome
Form the groups	10 minutes	Agree roles and team contract
Prepare for the role play	15 minutes	Individual work, examine #openteach resources and plan what to say
Role Play	15 minutes	Recorded call
Review	15 minutes	Discussion on what happened.

Activity deliverables:

Team Contract, agreed and signed

Role Play video recording

Observers notes

Aines's dilemma Áine – Suggested Response

3. Tell the other members of the group to get on with the project and ignore the other student

Group work: In groups of four, form a team and allocate the following roles:

- Deirdre the institutional manager
- Áine the online educator
- Two observers (own names)

Role play: The activity requires you to act out what would occur in the call between Áine and Deirdre.

Observer 1 – Coordinator of the group. Obtain agreement of who is who within the team, arrange discussion of the team contract and get all to sign it, set and agree schedule of group work with the team.

Observer 2 – This person takes on a role as an observer of the process. This person should consider what she/he would say if she/he were Áine and create a tick box list. This tick box can used as part of the observation, i.e. is this what actually happened? In addition, the observer should make notes on how

the group work element of the project works out, i.e. was the team contract adhered to?

Conor (Student) is aggrieved, he expected more support in the form of synchronous classes and is unhappy that the tutor pointed him to more 'online resources' and 'rubrics' after the initial complaint. There is too much left to the students, and Áine, the educator, does not teach. She runs one tutorial every three weeks, that is far too few as far as Conor is concerned. For this discussion forum project, Conor wants more instruction on how design factors are implemented in practice in order to be able to weigh them up. He is enraged that Áine has ignored him and told the project group to get on with the project without him. He wrote a letter of complaint to the relevant institutional body to complain about Áine and the course.

Deirdre (Institutional manager) – Deirdre has promised the student that she would look into the situation and get back to him within a few days. Deirdre knows Áine, the educator in question, she does a good job and Deirdre has never heard a complaint before. Deirdre does wonder, though, why Áine chose to ignore the student and encouraged the rest of the project team to move on without him.

Deirdre has arranged a call with her to see how best to deal with the student.

Áine (Educator) – Áine hasn't come across this situation before, students are usually happy once they receive a response to their complaints, and they like getting extra resources. Áine is not really sure what this student's problem is and hates confrontation. As most of the other students seem to be getting on OK Áine told them to move on with the project without Conor. Now Conor has complained to Áine's institutional manager, Deirdre, who has called her in to discuss what can be done about Conor. Áine wants to be prepared for this call as she knows that she is the expert on the ground.

Suggested timings

Activity	Duration	Outcome
Form the groups	10 minutes	Agree roles and team contract
Prepare for the role play	15 minutes	Individual work, examine #openteach resources and plan what to say
Role Play	15 minutes	Recorded call
Review	15 minutes	Discussion on what happened.

Activity deliverables:

Team Contract, agreed and signed

Role Play video recording

Observers notes

Aines's dilemma [Áine – Suggested Response](#)

6.4 TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR COLLABORATION

Tools for collaboration

Click on the links below to access additional tools. All links open in new windows.

A [Twitter](#) chat is a public Twitter conversation around one unique hashtag. This hashtag allows you to follow the discussion and participate in it. Twitter chats are usually recurring and on specific topics to regularly connect people with these interests.

[Flickr](#) is a photo sharing platform and social network where users upload photos for others to see. Students can create and share individual

images or entire collection of images using Flickr.

Slack is a cloud-based tool purposely designed for collaboration that is built for discussion based activities. It can facilitate persistent chat rooms (channels) organized by topic, private groups, and direct messaging. Content, including files, conversations, and people, is all searchable within Slack.

LinkedIn has two main ways to facilitate discussions; the commenting feature on LinkedIn posts and the discussion groups. The amount of expertise that is willingly shared via LinkedIn discussion groups is excellent and literally endless when it comes to topics covered by the discussion groups.

Instagram is a photo and video sharing social networking service. Use this to engage with

students through the media of pictures. Student work can be showcased, educational memories recorded, and unique projects created.

Resources for collaboration

Click on the links below to access additional resources. All links open in new windows.

eLearning Industry :5 Online Group Collaboration Ideas For Your Next eLearning Course

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Learning Solutions: Addicted to virtual classroom breakout rooms? Get help now!

Using Polls : How to increase student engagement in your online course with polls

Using Zoom for Polling: Watch this short video on [how to use Zoom](#) for polling.

#Openteach takeaway resource

In this chapter, we examined how best to implement collaborative activities in an online environment.

You can access a downloadable copy of the #Openteach resource here: [Collaborative activities.](#)

7. SUPPORTING ONLINE STUDENTS

"I think the safe environment is really vital because we all. I know that I would worry if I posted some random thing that I began thinking. I would worry about how that might be perceived. Is it going to sound stupid? Is it going to sound unacademic? Is it going to sound... I think you get what I'm trying to say. There's a certain fear of asking the question. Especially if you don't feel that you're in your safe space because you don't want to feel like you're making a fool of yourself"

(Student quoted in [Farrell et al., 2019, p. 17](#))

So far, in this book, we have examined the importance of establishing social presence, explored how to create interactive online classrooms, and considered how to use effective collaborative activities. We have focused primarily on the challenges faced by online educators. But students new to online learning will also face many obstacles. It is very important that online educators know how to support these students in achieving their goals. In this chapter, we will look at strategies that can be used to support online students.

What does the literature say?

Effective and holistic student support plays an important role in online student engagement and successful study completion. The literature indicates that online students are more vulnerable to attrition and have typically lower course completion (Woodley & Simpson, 2014). First year is the most vulnerable period, when students are most likely to withdraw (Jones, 2008). Therefore an important element in the structures of student support is a strategic approach to the orientation of new students (Brunton, Brown, Costello, Farrell, & Mahon 2017; Brunton, Brown, Costello, & Farrell, 2018; Brunton, Brown, Costello, & Farrell, 2019).

An engaged student is typically a successful student. Online student engagement is a complex phenomenon which is influenced by socio-cultural, structural, and psychosocial factors (Kahu, 2013). Student engagement is influenced by psychosocial factors such as peer community, an engaging online teacher, and confidence and by structural factors such as lifeload and course design (Farrell & Brunton, 2020). Further, feeling that they belong to a community has an impact on the learning experiences of online students (Buck, 2016; O' Shea et al., 2015). Establishing social presence and strong levels of course interaction support the development of a sense of community and belonging in students (Buck, 2016; Veletsianos & Navarrete, 2012).

In DCU Connected's online courses, the following

approach to supporting online student engagement is taken, as outlined in Farrell & Brunton (2020):

Access	• Open access admission policy • Flexible progression routes • Student chooses credit load to align to lifeload
Strategic approach to transition	• Pre-entry: Online socialisation courses, welcome emails and phone calls • On-entry: On campus and/or online orientation: including introduction to their programme, socialisation with staff and students, campus tour, overview of university support services, etc. • New student mentor
Support	• Programme team support- Check-in emails and phone calls to identify at-risk students, programme support hub on VLE • Module tutor support- synchronous online seminars (evenings and weekends), asynchronous discussion forums, email and phone support • Institutional supports-library, student services, careers
Skills development	• Online training on the use of the VLE, online classrooms, online library resources • Study skills instruction embedded in year one modules • Additional study skills online seminars throughout the year

Learning design	• Modules designed for online delivery, following the ABC and Quality Matters approaches (Young & Perović, 2018; Quality Matters, 2019) • Interactive learning resources, multimedia which are informed by usability and accessibility standards • Teacher presence established through welcome video, photo, approach to facilitation • Synchronous and asynchronous interaction
Assessment	• Programmatic approach to assessment and feedback, aligned to learning outcomes and learning resources • Consist approach to presentation of detailed assignment briefs • Three week turnaround on assignment feedback using consistent, detailed feedback forms • Variety of assessment approaches • Group work to facilitate sense of belonging

7.1 THE PEDAGOGY OF CARE

The following quote from Maha Bali highlights the importance of care in how we support students and design learning experiences:

> "Sometimes, the most valuable thing we can offer our students is genuine care for them, their well-being, their happiness. Not just their grades. Not just their learning. But their whole selves." ([Bali, 2015](#)).

As Bali argues, we can show care for students in a variety of ways; in how we design the course, in how we offer support through our teaching, and in how we interact with students. Simple practices such as asking students how they are doing or feeling shows care. ([Bali, 2020](#)). Bali's perspective on a pedagogy of care resonates with us during the Covid-19 pandemic as, in the face of uncertainty, grief, anxiety and fear, showing care for our students, our teachers, and our communities holds us together.

In this video, Dave Cormier and Sundi Richard talk about pedagogies of care, thinking about the world through your students' eyes while also taking care of yourself. This video comes from the Online Learning in a Hurry series.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=910

7.2 EDUCATOR AND STUDENT PERSPECTIVES

> "So, at the start I found it a very lonely process, I was very unsure about whether I was doing things correctly or not, so the more I did it, the more I gained experience, to finding it very enjoyable and a very interactive space to work."
> (Educator quoted in Farrell et al., 2019, p. 25)

Educator perspectives

Meet our online educators Ann Whyte, Dr Barry Wheelan and Dr Sinead Eccles from the Open Education Unit (OEU) in DCU.

In this short video, these experienced educators outline how they support online students.

Tips from the Coalface

#Supporting online students

#OpenTeach

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://oer.pressbooks.pub/ openteach/?p=574

Meet the students

"There's certain tutors that will ask you, like if we're going to have our next tutorial what are you struggling with? What do you want me to prioritise?"

"Some tutors just read PowerPoint presentations for 2 hrs, this is very boring"

"Often you get the impression you are annoying the tutor by asking questions"

"In the three modules I studied last year, I was satisfied with tutor-student interaction. Some tutors really nurtured and allowed for group interaction, encouraging a sense of belonging within the class. They also fostered an environment where questions and queries were welcomed"

(Students quoted in Farrell et al., 2019, pp. 11-16)

7.3 HOW TO SUPPORT ONLINE STUDENTS

A multifaceted approach

In order to engage students successfully they require:

- Pastoral support
- Technical assistance
- A managed approach
- And expert knowledge

> **Key to success is identifying the students' needs and ensuring your interactions with students meet those needs.**

👉

Guidelines

- Design a set of guidelines for engagement at the beginning of the course, and obtain students' agreement for those guidelines, or better yet design the guidelines with your students.
- Keep to your guidelines and respond to students in a timely fashion.

☛

Digital Literacy

- Assess your students' digital literacy skills.
- Provide links to institutional supports for commonly used tools.
- Create short screencasts on how to use the additional tools you adopt for use in the course.

☛

Monitor Progress

- Monitor student progress and contact students who are falling behind.

- Remember that online students may have many competing interests such as work and family.
- Flexibility is important, in so far as it can be achieved within the confines of the course.

☛

Appropriate technology

- Use appropriate technology to support the learning activities.
- For example, use collaborative tools, such as Google Docs and collaborative mind maps, for collaborative activities.

☛

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

In order to meet the different needs of students, online courses often embed the [three Universal Design for Learning (UDL)](#) principles
(link opens in a new window).

You can echo these principles by providing multiple means of:

1. Engagement
    – For example, include activities that allow different
    levels of engagement through goal setting.
2. Representation
    – For example, explicitly link new concepts to prior
    learning.
3. Action and expression
    – For example, allow students to upload assignments in
    their choice of media.

7.4 ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE STUDENTS ENGAGEMENT

> **"I think posting a question or, you know, put up a notice, you know the tutorial is going to be in two weeks' time on whatever date it is and asking a question, here's what we'll be discussing and I'd like you to come in with a question or I'd like you to look at a particular aspect. So, they're actually coming to the tutorial with a question or a remark or an opinion in mind and I think that helps. Then I would ask them one by one to contribute speaking, not just in the chat box. So, I would expect them to have something done on a topic before the tutorial and I found that really helps."**

(Educator quoted in [Farrell et al., 2019, p. 23](#))

Keeping students engaged

There can be an initial flurry of activity at the beginning of a course, both from students and educators.

It is essential to reignite student interest at regular intervals during the course.

Key to keeping students engaged is regular opportunities for interaction and feedback.

👉

Monitor understanding

- Monitor student understanding at regular intervals during the course and adjust your teaching accordingly.
- For example, use short quizzes to capture student understanding of concepts.

👉

Novel activities

- Create novel activities such as online debates or online collaborative mind mapping exercises.

Feedback opportunities

- Provide activities that ensure effective feedback can be sought and received.
- For example, ask students to submit a draft assignment along with one or two questions about where they require feedback for the final draft.
- Provide individualised constructive feedback that points the student towards further information.

Teaching Strategies

- Use teaching strategies that are effective for the particular discipline and content.
- For example, use synchronous live chats to establish students' current understanding of a concept they have just covered.

Use groupwork

- It can be beneficial to have a group project midway through the course.
- Prior notice of this will help students focus on engaging with learning materials early on in the course.
- However, there are challenges associated with collaborative activities which you need to bear in mind.

An interactive H5P element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=580#h5p-16

#Openteach Takeaway Resource

In this chapter, we looked at how to support online students.

You can access a downloadable copy of the material here: Supporting Students.

7.5 TOOLS AND RESOURCES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS

Tools for supporting students

Phone: A phone call to a student can be very effective in getting their attention and showing how much you care about their progress.

Email: Use email when you want to communicate with a student outside the confines of the VLE.

Discussion forum: Asynchronous communication with students can be within the module discussion forums. The forum tools within a VLE allow many different formats, select the one most appropriate to your learning activity.

Live chat: Use a live chat feature for synchronous messaging with a student who is currently online. This tool can also be used for discussions amongst the whole class group.

Annotations: Use video, audio or written annotations on students' draft work as feedback.

Quizzes: Use quiz tools to create quizzes that check student understanding and give automatic feedback.

YouTube: The commenting feature available in YouTube can facilitate a lot of discussion about particular videos and is a very useful feature from a learning perspective.

Slack: Slack is a cloud-based tool purposely designed for collaboration that is built for discussion-based activities. It can facilitate persistent chat rooms (channels) organized by topic, private groups, and direct messaging.

Glossary: Use a glossary to encourage discussion. Students can comment on each entry and even rate entries, both of which can facilitate 'discussion' between learners.

Resources for supporting students

Teaching in a digital age (BCCAMPUS OPEN EDUCATION): [Online collaborative learning](#)

Topclass: [Eight new ideas for engaging online students](#)

JISC: [Guide to supporting online students](#)

8. EIGHTEEN ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING ONLINE

In this chapter, we present eighteen activity ideas for teaching online crowdsourced from the participants in the first run of the #Openteach course in March 2020. The participants have generously consented to sharing their ideas for activities they have designed for teaching online in this book.

Photo by AbsolutVision on Unsplash

Overview of activities

The activities are designed for different engagement types: student support, collaboration, synchronous, asynchronous and icebreaker to promote presence at the start of an online course. Each activity gives a full plan so they you can integrate into your teaching practice if you wish.

Activity	Presence	Supporting online students	Collaborati
8.1 Icebreaker: 2 minute bio	x		
8.2 Icebreaker: 2 truths and a lie	x		
8.3 Icebreaker: Leadership images	x		
8.4 Icebreaker: Time Travel	x		
8.5 Student support: Hanging on through the Midway Blues		x	
8.6 Student support: Icon: I can		x	
8.7 Student support: Virtual cafe		x	
8.8 Synchronous: The Trolley problem			x
8.9 Synchronous: group concept mapping			x
8.10 Collaboration: Online mind mapping			x
8.11 Collaboration: Web quest Jigsaw			x
8.12 Collaboration: Let's talk about mental health			x
8.13 Collaboration: Collective creation of course materials			x
8.14 Collaboration: Teaching Values			x

8.15 Collaboration: Virtual ethics committee			x
8.16 Asynchronous: Teacher reflections on their challenges as Irish Language Teachers			
8.17 Asynchronous: Online role play			x
8.18 Collaboration: mathematics in everyday life			x

8.1 ICEBREAKER: 2 MINUTE BIO

Contributor	Carrie Archer
Title	Icebreaker: 2 minute bio
Aim	To break the ice and build teacher and student presence.
Learning Outcomes	Facilitate opportunities to engage learners using multiple means of engagement, representation and action and expression.
Timing	10 mins
Activity Description	Teacher will post a 2 min bio style introduction of themselves 1 week in advance of first online class. Students can respond using any format: Video, text, audio, images.
Tools	Moodle Discussion forum; YouTube or Vimeo (if student response is longer that 2 mins allowance in Moodle forum); audio tools in Moodle
Resources	Moodle; internet access; model video uploaded by facilitator

Instructions	Watch the bio video of the facilitator. Respond to the video by posting your own mini biography (2 mins long or 150 words max). Follow the prompts provided in the video and include: Your context; what you've enjoyed about the course so far; what you hope to learn in this module; 1 fun fact about yourself. Respond in whatever format you choose (audio, written, comic strip, video, images, emoticons)Respond to posts by other participants on the course using any media you choose
Feedback	Facilitator will respond to all posts in a timely manner and encourage others to do the same and to engage in conversation. Informal and conversational approach to model tone of the course and expected interactions.

8.2 ICEBREAKER: 2 TRUTHS AND A LIE

Contributor	Nataliya Romanyatova
Title	Famous Managers-2 Truths a lie game
Context	A business English module
Aims	To brainstorm on the famous managers and their biographies. Continue creating a supportive community of autonomous learners.
Learning Outcomes	Facilitate online communication and discussion forums to engage students in learning about famous managers, their lives and creating audio artefacts. Create a supportive community of autonomous learners using digital pedagogy.
Timing	Approximately 30 minutes
Activity Description	It is one of the asynchronous warm-up activities that will run for the first week of a new Module, allowing students to continue building their knowledge and vocabulary of the Business English and develop a learning community.

Tools	Moodle discussion forum tool
Resources	A model answer for the 2 Truths + a lie game.· A resource which outlines the netiquette of posting on forums in the course. Teacher online video tutorial for making audio posts via Moodle VLE. Reading and video material about famous managers.
Instructions	Which of the five famous managers do you find the most interesting and impressive, Akio Morita, Jack Welch, Steve Jobs, Meg Whitman or Carlos Ghosn? Choose one of them or any famous manager of your choice and post an audio riddle. In your riddle tell three interesting facts about the manager you chose. Two of your facts should be true and one not. Don't tell or write the name of your manager. Listen to two other audio posts and reply by answering which fact was not true. At the end of this activity when everyone in the group posted their responses, comment on the replies to your riddle and write the names of the students who guessed right.
Feedback	The course facilitator will give individual written/audio and whole group video feedback by replying to students' posts on the Moodle forum following a high touch approach.

8.3 ICEBREAKER: LEADERSHIP IMAGES

Contributor	Paul McGuckin
Title	What is Leadership? Share an image that you feel is a good representation of leadership.
Aim	This is an introductory icebreaker at the start of a leadership module. This performs the dual tasks of asking the students to explain what leadership means to them and also aims to build an online community within the class cohort.
Learning Outcomes	Facilitate students in the use of discussion forums to share and discuss ideas.
Timing	30 minutes
Activity Description	Asynchronous activity which will take place early in the module – immediately after module and tutor introductions and general housekeeping. Students will post a thread to the discussion forum and comment on at least two other posts by classmates. Gives students the opportunity to interact.
Tools	Discussion forum on VLE
Resources	A resource about creative commons license. Students will also be provided links to sources of creative commons licensed images – for Unsplash.com. A model answer will be posted to the discussion forum.
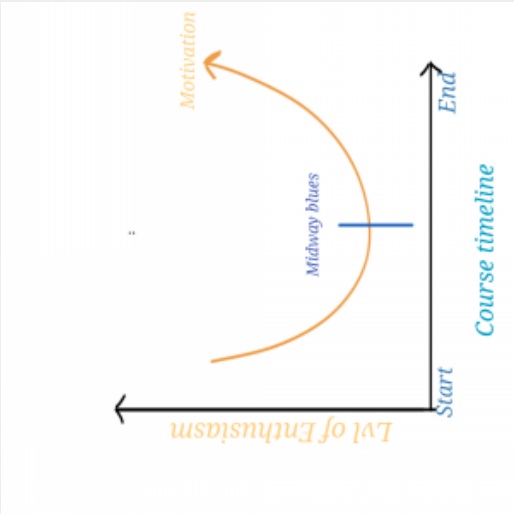
Instructions	Find an image that represents leadership. Share this image on a new thread on the forum: What is Leadership- Icebreaker Discussion. Explain why you chose this image. Comment on at least two other images that have been posted by other students. If you are one of the first people to post your image – return to this activity later in the week and be sure to comment on other people's contributions.
Feedback	The module facilitator will monitor the discussion forum contributions. Commenting on student interactions and following up directly by email with non-engagers.

8.4 ICEBREAKER: TIME TRAVEL

Contributor	Tricia Nisbet
Title	Time Travel
Aim	To break the ice at start of new course in order to build a rapport with both peers and teacher. To encourage a sense of belonging and participation within the class.
Learning Outcomes	After completing this activity, the student will: – Establish interaction with other learners and teacher. Become more familiar with discussion forums that engage students in the learning process.
Timing	15-20 minutes for students to complete their own task and then comment on other learners' posts.
Activity Description	This asynchronous activity will run for first week of course, allowing students time to familiarise themselves with both the activity and discussion forum in a flexible time frame.
Tools	The activity uses the discussion forum tool in the selected VLE.

Resources	Welcome video, written instructions, discussion board and netiquette outline which students must agree to before continuing with activity.
Instructions	If you had the ability to Time Travel: – Where would you go? Which time period? Is there something or someone you would like to see? Why? Think creatively and post your answers to the discussion board. After you complete your own make a brief comment on all classmates posts. Remember respond with respect! Have fun!
Feedback	Feedback to learners will consist of teacher replying to all student comments on post. Evaluation can be measured by observing the participation, enjoyment and engagement of students in the activity.

8.5 STUDENT SUPPORT: HANGING ON THROUGH THE MIDWAY BLUES

Contributor	Prajakta Parag Girme
Title	Hanging on through the Midway Blues.

Aim	To check on/facilitate student engagement halfway through the module.
Learning Outcomes	Reassurance that everyone is in the same boat (loss of enthusiasm) Renewed interest in online learning, motivation for coping with the course while boosting interaction, communication skills. Bringing the essential human element to teaching and learning online.
Timing	30 minutes. (10 minutes for the discussion forum, 10 minutes in the breakout room and 10 minutes for a collective session.)

Activity Description	Two options for choosing the topic:
	Academic: Topic is relevant to the course (like an assignment feedback) however, the discussion is casual like a coffee meeting (that sounds fun and more people will join) practical discussion of students dealing with stress of online learning, motivations and self-evaluation. Non-academic: Topic is chosen through discussion forums in Loop before the scheduled Zoom meeting (current affairs, common topics; health, fitness, exercise, food, music, etc.). This will assure engagement of students who are avoiding academic topics for the fear that they are the only ones lagging on the course. For Academic sessions: breakout room activities that are general enough to include students at every level of learning. For Non-academic sessions: current topics with fun quizzes, etc. The only purpose is interaction with classmates and installing a sense of belonging.
Tools	Discussion forums, Zoom (breakout rooms), polls.
Resources	A netiquette resource as well as one for zoom usage for beginners.

Instructions	Take a poll on the discussion forum and decide on a topic (or multiple topics and assign different breakout rooms according to student preference of topic.) Have fun, interact and be inspired to continue with renewed enthusiasm.
Feedback	Tutors typically only use this as means to casually interact and motivate students without academic pressures and deadlines. (Think school picnics)

8.6 STUDENT SUPPORT: ICON: I CAN

Contributor	Denis Bates
Title	Icon: I can
Aim	To enable students to familiarise themselves with the features and functions, specifically the menu icons, of the VLE (e.g. Zoom) so they can be self-reliant.
Learning Outcomes	Students will be familiar with Zoom Students will be familiar with icons relating to core functions and most additional functions of Zoom Students will understand how to troubleshoot common problems encountered in Zoom using relevant icons
Timing	Initial mentor led tutorial session of 50 minutes Then 5 days for student self-learning before the next session

Activity Description	This activity will combine a synchronous mentor led training session followed by an asynchronous student self-learning period. By means of a scenario, students will be guided through a hands-on experience of the icons for features and functions of the VLE Students will be assigned simple tasks and short scenarios during the first session and the week to follow Towards the end of the session, students will use the breakout room function to discuss the potential of the video conferencing platform, troubleshoot problems and compile feedback through an agreed rapporteur.
Tools	Zoom help files; tutorials on YouTube Mentor provided task sheets with a checklist of icon related tasks for completion
Resources	VLE help files and YouTube resources Mentor available by email or Zoom messaging

Instructions	You are required to participate in the initial online Zoom training session.
	You are expected to attend for the full session, to participate actively and to contribute to the activity as provided.
	Collaborating with fellow students in assigned breakout rooms, you will complete a task, elect a rapporteur and compile a brief summary of outcomes to be submitted via the whiteboard
	Collaborating with fellow students, you will then conduct at least two self-organised Zoom sessions during the 5 days between the first and second online mentor led sessions.
	Please contact the mentor by email or via the link on the VLE portal if you want to comment or request assistance.
	You will receive a reply within 24 hours of your message being sent.

8.7 STUDENT SUPPORT: VIRTUAL CAFE

Contributor	Trevor Clohessy
Title	Bi-Weekly Discussion Café on Microsoft Teams – class size n = 30
Aim	To provide students with an open forum to discuss aspects relating to the course such as weekly discussion items or project assignments.
Learning Outcomes	Facilitate online communication and discussion between students to engage them in learning. Create a supportive environment where students can use the virtual café as a sounding board and to gain feedback on their understanding of a topic.
Timing	1 hour max
Activity Description	The synchronous activity will commence in week 2 of the module and continue on a bi-weekly basis.
Tools	Microsoft Teams and Moodle and Polls Plugin
Resources	An initial ice breaking session will be conducted in Week 1 of the module to onboard the students to the VLE and nuances of Microsoft Teams.

Instructions	Details and instructions on how to use the VLE will also be provided in a video on Moodle.
Feedback	The chat, video and polls functionality of Microsoft Teams will be used in order to elicit student feedback.

8.8 SYNCHRONOUS: THE TROLLEY PROBLEM

Contributor	Isabelle Courtney
Title	The Trolley problem breakout activity
Aim	To maintain social presence and facilitate collaborative learning by introducing students to the breakout room.
Learning Outcomes	Students will be able to: Collaborate with a smaller group of classmates in an online environment. Use the whiteboard feature to annotate group discussion points. Present the main findings of their group session to the entire class.
Timing	The activity will take **40 mins** total: **2 mins** video tutorial on joining the breakout room and using the whiteboard function **20 mins** breakout room discussion **10 mins** present and discuss with entire class **8 mins** to post 200 words on the VLE discussion board

Activity Description	This synchronous activity will take place early in the module (second lecture) it will build on any icebreaker activities and will allow students time to get used to using the breakout room and collaborative whiteboard function.
Tools	Zoom/Zoom breakout rooms & collaborative whiteboard Discussion board of VLE
Resources	A video tutorial on how to use whiteboard in breakout roomhttps://blogs.otago.ac.nz/zoom/breakout-sessions/how-to-use-a-whiteboard-in-a-breakout-room/The Trolley Problem link shown prior to the session

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here:
https://oer.pressbooks.pub/openteach/?p=1132

8.9 SYNCHRONOUS: GROUP CONCEPT MAPPING

Contributor	Valesca Lima
Title	Concept map
Aim	Help students to collaboratively connect concepts in the field of International Relations
Learning Outcomes	At the end of the activity, student's will be able connect new concepts in International Relations to already internalized ideas of governance
Timing	This activity will be performed in the last 15 minutes of the class.
Activity Description	Students will be given a central concept (i.e. supranational institutions). From that concept, students will connect these concepts to previous concepts studies in the previous class (i.e. governance). The students will graphically map in groups of three how those two topics interconnect.
Tools	This activity uses a whiteboard online space and synchronous chat space.
Resources	Students will be given background knowledge on how to construct concept maps and their purpose for this activity.

Instructions	Think about the concept of supranational institutions. From this word, create branches of interrelated ideas that connects to supranational institutions. In group, discuss what concepts are related and expand the map with new concepts and ideas. The final map is shared as a picture in the class chat page and also submitted directly to the instructor.
Feedback	The instructor will give feedback by commenting on students maps.

8.10 COLLABORATION: ONLINE MIND MAPPING

Contributor	Orla O'Grady Amet
Title	Mind map on the Elements of Graphic Design
Aim	To allow learners the opportunity to collectively reflect on their learning in relation to the elements of graphic design (previous series of classes), using word and image
Learning Outcomes	To discuss the elements of graphic design, with reference to relevant examples.
Timing	30 minutes
Activity Description	This is an asynchronous activity. It is a task given during a set of 9 classes, which each have looked in detail at an element of Graphic Design.
Tools	https://www.mindmup.com/ A mind map created by the tutor on the above website. Link will be given to learners to access the mind map.

Resources	Slides from each week's class, including hyperlinks to relevant Youtube videos. Freestock image websites, behance.com. Support document on referencing. Support document on netiquette in relation to posting and taking part in the course online.
Instructions	Following each of the first 8 classes of the elements of graphic design, you are asked to add an image of a piece of graphic design to the Mindmup and add a comment about it in relation to the element spoken about each week. Use the Mindmup as an opportunity to explore the element. Look for examples where that element is used effectively/ineffectively. Let us know why you think this too. Please reference your chosen image.
Feedback	This Mindmup will be looked at as a group in the final class. Students will be encouraged to choose one image that stands out to them and say why it stand out for them. Following this, overall feedback will be given by the tutor to the group.

8.11 COLLABORATION: WEB QUEST JIGSAW

Contributor	Robert Hickey
Title	Web quest Jigsaw
Aim	To introduce students to the concept of triad working groups, and the power of sharing the workload, with a view to utilising teamwork throughout a module.
Learning Outcomes	To complete a small group exercise using Google Docs. Familiarise yourself with the concept of (triad) teamwork. Explore methods of active learning in an online environment
Timing	2 hours
Activity Description	Each student is assigned to a triad group via a breakout room in the live lecture. Group members communicate and discuss how to split up and complete their allocated task during the live 2 our lesson. Populating the Google doc as they chat in the breakout room.
Tools	VLE for sharing links and documents. One Google Doc for all students to fill in. Live lecture tool such as Zoom or Adobe Connect.

Resources	Link to a Google Doc template for all students to populate with their content. Link to the live lesson on Zoom or similar.
Instructions	Within your allocated triad group, complete and fill in your assigned section of this class Google Doc. Follow the instructions as outlined in the Google Doc. **https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rfYLC5oYUfnyZMsrocCGX9-RXKKyFP0N/view?usp=sharing**
Feedback	Each triad will receive feedback during and after completing their online exercise. The facilitator will keep an eye on the group work by reviewing the live Google Doc during the lesson, and a reflective discussion will take place in the next live lesson.

8.12 COLLABORATION: LETS TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Contributor	Yohanca Diaz
Title	Lets talk about mental health

Aim	To collectively reflect on the meaning of Mental Health
Learning Outcomes	To practice critical thinking by facilitating an online discussion on Mental Health. To build a "Wellness Toolbox" for students to access when needed.
Timing	Mind mapping 15 minutes. Mental health definition and questions 10 minutes. Debate on what works for you to keep positive mental health and collating responses 30 minutes.
Activity Description	This synchronous activity will run on the first week of the Mental Health Awareness QQI 6 after introducing ourselves. It will allow students to think about their mental health and what can they do if they are feeling a bit overwhelmed. The "Wellness Toolbox" will contain activities that students identified themselves and can always access them.
Tools	Microsoft teams Kialo Edu, Powerpoint, YouTube videos – How to practice emotional hygiene (follow up video after class).
Resources	HSE website for tips on how to promote a positive mental health

Instructions	Using Kialo Edu we will explore – is Mental Health a positive or negative term? Students will record their responses. Responses will be mixed. After the debate on the positive or negative term, the definition of Mental Health will be presented and discussed. For the second part, students should respond
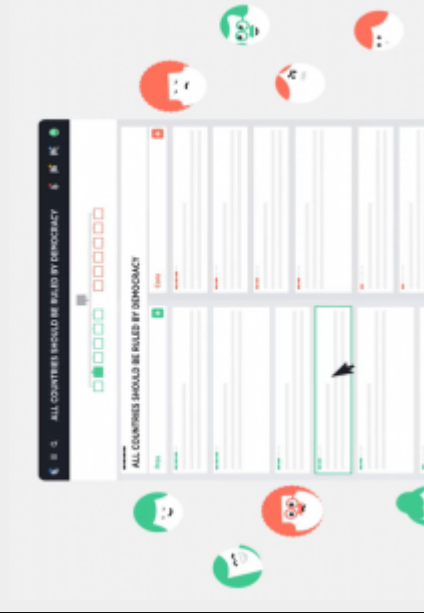
to – What do you do to keep a positive mental health / what works for you? Responses will be collated and will be posted in our Moodle for students to access their "Wellness tools" in the "Toolbox" in future.

Develop a "wellness toolbox" to deal with depression

Come up with a list of things that you can do for a quick mood boost. The more "tools" for coping with depression, the better. Try and implement a few of these ideas each day, even if you're feeling good.

1. Spend some time in nature
2. List what you like about yourself
3. Read a good book
4. Watch a funny movie or TV show
5. Take a long, hot bath
6. Take care of a few small tasks
7. Play with a pet
8. Talk to friends or family face-to-face
9. Listen to music
10. Do something spontaneous

| Feedback | The student-generated content on promoting positive mental health will be posted by the facilitator on Moodle, this, in turn, will allow the student to apply this knowledge in real-life scenarios. |

8.13 COLLABORATION: COLLECTIVE CREATION OF COURSE MATERIALS

Contributor	Gennady Egorov
Title	Collective creation of course materials
Aim	This module is available at the end of the course. Its purpose is to strengthen the text analysis skills acquired in previous modules, to facilitate the search and selection of texts relevant to the proposed topic, and to enable students to engage in academic discussion.
Learning Outcomes	By completing this module, students will broaden their awareness of the corpus of texts from the field of study, improve their skills in text analysis and will also be able to use the Moodle database as a tool for orderly collecting material and teamwork.
Timing	2 weeks
Activity Description	Students independently search for materials on a given topic and place them in a database, and then comment on each other's work.
Tools	Moodle Database with the comments enabled. Discussion forum.

Resources	Throughout the course, students worked with a large number of written sources, which will guide their independent search in books and the Internet. Content description of the topic and principles of search and selection of quotations are given in the course. This module provides a forum to discuss issues and ideas that have emerged in the search for materials. Activity in the forum is optional and not assessed.
Instructions	To receive a grade on a topic, each student must place at least one self-finding quote with a total length of 1 to 3 thousand characters in the database. The database entry should contain the source, the quote itself, a link to the source on the Internet, if any, and a comment. In the comment, the student should explain why this quote was chosen and what ideas important for the course it illustrates. After creating the entry, a student can see the quotes posted by other participants. The authorship of the recordings is hidden from students. Each student should comment on any two entries by either acknowledging or disputing the proposal to include them in the course materials.
Feedback	After the work is done, the teacher gives a comment to each entry. A general overview of the group's work is to be given on the forum.

8.14 COLLABORATION: TEACHING VALUES

Contributor	Joerdis Weilandt
Title	Teaching Values You can see it implemented here: **https://www.opendigped.de/flo-ic/**
Aim	The participant in our online course can discern which pedagogical aspects they care about in teaching and therefore wish to implement into their online courses
Learning Outcomes	After the completion of all three steps in the activity, the participant will have reflected on his/ her/ zer pedagogical choices for online courses and take away a written piece of communication that the can incorporated into the syllabus.
Timing	It will take the participant about 2 hours to complete all three steps in the activity.
Activity Description	This multiple-step activity will be part of the Module: *Working with the Online Learner* in an online faculty PD course on online teaching, allowing the participants to interact with each other during the process of articulating their teaching values. Step 1: Participant drag pedagogy cards into appropriate category. Step 2: Participants reflect on choice made in step 1. Step 3: Participants write letter to their online students to become part of the online course syllabus

Tools	For this activity, the following things were used: pictures from Public Domain picture repository: svgsilh.comonline picture editor: canva.comself-hosted website: wordpress.orgH5P interactive content creator plugin: h5p.org
Resources	pictures of pedagogy cards by Jiscdesignstudiomodel letters to students
Instructions	See the instructions for all 3 steps in the H5P I created for this activity here https://www.opendigped.de/flo-ic/
Feedback	Instructor Feedback is planned for both Step 2 (the optional Etherpad entries) and Step 3 The Letter to the Online Student, but will need to be handled in accordance to the nature of the submissions. It will include details from the facilitators' teaching practice .Since another portion of the Module the above referenced activity is part of relates to proactive and inclusive planning of online courses following principles such as the Universal Design for Learning, the facilitators will refer to some of those principles in the feedback they are giving on the letters to students (for instancing highlighting the importance of considering language, font and font size, text on graphics, tone, voice, colour choice, document formats, descriptions for graphics and visual elements

8.15 COLLABORATION: VIRTUAL ETHICS COMMITTEE

Contributor	Moira Maguire
Title	The virtual Research Ethics Committee
Aim	To explore research ethics in practical contexts. To encourage learners to interact meaningfully online.
Learning Outcomes	To apply ethical principles to decision making in research. To explore ways to design ethical research.
Timing	This is a substantial activity that contributes significant to a module learning outcome. Ten days will be given to complete the preparation and discussion.
Activity Description	The students are required to work together to apply ethical principles to review a short ethics 'application.' Students can only access the applications once the preparatory work is complete to encourage deeper, prepared responses. The students will be divided in to groups of 6 of less to form several virtual Ethics Committees. Each committee will work together on a separate forum and then post their decision and feedback to the main board. This activity will contribute significantly to the delivery of the Research Ethics component of a Research Methods module on a Blended programme. The students will already have met face-to-face. I have used the Gernsbacher (n.d.) principles to guide the design of this activity: Divide and Conquer; Direct Traffic, Assign Actions and Avoid Parachuting. Following Lieberman (2019), I have given a longer time window to encourage quality and depth of response.

Tools	The Discussion Forum on Moodle. To facilitate engagement, earners will be divided into groups of no more than 6 and separate fora set up for each group. Short scenarios (in both written (< 500 words) and short video form) that outline proposed research studies.
Resources	Short screencast (10 mins) that highlights the key ethical principles and how they can be practically applied. A review template including DkIT Ethics Principles and Ethics Checklist.Guide to netiquette, Online Chapter on Research Ethics for Undergraduates https://eprints.dkit.ie/328/List Agreed guide to netiquette(agreed earlier in the course)

Instructions	You have been allocated to group (you will have had an email letting you know which group you have been allocated to). You and the rest of the group are all members of a Virtual Ethics Committee. To prepare for your role you should view the short screencast. This considers how we use the ethical principles to guide decisions in research. You should also read the chapter 'Doing the right thing: A guide to Ethics for Undergraduate Researchers'.
	Once you have completed the preparatory work, you should be able to open the 'Ethics Applications'. Please not, this folder will only become available once you have completed the preparatory tasks. These applications describe proposed research studies that are being submitted to this committee for ethical approval. Your task is to consider one these proposals in the light of the ethical principles you have learned about and decide whether to approve or not. If you are in Group A, you will consider Application A, Group B will consider Application B and so on. Use the Ethics principles and Ethics Checklist to help you to do this.
	Your Committee will discuss your application in the appropriate discussion forum (A, B or C). Remember group A should use Discussion forum A and so on.
	Please start by posting an individual response to each of the scenario. If another member of the group has posted first, please post your response as a reply. This means that all responses will be part of a single thread and the discussion can be easily followed without having to move in and out of different threads.
	Your response should identify any good ethical aspects and also identify any problems. You should say whether you would approve or not. You should ensure that you post before midnight on Wednesday [date] to ensure that your group will have time to engage with each other. Then read the other posts. You should come to a decision, as a committee, on whether to approve

the study or not. If there are different views on this, discuss, using the forum, and try to reach a consensus. Explain why you would approve or reject and respond to the points made by the other group members.

It is important to give the reasons for your decision. As a group, you should agree some feedback that would allow the researcher to address the ethical issues. This can be bullet points but should be agreed between you. Use the forum to make and respond to suggestions.

Once this has been agreed, one of you should be nominated to post this response to the main discussion forum on behalf of your group. Please make sure this happens before midnight on Saturday [date].

Once you have posted your decision and feedback, you should review the posts the other groups have made. Comment on at least one other by midnight Monday [date].

Feedback	Learners will provide feedback to each other in the course of the task. I will monitor the discussions and prompt and encourage as appropriate. I will also provide clarification if necessary. In particularly, I will ensure that I encourage and reinforce constructive online interactions. If learners don't contribute, I will contact them privately via email and see if there are any issues that can be resolved. Once the task is complete, I will post general feedback on all the ethics applications**.**

8.16 ASYNCHRONOUS: TEACHER REFLECTIONS ON THEIR CHALLENGES AS IRISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

Contributor	Ailín Ní Chonchúir
Title	Teacher reflections on their challenges as Irish Language Teachers.
Aim	To allow teachers at the start of a course to reflect on their main challenges.
Learning Outcomes	Setting the Scene: This is the first section of the first module in a teacher training course on how to teach languages. The target group are teaching Irish in adult and community settings but have not had an opportunity before to learn about teaching languages and may not have any formal teaching qualification. This first module is called The Language Teacher and it is divided in 6 sections (i) my challenges (ii) my training needs (iii) beliefs and traits in language teaching (iv) role of language teacher (v) methods. The activity in this assignment is the activity cycle pertaining to the first section – 'My Challenges'. Outcomes: Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on the challenges they have in their settings as Irish language teachers, they will share those challenges with co-participants and have an opportunity to collaborate with others on their main challenge.
Timing	30 minutes

Activity Description	Course participants will view videos as a pre-task aid to reflection. They will then access a Padlet with challenges that have been documented by other teachers. They will watch a screencast of the tutor making practical suggestions about those challenges. They will then reflect on their own challenges and write a 600-word reflection (or audio / video reflection). Finally, they will be able to collaborate with others through sharing their challenge on a Padlet wall and commenting on other participants' challenges and make suggestions.
Tools	Moodle site – Moodle book, 2 pre-recorded videos of other teachers sharing their experience, 1 excerpt from fictional film,Screencast-o-matic, Padlet
Resources	Videos (2 videos of teachers sharing their experience)1 excerpt from fictional film, Screencast

Instructions	These are the steps in the activity cycle: 1. Watch 2 short videos of teachers talking about their challenges with teaching Irish. 2. Watch a short fictional excerpt from a film in which an Irish language teacher is having a negative experience. 3. Reflect on a set of questions as they watch the videos. 4. Access a Padlet wall which contains other teachers' records of their challenges. 5. Watch a short Screencast of the tutor navigating the Padlet giving suggestions as to how to tackle those challenges practically. 6. Submit a short written or audio/video of their own main challenge after having made a list of their challenges. They will be encouraged to reflect on the list as the course progresses. 7. Access a blank padlet which is designed for them to write up their own challenges and get suggestions and feedback from other participants. 8. Receive feedback from the tutor on their submitted assignment.
Feedback	Participants will receive feedback on the written / audio / video piece from the tutor. They will also get feedback and suggestions from other participants through the Padlet wall.

8.17 ASYNCHRONOUS: ONLINE ROLE PLAY

Contributor	Samantha Trevaskis
Title	Online Discussion of Theories through virtual role play
Aim	For the students to engage with psychological theories. To encourage critiquing and deep diving into the merits. To introduce a bit of fun.
Learning Outcomes	Increase critical knowledge of two fundamental theories in psychology. Encourage use of discussion forums, and help students become more comfortable in the environment. Introduce the student to academic skills such as referencing and concise writing. Introduce students to navigating the virtual resources supplied by the college. Introductory class with each group will provide a small group opportunity to assess students technology literacy
Timing	An hour and a half a week for 6 weeks.

Activity Description	Aimed to be implemented in an introductory psychology course for the students first year in a degree program online. To be run in the first 6 weeks of the semester. Students will have a week to read up on the theories. They will then be split into smaller groups (max. 5 people). First, they will be asked to each produce an introductory post outlining one area of the theory. Next, each group will be split into pro and anti of the theorist (e.g. Freud). They will be asked to post at least once a week for 4 weeks. In the final week, they should produce a summary paragraph of the main points of the discussion.
Tools	Textbook, discussion forum, Academic journals, computer, web cam, earphones, mic, video conferencing software
Resources	College library, textbook, tutorial/lecture notes, internet

Instructions	This task will be conducted over the first six weeks of term. You will be assigned to a group with up to four other students. These groups will be communicated to you by your 'educator'. You will be invited to take part in a group specific class where you will discuss the task and the assign aspect of the theory which you will have to write about in the forum. The next three posts will consist of you either arguing for or against the theorist. Each post should be no more then 200 words. You will need to critically assess the theory and provide evidence to support why you think it is a useful or not so useful theory. During the final week, you will produce a 300 word summary of the main points in the discussion. You can choose to either agree or disagree with the theory in this final post, as you may be swayed by the arguments your group have presented.(A further calendar will be provided, as well as a forum in order to discuss any issues)
Feedback	Written individual Feedback will be provided to each student, focusing on referencing, concise writing, formatting and critical thinking within their arguments. This task will form 10% of their grade for this class.

8.18 COLLABORATION: MATHEMATICS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Contributor	Andrea McCallion
Title	How do we use mathematics in our everyday life?
Aim	To get students thinking about all the ways that we use and need maths for our everyday life and work.
Learning Outcomes	QQI Level 4 Functional Maths L.O. 'Explain how mathematics can be used to enable the individual function more effectively as a person and as a citizen'
Timing	30 minutes
Activity Description	This activity will run for week 1 of the QQI functional maths course allowing students to identify why they need mathematics.

Tools	This activity uses the discussion forum in the VLE moodle where groups will be broken into 2.They will use a suggested online mind map tool; mindmup, which is good for collaborative planning, and students can publish and share maps online and can easily save to google drive. We will be using Web Whiteboard to draw together some of the best bits of information coming from the two groups at the end. We will be using an online poll at the end of the class to establish if students enjoyed the class activity.
Resources	The students background
Instructions	Students are to think about the many ways in which they use maths in everyday life. The class will be broken into two groups. In your group you will come up with a mind map to show your thoughts. One person will take the job of entering the information into the mind map while everyone contributes. One person will be responsible for talking through the mind map which they have uploaded to the main discussion forum. I will begin with giving a 5 min tutorial on using the mind map tool and how to share it to the forum.
Feedback	Both groups will deliver their groups findings with one spokesperson. There will then be some open discussion on people's thoughts on the importance of mathematics. I will then sum up the findings and give some feedback.

9. CONCLUSION

The #Openteach project has had significant impact on the professional learning of educators at a number of levels: at a local university level, at national and international level, see table below for details of the projects impact as of May 2021.

#Openteach Impact by numbers	
Website traffic	28,000 unique visitors, 700,000 hits
Twitter	594 followers, 475 tweets, max impressions 10,779
YouTube	5,188 views
Teaching online is different report	38 citations, 5900 reads
Research publications	3
National conference/workshop	17
International conference/workshop	11
Course participants	1002
Course completers	203

Impact on #Openteach course participants

Following the first course run, we conducted an evaluation study to explore and understand participants learning experiences of the course. An evaluation report was produced

called *The Openteach Pilot Evaluation Report* (Farrell, Brunton, Costello, Donlon, Trevaskis, Eccles, Ní Shé, 2020).

The evaluation study yielded a number of interesting findings in relation to the #Openteach course pilot and educators' experiences of professional learning in four thematic areas:

1. Knowledge and understanding of online pedagogy;
2. Community of Educators;
3. #Openteach course design;
4. The Covid-19 Pandemic context.

We present a short extract of our findings in the next section.

Knowledge and understanding of online pedagogy

When asked if participation in the #Openteach course increased their knowledge of online teaching, 98% of 101 respondents answered Yes, 1% responded no and 1% responded maybe.

Do you think you have increased your knowledge of online teaching through participation in this course?

Maybe
1.0%

Yes
98.0%
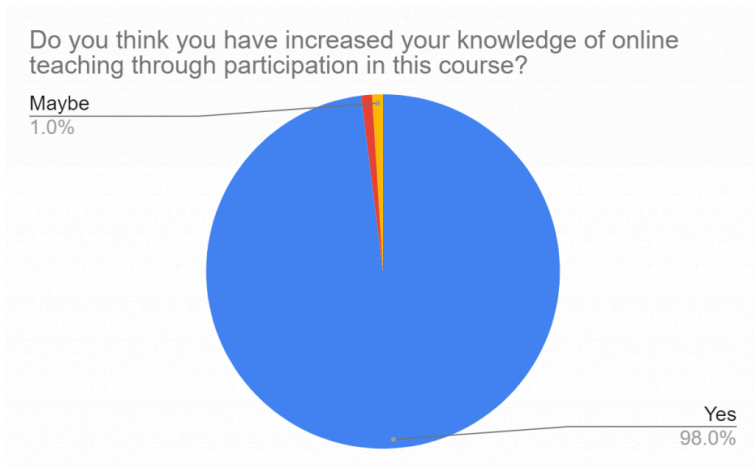
The data shows that the #Openteach course impacted participants' knowledge and understanding of teaching online in a number of ways:

1. Building confidence about teaching online;

   "I had no knowledge of online teaching beforehand and I feel I could teach online with my learners now. I have small groups and individuals so I would be comfortable working online with them now."

2. Developing new knowledge about online teaching including key theories, technology, and strategies for encouraging student interaction;

   "I particularly liked the emphasis on pedagogy. The course suited my needs perfectly and allowed me to deepen my

knowledge and raise my awareness of the need for carefully designed learning pathways. Online is definitely different to the traditional classroom"

3. Gaining insights into online learning by experiencing it from a student perspective;

"Experiencing a fully online course and seeing the different tips and strategies for engagement in an online environment"

4. Developing ideas and strategies about engaging students in both asynchronous and synchronous environments.

"Suggestions on how to better engage students – specifically some of the suggestions on how to use breakout activities, polls etc. Opportunity to read all the very useful suggestions from others on the course, in the various forums"

Covid-19 Pandemic Context

The release of the #Openteach course coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. Due to the fact that #Openteach was an open and free professional development course about teaching online, the numbers that signed up increased rapidly in a matter of days from 120 to 450. The sudden pivot online by those in the further and higher education sectors thrust many educators into teaching online for the first time.

For those who were teaching online for the first time, the #Openteach course provided them with reassurance, support, and encouragement during a challenging time.

> "I am a true beginner so my participation has been limited, but I got a good feel for what is involved in this essential area of teaching"

A number of challenges related to the rapid pivot online were reported in the data by educators. These challenges included problems relating to working from home, poor broadband, underdeveloped digital competencies, time management issues, caring responsibilities, and workload.

> "Because we were in crisis, I was not able to give the time I would usually give to new learning. I was fitting this in among a hundred other demands, so I was more stretched than I would ideally be when learning."
>
> "I was working from home due to the lockdown and my internet is not consistent, some days I couldn't get online at all"

Final Thoughts

Over the course of the project, the #Openteach project team learned numerous lessons from the design, development, and delivery of the course about online educators experiences of

professional learning, and we share these now as our final thoughts.

Professional learning about online pedagogy should be situated online, and the experience of being an online student is invaluable for online educators as it facilitates empathy with students learning in online contexts. Participating in and building a learning community contributes positively to the learning experience for educators. Time management and workload are major challenges for educators, therefore professional learning should allow for flexible engagement. Building confidence and reducing the fear of online teaching is an important aspect of professional learning related to online education. Developing understanding and knowledge of online pedagogy is an important element of professional learning about teaching online. Finally, confidence and competence with the tools and technologies for teaching online are important threshold digital competencies for online educators.

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