

## Forum Insights

# A MOOC TO IMPROVE THE TRANSITION FROM 2ND TO 3RD LEVEL EDUCATION.

### Overview of the project as it has developed

- A steering committee was established with a representative from each of the 7 institutions. The committee members have collaborated through regular synchronous video conferencing via adobe connect and occasional F2F meetings. Follow up emails and resource sharing has strengthened the collaborative nature of communications.
- The necessity for an instructional designer/ researcher was established in the original proposal. IT Sligo was able to fund this 12 month post explicitly for this and one other National Forum funded project. The procurement process was slow but a person was appointed and commenced work on June 2nd 2015.
- A basic structure for the MOOC has been agreed and progress on developing a template is on going
- The original proposal listed 10 modules but the Steering Committee rationalised these into the following MOOC modules:

Weeks	Modules	Phases
Week 0.	MOOC Orientation	Phase 1
Week 1.	Module 1 - Learning to Learn (at third level)	
Week 2.	Module 2 - Critical and Creative thinking	
Week 3.	Module 3 - Digital Literacy	
Week 4.	Module 4 - Responsible Citizenship	
Week 5.	Reflection and summarisation. Synthesis.	Phase 2
	Module 5 - Parental Transition	
	Module 6 - Supporting Faculty to support the undergraduate	
	Module 7 - Transitioning Adult learners- from the work place to F-T HE	

### Project Partner Institutions

IT Sligo (Lead)	Gavin Clinch	<a href="mailto:clinch.gavin@itsligo.ie">clinch.gavin@itsligo.ie</a>
IT Sligo (Lead)	Jennifer Gilligan	<a href="mailto:gilligan.jennifer@itsligo.ie">gilligan.jennifer@itsligo.ie</a>
University of Limerick	Dr Fiona Farr	<a href="mailto:fiona.farr@ul.ie">fiona.farr@ul.ie</a>
Galway-Mayo IT	Dr Carina Ginty	<a href="mailto:Carina.Ginty@gmit.ie">Carina.Ginty@gmit.ie</a>
Limerick IT	Seamus Hoyne	<a href="mailto:seamus.hoyne@lit.ie">seamus.hoyne@lit.ie</a>
Mary Immaculate College	Dr Anne O'Keeffe	<a href="mailto:Anne.OKeeffe@mic.ul.ie">Anne.OKeeffe@mic.ul.ie</a>
Mary Immaculate College	David Moloney	<a href="mailto:david.moloney@mic.ul.ie">david.moloney@mic.ul.ie</a>
NUIG	Dr Mary Fleming	<a href="mailto:mary.fleming@nuigalway.ie">mary.fleming@nuigalway.ie</a>
NUIG	Nuala McGuinn	<a href="mailto:nuala.mcguinn@nuigalway.ie">nuala.mcguinn@nuigalway.ie</a>
Letterkenny IT	Brian McGonagle	<a href="mailto:Brian.McGonagle@lyit.ie">Brian.McGonagle@lyit.ie</a>

### Key outcomes and outputs of the project

The MOOC will provide an understanding of the type of learning required at third level and assist students in developing appropriate and effective learning strategies for higher education. Specific outputs include:

- Initial research and consultation with Stakeholders, senior cycle and undergraduate students, USI, Transition Reform Steering Group, academic and technical staff, career advisors
- Piloting and evaluation of project
- A nationally available 'Transitioning MOOC' for all senior cycle and undergraduate students, parents, faculty and adult learners returning to HE

### How the project benefits the higher education sector nationally

- Higher retention rates of students in 3rd level
- Enhancement of student success and progression in 3rd level
- Greater collaboration between partner institutes
- The development of common learning materials and content for mutual benefit
- Staff development
- A greater understanding of the barriers to successful transition
- Understanding senior cycle and first year undergraduate student's participation in and engagement with MOOCs
- This project and the resultant MOOC will provide a springboard for further collaboration with other HEI's and the development of further resources appropriate to the Irish models of secondary and tertiary education.

### How the project benefits students

- A smoother and successful transition into 3rd level education
- Enhance student support through phase 2 support MOOCs.
- Greater confidence in student's ability to transition
- The development of essential study skills, independent learning and digital literacies

### Other national/International development work that complements this project

#### Future learn

The FutureLearn MOOC platform has developed 'FutureLearn Choices' - a collection of online courses to 'give a taste of what a degree, college or career will be like'. One such course is 'Preparing for Uni', designed to bridge the gap between school and higher education.

## Epigeum

### **Academic Success: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life**

This is an international collaboration of Epigeum and a number of third level institutions across the world that will provide a suite of three online courses designed for students transitioning to third level. The outcome of the course is to enable students to fully explore the challenges of college life. These courses will be only available to the registered students of the collaborating institutions (which includes IT Sligo and GMIT). Not available to students of other institutions.

### **The Open University - 'Badged Open Courses'**

The Open University (OU) has released a number of innovative new free Badged Open Courses (BOCs). These have been developed in response to the needs of informal learners who are seeking access to study skills and to have their learning recognised. See: [http://www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/try#Badged open courses](http://www.open.edu/openlearn/about-openlearn/try#Badged%20open%20courses)

## Next steps

Here is an outline of our next steps in the project:

- An analysis of the content developed for the first module 'learning to learn'. This is currently in process and will lead to creation of storyboards and development to take place alongside this process
- Review and plan, design and create subsequent and supplementary materials
- Further design and development work will follow
- Implementation, which involves prototyping, pre-piloting and piloting of the first module of the MOOC 'Learning to learn' to take place between September and October 2015
- Review, evaluation and action planning to take place subsequent to Implementation
- Subsequent modules to be developed parallel to each other with same processes to be applied with a view to launch of completed MOOC in February 2016