Professional Development Reports

A SNAPSHOT OF INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL DISCIPLINARY INITIATIVES FOR ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING

T&L

NATIONAL FORUM
FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF TEACHING
AND LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A Snapshot of International and National Disciplinary Initiatives for Enhancing Teaching and Learning

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Contents

Acronyms

AHEAD –   Association for Higher Education Access & Disability

AISHE –   All Ireland Society for Higher Education

ALTC –   Learning and Teaching Council

CASTL –   Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

CETL –   Centre(s) of Excellence for Teaching and Learning

CIRTL –   Centre for the Integration of Research Teaching and Learning

DBER –   Discipline Based Education Research

DBI –   Discipline Based Initiatives (scheme)

DRHEA –   Dublin Region higher Education Alliance

EDIN –   Education Developers in Ireland Network

HEA UK – Higher Education Academy UK

HECA –   Higher Education Colleges Association

HEFCE –   Higher Education Funding Council for England

ICEP –   International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy

IDEA –   Irish Development Education Association

ILTA –   Irish Learning Technology Association

INEW –   Irish Network for Enhanced Writing

INMED –   Irish Network of Medical Educators

IOP –   Institute of Physics

LIN –   Learning Innovation Network

LInCS –   Learning Innovation Community Support

LTSN –   Learning and Teaching Support Network

NAIRTL - National Academy for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning

NDLR –   National Digital Learning Recourses

NRC –   National Research Council

NSF –   National Science Foundation

OERs –   Open Education Resources

OLT –   Office of Learning and Teaching

PCK –   Pedagogical Content Knowledge

SOTL –   Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

SIF –   Strategic Innovation Fund

STEM –   Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics

T&L –   Teaching and Learning

Introduction

This is the first of three snapshot reports arising from the professional development consultation document: *Mapping Professional Development Pathways for Those who Teach in Higher Education.* As indicated by the term snapshot, these reports provide focused in-depth coverage of key topics; accredited, non-accredited and disciplinary engagement with professional development.

The aim of these snapshot reports is provide readers with the opportunity to delve selectively or comprehensively into the underpinning research and benchmarking activity that has informed the proposals and options outlined in the professional development consultation document. Based on structured data gathering and analysis as well as active engagement with key personnel across the sector, these snapshot reports allow the current arrangements for professional development in Irish higher education to be described and interpreted further in the context of prevailing research literature.

This report provides an overview of the activities of disciplinary and network groups and their approaches to the enhancement of teaching and learning arising from a series of Forum Partnership Dialogues. It also places these activities in the wider context of international practices for supporting disciplinary enhancement.

Background

The enhancement of teaching and learning in Higher Education in Ireland is supported by many membership organisations, institutional collaborative networks, discipline specific networks and communities of practice. The National Forum established the Partnership Dialogues initiative to forge links with these groups and to work in partnership with them to support the important role that each plays.
During 2014/15 the National Forum has engaged disciplinary and teaching and learning networks with the following aims:

- Bring together key stakeholders to provide inputs into the support and future development of key networks, projects and communities of practice who actively support the enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education.

- Foster collaboration and mutual recognition between key stakeholders and the National Forum.

- Identify the significant inputs and ongoing activities of organisations and networks that work at a national level to support the enhancement of teaching and learning.

- Assist in the development of a national database by the National Forum of all such organisation and their activities.

- Identify, discuss and address issues of common concern and build a sustainable vision for existing networks and organisations.

What can we learn from others?

Disciplinary-based national initiatives to enhance teaching and learning

This section looks at a number of different approaches taken in the UK, USA and Australia to enhance teaching and learning that begin with a disciplinary focus, and it reflects on their respective impacts.

Supported by the UK's Higher Education Academy (HEA), Subject Centres[1] among other activities, ran conferences and workshops, published guides, issued teaching awards, and provided small grants to investigate innovations in teaching and learning or to disseminate outstanding work in particular subject areas. A review of the HEA in 2008 highlighted the positive impact of the discipline-based support offered through the subject centres as "they tackle enhancement from the 'ground floor', are practitioner-led, and by working within disciplines maintain a contextual focus" (Shenstone, 2008, p. 5). The review recommended the retention of the subject network, but suggested a number of improvements such as initiating programmes focused on staff engagement with centres displaying low levels of participation, sharing good practice in impact assessment activities, and increasing cross discipline support in rapidly evolving subject areas (ibid, p. 9). The network of 24 Subject Centres was closed in 2012 due to a contraction of the HEA's budget.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) also funded discipline-specific Centres of Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL), and opened 74 CETLS in 2005 in an effort to impact mainstream teaching quality. Despite extensive funding, the impact of the centres was limited to specific CETL communities or the institution where the CETL was housed (Saunders et al., 2008). Furthermore the application for hosting a CETL neglected to include a requirement for broader dissemination, thus there was little sharing of resources. It was found that CETL activities with a cross-disciplinary focus had a deeper effect in terms of enhancing teaching and learning. The CETLS were discontinued in 2010.

In Scotland, a HEA Practitioners' Forum was established in 2009 to enable disciplinary communities to guide and inform work to enhance teaching and learning. This group advocated for discipline-based projects to be included under the Enhancement Themes. The first project arising from the Practitioners' Forum included the production of short summary reports of key points arising from the Enhancement Themes as they applied to each discipline. Earlier Enhancement Themes also provided funding for discipline-specific projects and sector-wide activities, e.g. Research-Teaching Linkages, depending on the focus of the particular Enhancement Theme. More recently, disciplinary or interdisciplinary events have been supported through the Quality Assurance Agency as part of Enhancement Theme activities.

In the US, the Carnegie Scholars programme[2] worked with individual faculty members across a range of disciplines and institutions. The programme was organised into five cohorts between 1998-2005 and it's purpose was to develop a community of scholars to create and disseminate examples of the scholarship of

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1   The Subject Centres predated the HEA having been set up in 2000 as part of the Learning and Teaching Support Network (LTSN). The LTSN merged with two other bodies in 2003 to become the Higher Education Authority and the renamed "Subject Centres" continued their work across the different centres.

2   The Scholars programme was one component of the broader Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (CASTL), which worked with teachers across primary, secondary and third level and had a budget of $6 million. The CASTL initiative ended in 2009.

teaching and learning. The scholars investigated issues relating to teaching and learning in their discipline. They largely undertook this work in their individual institutions, but they also attended two residential summer sessions at the Carnegie Foundation and worked with scholars from the different cohorts. The Carnegie Scholars programme planted the seeds for further SOTL engagement in campuses in the US, Australia and Ireland. However, as only 140 individuals in total were involved in the programme, its lasting impact outside the US was weak.

In Australia the Discipline-Based Initiatives Scheme (DBI) was run until 2008 by the various iterations[3] of the national body for enhancing learning and teaching in higher education. Through the scheme disciplinary leaders received funding to "investigate the scope of existing resources, effective practices and future challenges for graduates of the discipline and identify a plan and infrastructure needed for future development" (Carrick Institute, 2007, p.1). The 31 funded projects could be broken into two categories, i.e. disciplines with a "well established professional body that results in a strong professional identity and those that support graduates to go to many and varied careers and jobs" (McDonald, 2009, pg. 1). The former projects emphasised assessments linked to professional practice and curriculum renewal, while the latter stressed the need to develop appropriate graduate attributes. Following the termination of the DBI scheme, the ALTC board has prioritised cross-disciplinary programmes and approved a 'Curriculum renewal/ development' grants scheme to build on the learning and to address issues that arose from the disciplinary scoping exercises.

At a European level, the "Tuning Educational Structures in Europe" project was run from 2000-2006 by a group of European Universities with the purpose of supporting the implementation of the Bologna process in Higher Education. The project involved extensive international consultation with employers, graduates, academic staff and students which resulted in the identification of the key competences to be formed or developed in degree programmes. The principle outcome of the project was the Tuning process which enabled the articulation of anticipated learning outcomes for learners in specific subject areas, including both generic and subject-specific competences. A series of subject-specific publications[4] were also created which include suggestions on how to design and deliver student programmes reflecting disciplinary considerations as well as more generic pedagogical approaches.

National support for disciplinary groups and subject specific organisations

In the US, the National Science Foundation has a long tradition of supporting disciplinary associations. For example, it supports the activities of the American Sociological Association which amongst its other activities, coordinates a Departmental Resource Group comprised of sociologists who act as consultants to departments and institutions and organise national workshops on teaching (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005). The NSF also funds the CIRTL network which builds on the work of the original Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The CIRTL network works to

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3   The Carrick Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education was launched in 2004 and was renamed the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) in 2008 and closed in 2011. The Office of Learning and Teaching (OLT) was opened in 2012 with a budget of $58.8 million over 4 years.

4   For examples of subject-specific Tuning publications go to www.unideusto.org/tuningeu/subject-areas

improve student learning in STEM subjects in its 23 partner institutions, all research universities. This is achieved by engaging graduate students in teaching-as-research activities, thereby influencing future STEM teachers.

Discipline-Based Education research (DBER) is an emerging area of enquiry in the US, supported by the NSF, DBER seeks to apply research from fields such as education, cognitive science and social-behavioural sciences to disciplinary-based curricula design and teaching methods (NRC, 2012). It incorporates the culture and value base of the discipline as a key element of research into teaching and learning in the discipline, which resonates with D'Andrea and Goslings' assertion that single disciplinary groupings "*are liked precisely because they reaffirm the avowed identity and confirm existing forms of social cohesion*" (D'Andrea and Gosling, 2005, p. 61). They caution however that there is a *"tendency to reinforce the reproduction of the traditional values and practices of the group"* (op cit.) in this approach and they recommend interdisciplinary activities to bypass this effect.

In the UK, national organisations such as the British Academy, the Wellcome Trust, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), and the Research Councils support research within a wide range of disciplines and subject areas. Many of the defunct Subject Centres described above are now being supported at an institutional level or through inter-institutional partnerships. The Geography Discipline Network is one example of a long standing disciplinary network in the UK with a particular focus on teaching and learning. It has published a teaching journal for the past 25 years and created a series of short guides on a range of methods for delivering and assessing teaching and learning using the HEFCE Fund for the Development of Learning and Teaching.

In Ireland, groups have been supported to enhance teaching and learning at a disciplinary level through projects funded under the Strategic Innovation Fund (see HEA, 2013). For example, the National Academy for the integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL) funded several discipline-specific projects under its annual grants scheme and supported groups such as ChemNet, the Physiotherapy Practice Education Team, the Irish Integrative Learning Project, and the Irish Network of Medical Educators to name but a few. In total 161 NAIRTL projects involving 420 academic staff were supported over a four year period, 43% of which were collaborative in nature (Murphy and Brennan, 2011). The National Digital Learning Resources (NDLR) also ran an annual funding scheme called Learning Innovation Community Support (LInCS) to support the emergence of communities of practice around specific disciplines and with a focus on the development and sharing of open educational resources. The contraction of funding by the HEA in 2012 led to the closure of the NDLR and the refocussing of NAIRTL's activities and those of many other national teaching and learning networks. A key element of NAIRTL's current activity is the promotion of 'threshold concepts'. A threshold concept is a core concept that once understood, transforms the learner's way of looking at, and acting in, the discipline. "It represents a transformed understanding, without which the learner cannot significantly progress" (Higgs, 2011). This is relevant not only within, but between disciplines (NAIRTL 2014).

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning was established by the Higher Education Authority and the Department of Education and Skills in 2012. The Forum supports national teaching and learning networks[5], many of whom promote specific pedagogical approaches which can be implemented within a range of disciplines. For example, NAIRTL promotes innovative approaches to help students grasp the threshold concepts within particular programmes and disciplines. The FACiLiTATE network supports the use of enquiry and problem-based learning methodologies. Campus Engage is focussed on encouraging community-based research, community-based learning and student volunteering initiatives"

Conclusions

While there are many examples of national initiatives to support disciplinary approaches to enhance teaching and learning, this short review highlights the precarious position of these initiatives. The timing of the closure of many of these suggests that economic pressures were largely at play. However, several projects also noted the difficulty in disseminating resources or influencing practice beyond the individual participants or the institutional location of a project, and cross-disciplinary approaches seem to have had a deeper and lasting impact. The Australian and Scottish examples are interesting, contrasting approaches, with the former using the discipline as the lens to identify issues for future generic responses, and the latter providing generic resources that are contextualised within the discipline. The emergence of discipline-based education research and the move towards using evidence from educational research, SOTL investigations etc. to inform pedagogy and change practice at the disciplinary level suggests a re-emphasis on contextualising generic T&L strategies.

Higher Education teachers can access resources and support relating to discipline-based teaching and learning practices, also known as pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), through linking with the colleagues in their department or faculty or through engaging in broader national and international disciplinary group and professional associations. The Tuning Project is a useful point of reference for academic staff seeking to renew or revitalise their courses.

The remainder of this study looks at disciplinary groups and communities of practice in Ireland which may be the first point of contact for those new to teaching or those wishing to enhance their practice, and identifies how the Forum might support their work.

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5   For a comprehensive list of the national teaching and learning networks visit
     http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/teaching-learning-partners/

Where are we now?

## Overview of Partnership Dialogue Initiative

The Partnership Dialogues initiative took the form of a series of meetings, focus groups, and interviews with national networks, and disciplinary groups in order to meet the outlined objectives. The first phase involved linking with national teaching and learning networks (see Appendix A for list of participating teaching and learning networks), and the second with disciplinary groups across the sector.

Following an extensive mapping exercise, close to 140 different disciplinary groups, subject-specific associations and communities of practice were identified in Ireland. These included a mix of professional associations, research networks and organisations with a teaching orientation. A half-day meeting was held with representatives from nine organisations who responded to an open invitation from the National Forum. The focus of the "Partnership Dialogues" session was to uncover the main activities of the participating groups and to identify the supports they required to enhance teaching and learning in their disciplinary area.

Following this initial consultation a series of phone interviews was conducted with additional disciplinary groups identified in the initial mapping exercise. Efforts were made to ensure a wide range of disciplines was represented in the interviewee list (see Appendix B for list of participating organisations). The purpose of the interviews was to gain an insight into activities concerning teaching and learning in disciplines, to identify where members accessed teaching and learning resources, to gather examples of any discipline-specific pedagogical practices, and to understand 'what good teaching looks like' in different disciplines or subject-areas (See Appendix C for list of interview questions).

Findings from focus groups and interviews

Using the categories identified by the HEA in the 2014 "Key Facts and Figures" publication, the participating groups represent a range of different disciplines including Chemistry, Early Childhood Studies, Engineering, Finance and Accounting, Mathematics, Nursing, Philosophy, Physics and Psychology (see figure 3).
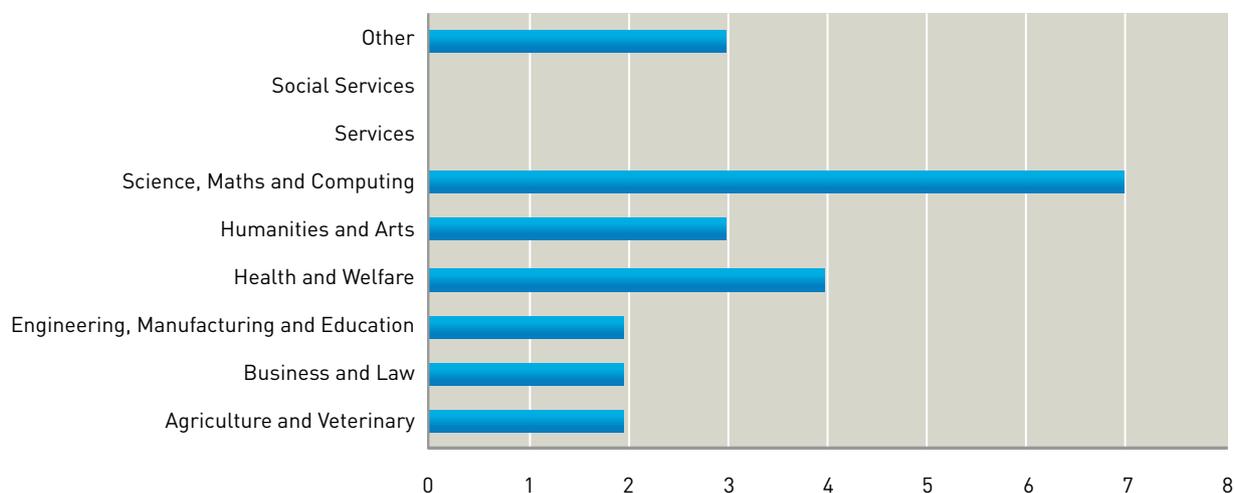
Figure 3: Categories of disciplinary groups who participated in the Partnership Dialogues (n=23).

The focus of the group or organisation fell into four main categories (see figure 4) with the greatest representation from research networks (7, 31%), equal representation from professional associations and organisations with a specific teaching and learning orientation (6, 26%) and four individuals representing their discipline[6] (4, 17%).
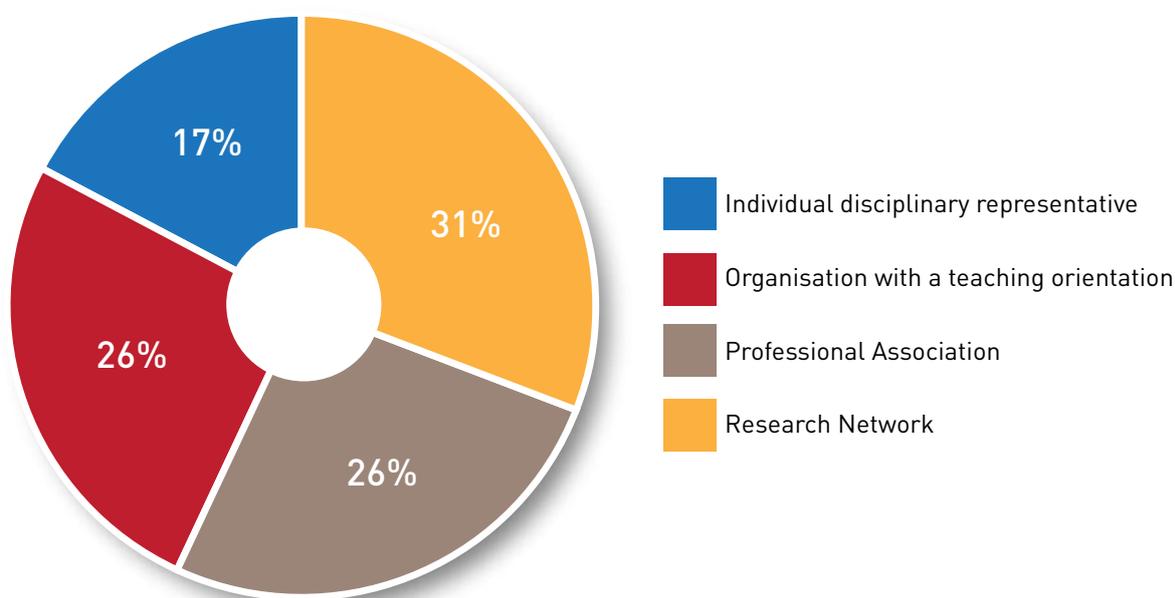
Figure 4: Orientation or main focus of responding organisation (n=23).

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6   This sample included four respondents who completed the interview questions in relation to their experiences as teachers in their disciplinary area. This was considered appropriate as the professional organisations were not always aware of the specific teaching practices or challenges in a particular discipline. In the case of IOP, a representative from the professional body and an active Physics teacher provided joint input into the interview responses and a similar approach would have been useful in relation to other professional organisations.

The groups differed greatly in terms of their focus on teaching and learning. All organisations were based in Ireland but some were supported through their international links in terms of accessing teaching and learning resources or professional development. Some have very formal structures in place and run annual conferences, accredit courses, organise professional development activities, conduct research on teaching and learning in the discipline, train tutors, publish articles and reports, and create and disseminate open educational resources via their website. Other groups were only just beginning to think about teaching and learning in their discipline and have more of a focus on research and networking.

The groups identified particular pedagogical approaches central to their discipline, e.g. experiential learning, blended learning, inquiry-based science education, community-based research, project-based learning. They also acknowledged more generic skills development that they were focussed on developing among their students such as critical reasoning, learning how to learn and independent thinking.

When asked to identify what good teaching looks like, the groups specified more generic teaching practices such as providing timely feedback, active learning approaches and strategies that ensure student-centred learning. The majority placed a strong emphasis on enhancing students' independent learning skills. The groups recognised that there is a wealth of expertise already in the sector, but expressed the view that a mechanism is needed to share this more broadly. Teaching and learning was not the main focus of the majority of the organisations, and their members tended to access teaching and learning-related resources and professional development from within their home institutions rather than through their disciplinary group. The provision of flexible or blended learning was a key area of interest also (See Appendix D for a full overview of responses).

Some suggestions as to how teaching could gain greater prominence and how these groups could be supported included: support for research on teaching and learning within the discipline, support for discipline-specific teaching and learning-related events including invitations to expert speakers, hosting of online meetings and webinars, support for developing teaching and learning resources, scenario or simulation development, mentorship on publishing in teaching and learning journals and the availability of sabbaticals to develop teaching practice[7].

The groups interviewed acknowledged the benefits of collaboration and were open to sharing discipline-specific teaching and learning resources via the Forum website. The request for discipline-specific teaching and learning events was accompanied by a request for assistance in opening these events out more broadly to disciplinary academics, relevant professional associations and industry links.

Teachers in higher education tend to identify strongly with their discipline and often are members of their disciplines' professional association or body. While the majority of these associations are focused on licensing professional practices and accrediting courses, a few have a specific focus on teaching and learning and some offer professional development on T&L in the discipline[8]. The majority of respondents seek and receive teaching and learning support at an institutional level.

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7   The groups were not asked explicitly about their preferences regarding a Professional Development Framework - this will happen as part of a coordinated, national consultation.

8   There are exceptions, for example the Nursing and Midwifery Council in the UK places a strong emphasis on Nursing education and award dual accreditation with its body and with the Higher Education Academy's Professional Standards Framework. The Irish Nursing and Midwifery board do not place the same emphasis on nursing education.

Conclusions

While these 'formal' groups were interested in activities that helped the student to link theory to practice, they were also interested in more general concerns such as ensuring enhancing student engagement and providing an active learning environment.

The disciplinary focus was most evident in relation to the development and sharing of teaching resources with participants expressing a need for more discipline-based resources. Respondents also emphasised the need for a disciplinary lens when organising teaching and learning workshops and seminars. Perhaps what is needed is support for disciplinary groups to refocus resources and information from teaching and learning events and initiatives highlight their relevance and usage within a particular discipline. This translation or contextualising would be similar to the Scottish Enhancement themes approach and that of the Geography Discipline Network.

The legitimacy of delineating knowledge along disciplinary lines has come into question of late, particularly when approaches and methods vary as broadly within disciplines as between them, something that is encouraged by competitive research climates within disciplines. There are benefits associated with looking beyond disciplinary boundaries which could be lost by taking too narrow a focus. Teaching practices that have emerged from particular disciplinary areas, for example problem-based learning in Medicine and the case method in Business, have been successfully adopted by other disciplines. Innovations in teaching are also to be encouraged and may have the added benefit of encouraging the formation of new paradigms, new disciplines and interdisciplinary approaches.

Moving forward

The requests for support made by the disciplinary groups are relatively modest and can be structured around three different areas of support.

Fostering collaboration

- The groups identified the need for support to form links with disciplinary academics, other HEIs and with enterprise. In some cases this would require broadening the focus of the disciplinary group to include other relevant disciplines facing similar challenges and employing similar approaches. This would be particularly relevant in relation to organising conferences and workshops.

- In discussion with the various groups, it was clear that some of the work of the national teaching and learning networks would be of interest to the disciplinary groups, e.g. INEW work on supporting academic writing in the discipline. The T&L networks could be incentivised to form more close collaborations with disciplinary groups in future years.

Identification and sharing of best practice

- A common request across the disciplinary groups was for discipline-focused teaching and learning events/seminars featuring international experts who would share best practice.

- Many groups requested support to develop discipline-specific teaching and learning resources. They also requested assistance to identify and disseminate high quality teaching and learning resources.

- Small seed funding for disciplinary academics and disciplinary group members to meet and network would be largely welcomed.

Development of teaching and learning practice

- The groups identified a number of areas that they would like specific training and development on and this included problem-based learning, blended learning, critical thinking, and active learning approaches.

- Some groups expressed an interest in developing SOTL research activities within their discipline.

- In addition to requests for funding support to develop OERs, groups identified the need for support to implement their use in existing or new courses or programmes.

Key Issues that emerged from Disciplinary Groups

Reflecting on the Partnership Dialogues initiative and international approaches to supporting disciplinary uptake and engagement with effective and innovative teaching strategies and pedagogies, the following key issues emerged:

1: Disciplinary groups are very diverse and have different priorities, needs and objectives. This is evident in the interests and activities identified by the groups participating in the Partnership Dialogues initiative.

Some disciplines such as medicine and nursing have a lengthy engagement in education activities with a proliferation of journals relating to teaching and learning in the discipline.

2: While academics have strong affiliations with their disciplinary area, the respondents identified their institutional T&L centres or international links as the sources of T&L materials and resources. The review of international practice suggests that generic teaching and learning resources may require a disciplinary translation or contextualising for maximum effectiveness.

3: A key criticism of the approaches outlined in the review of international practices is the lack of impact or reuse of resources outside the institutions hosting the particular projects or beyond the specific disciplinary community. There is a need to emphasise dissemination and staff need to be supported to act as consultants in other departments and institutions to support the reuse and repurposing of these resources and methodologies.

4: Disciplinary consultations should be an integral part of the consultation on the emerging professional development framework for Irish higher education in particular with the more established, teaching -focused organisations such as INMED, IDEA, and IOP.

5: The Professional Development Framework (PDF) could reflect and support discipline-based approaches and transcend the disciplines by including the following:

- The Professional Development Framework could recognise and encourage OER development, dissemination and impact - incentivising the effective production and use of these resources.

- Both discipline-based education research (DBER) and the Threshold Concepts approach take disciplinary content knowledge as their starting point. The recognition of these activities as appropriate and valued areas for research may encourage teachers to develop their practice using either approach. In the context of the PDF, these could also be used to encourage staff to remain in good standing.

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APPENDIX A: List of participating Teaching and Learning Organisations: Partnership dialogues

Group	Primary objective	Website
All Ireland Society for Higher Education (AISHE)	AISHE is an independent, membership-based professional society dedicated to the promotion of good practice in learning and teaching throughout the island of Ireland. It represents the academic community across disciplines and communities of practice and also those who support learning and teaching in general. AISHE aims to provide a platform for critical dialogue and sustainable engagement in relation to the core concepts underpinning the very fabric of the Higher Education Community throughout the island of Ireland.	www.aishe.org
E-learning and blended learning summer school [Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA)]	The Dublin Region Higher Education Alliance (DRHEA) is a strategic alliance of the Higher Education sector in the wider Dublin city-region. It includes four Universities and their linked Colleges (TCD, UCD, DCU and NUIM) and four Institutes of Technology (DIT, IADT, ITB and ITT Dublin), many with long established and internationally renowned reputations for excellence in teaching and research. The DRHEA has been created to strengthen the region's higher education sector as an important contribution to the growth of Dublin's competitive advantage in a European and broader international context.	www.dit.ie/lttc/events/elearningsummerschool www.drhea.ie
Education Developers in Ireland Network (EDIN)	EDIN is the network of educational developers in Ireland. Educational developers support teaching and learning in higher education. Members of EDIN work in Irish universities, institutes of technology and other higher education institutions.	www.edin.ie
FACiLiTATE	FACiLiTATE is a community of practice/network which supports staff teaching in education in the use of enquiry and problem-based learning methodologies (EPBL). As the national problem and enquiry based learning network in Ireland.	www.facilitate.ie
Higher Education Colleges Association (HECA)	HECA is an association of respected, independent, private providers of quality higher level education.	www.heca.ie

Group	Primary objective	Website
International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy (ICEP)	The International Conference on Engaging Pedagogy (ICEP) is an annual event that brings together researchers and practitioners in the field of third-level teaching in order to discuss means and methods of improving student engagement.	http://icep.ie
Irish Learning Technology Association (ILTA)	ILTA is the Irish Learning Technology Association, and is a community of researchers, practitioners and industry professionals with a shared interest in technology-enhanced learning across Ireland.	http://ilta.ie
Learning Innovation Network (LIN)	The Learning Innovation Network (LIN) is the network of academic professionals from higher education that support academic professional development (APD) for staff in the Irish higher education sector, particularly the Institutes of Technology.	www.lin.ie
National Academy for Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (NAIRTL)	NAIRTL is a SIF funded collaborative project between University College Cork (lead partner), Cork Institute of Technology, National University of Ireland Galway, Trinity College Dublin and Waterford Institute of Technology. NAIRTL supports students, researchers and academic staff to implement and advance effective research-informed teaching and learning practices.	www.nairtl.ie
Irish Network for Enhanced Writing (INEW)	The Irish Network for the Enhancement of Writing is a network of educators who wish to actively enhance their own writing and to help learners to do likewise. This network is an offshoot of the Regional Writing Centre which was a strand of the Shannon Consortium's activities. The Shannon Consortium consisted of the University of Limerick (UL), Limerick IT (LIT), IT Tralee (ITT) and Mary Immaculate College (MIC), was formed in the context of SIF Cycle I in 2006. The Consortium's vision was to transform the Higher Education landscape in the region with each partner contributing according to its distinctive, yet complementary, strengths.	www3.ul.ie/shannon consortium/index.php
Student Leadership scheme (PAL and PASS)	PAL at GMIT and PASS at AIT are study session schemes that offers cross-year support between students on the same programme. It encourages first year students to support each other and learn cooperatively under the guidance of a trained student (a PAL/PASS Leader) from the 2nd, 3rd or 4th years of the programme.	www.ait.ie/pass www.gmit.ie/general/ about-peer-assisted- study-sessions

APPENDIX B: List of participating Disciplinary groups: Partnership dialogues

Disciplinary Association/ CoP	Focus group participant	Phone interview participant
Agricultural Economics Society of Ireland		x
AHEAD	x	
Association of Occupational Therapists in Ireland		x
Campus Engage	x	
Chem Net	x	
Chemistry - DCU	x	
Early Childhood Ireland		x
Engineering - UCD		x
Engineers Ireland	x	
Institute of Physics in Ireland		x
Irish Association for Contemporary European Studies		x
Irish Computer Society		x
Irish Development Education Association		x
Irish Finance and Accounting Association		x
Irish Integrative Learning Project		x
Irish Mathematics Learning Support Network	x	x
Irish Mathematical Society	x	
Irish Network of Medical Educators		x
Maths and Stats T&L Community of Practice	x	
Nursing - DCU		x
Nursing - UCC		x
Psychological Society of Ireland	x	
Society for Women in Philosophy in Ireland	x	

APPENDIX C: Partnership Dialogues Phone Interview Questions

Activities and focus

1. What are the primary activities of your disciplinary group/ subject-specific organisation?

2. Does your organisation have a teaching and learning policy/focus? If such a policy or focus exists then please give details.

3. Do you run any national events such as conferences, seminars etc.? If yes please give details.

4. Do you have any partners/collaborators? If yes, please list.

Resources and good teaching practice

5. Where do your members access information or resources relating to the enhancement of Teaching and Learning in your discipline? What resources are out there and how are they accessed?

6. What is good teaching in your discipline? (It would be helpful if you could define good teaching and give examples of it, include instruments and techniques used to provide this good teaching).

Supports

7. What changes could be made to enhance teaching and learning in your discipline? Gaps identified/ processes etc.

8. What can the Forum do to enhance teaching and learning in your discipline?

Goals

9. What are your organisation's goals in relation to teaching and learning (e.g. how formal a structure do you want to be)? How might you achieve these?

APPENDIX D: Overview of responses to Questions 5-8 from Partnership Dialogues focus groups and interviews

	WHAT IS GOOD TEACHING PRACTICE		FUTURE	
	In the Discipline	Generic Good Practice	Changes to enhance T&L in discipline	Support from Forum
1		Independent learning; active learning	Collaborative learning and continuous assessment. How we can use these tools without compromising academic rigour	Training and support for lecturers (become more flexible in their approaches)
2	Incomplete (Focussed on how association trains members)		Evaluate the impact of CPD and specifically on what elements of the training could be improved to enhance knowledge translation into practice.	Share strategies that would help support people to put new learning into practice. Identify the barriers that impede the translation of new knowledge into practice?
3	Aligning knowledge gaps in practical teaching sessions; Practical lab design; Matching theoretical and practical concepts	Feedback and assessment; independent learning; Feed forward	links between assessment types; alignment between activities and assessment; Critical thinking	integrate T&L into prof development; staff support to develop T&L strategy based on best practice
4	Analysing data through computer software, Stats	interactive discussions	Members take leadership role	Bring people from related disciplines together. Resources on website. Discussion board. Bring over experts; Leadership building
5	Video clips of practice, critical reflection	Experiential learning; interactive	Blended learning; suitable teaching spaces	Resources on website; bring over experts in area of pedagogy; Building links with University and industry.
6	CBR, CBL		Lack of incentive for staff to change their course; Need nationally funded programme to train and build capacity.	Space on website to define CBR/CBL. Use forum circles to link with staff.
7	Universal design		Writing academically; policy on accessible documents; Joined up approach to work placement	
8		Feedback and continuous assessment; PBL; independent learning; open assessment	Move towards PBL and from rote learning and recipe labs; Information literacy; Improve links between project work and lecture-lab; Online T&L resources	Recognition on Forum website; Admin support for newsletters, template resource packs for website; small grants for networking or to complete research

	WHAT IS GOOD TEACHING PRACTICE		FUTURE	
	In the Discipline	Generic Good Practice	Changes to enhance T&L in discipline	Support from Forum
9		Students become more intentional in their learning - set goals, learn to learn, know when to ask for help; make connections between disparate pieces of learning	Highlight the necessity to teachers and then support small changes in modules or programme level approaches	Continuation of the project. Include Integrative learning of one of the pillars of a quality HE experience.
10	Inquiry based science ed. (IBSE); Good content knowledge.	Support students become independent learners	CPD for 2nd level and primary teachers on science and PCK. Pedagogic training for 3rd level. Lots of out of field teaching of physics in Junior cycle. Support IBSE and develop confidence and competence in assessing students learning of key skills and concepts - not rote learning.	Work with Prof. Dev service for Physics Teachers (PDST); Run events for newly qualified teachers; Event on 3rd level ed in physics. Support to do research on our teaching and also mentoring on how to publish. Graduate modules on how students reflect and benefit from demonstrating, and how we can support tutor development. Dissemination tends to be discipline based and need support to unlock this. Community based learning and also work placements as form of experiential learning.
11	Participatory methodologies	Critical thinking and critical literacy;	Include development education perspectives and methodologies across formal and non formal education curricula	Highlight the work of IDEA and how the development education approach can add value to a range of T&L in HE.
12	Is multi-disciplinary but approaches to T&L tended to be influenced by the pedagogy of discipline degree are grounded	Simulation exercises, field-trips, work placements, research skills and to a lesser extent, PBL	Stronger professional association; Engagement with funding and networking opportunities e.g. Erasmus+ and Fulbright-Schulman programmes; Use of diverse pedagogical tools and techniques	Publications, seminars and funding support would be helpful. Joint European Studies focused event for networking.
13	Case studies and simulations	Critical analysis and critical thinking skills;	Move towards competency based marking in professional accounting exams; HE will follow	Seminar with international speaker across network of accounting academics; support to create simulations and resources
14	Apply new learning to practical situations	Action learning; discovery	High quality training and certification of trainers and teachers in delivery of IT and business analysis programmes	Would welcome discussion to explore this further

	WHAT IS GOOD TEACHING PRACTICE		FUTURE	
	In the Discipline	Generic Good Practice	Changes to enhance T&L in discipline	Support from Forum
15	Critical reasoning; Deep learning; Encourage teaching intervention rather than originality	independent thinking; learn how to learn;	Structured group work; PBL; video/online learning; direction towards quality resources; formative assessment; Use of analogy; Linking learning with current, topical issues	Repository for vetted resources; Support for flipped classrooms; Modules or structured PhD programme on T&L
16		Active student engagement; constructive feedback	More online learning and flexible delivery. Develop complex skills through use of scenarios and simulations. PBL with open ended Q for large student cohorts. Web based tools to support academic writing skill development	Sharing reusable OERs in nursing education. Have some to share. Funding to develop resources. Dedicated instructional learning technologists.
17				Help for networks in identifying research support; central database of funding sources; guidance re H2020
18	Use of tech in Maths e.g. graphing programmes, modelling. Highlight importance of getting things wrong. Highlight history and evolution of theories and definitions.	Problem based learning; making large classes interactive	Collaborate with other Maths centres. Networking to do research.	Support online meetings. Digital infrastructure to stream events held by partner orgs in UK or elsewhere.+N1:O9
19	About identity creation; triadic relationship of teacher-student-patient;	Grow knowledge from where students are; Development of attitude, competence and interest, not knowledge transmission; Creating environments where students flourish; Not about teaching but about learning	Support for clinical educators to enhance their scholarly practice; Advocate for education focus by HSE; Broaden network to include all health professionals; interdisciplinary activities	Transform website into educational meeting place for exchange of idea; Support to link with nursing schools and other health professionals; Support for development of clinical educators in relation to enquiry and reflection on their teaching practice
20	Linking theory and evidence to practice; Simulation		Run practice clinics in HEI and more practice based curriculum	Enhance digital learning
21			More time	Info for perspective students on subject choices with reference to discipline groups

APPENDIX E: Report on National Forum Partnership Dialogue with T&L Networks

Written by Martin Fitzgerald, Limerick Institute of Technology.

Introduction

The purpose of the dialogue days (which took place in March 2014)was to; bring the various networks together to explore and share their respective activities, build trust between the networks and enable the National Forum (NF) to ascertain the best way to support the networks in terms of funding and developing collaborative initiatives where possible. This process comes under the 'Partnership and Collaboration' Strand of the National Forum's work by supporting the educational networks and the role they play in the higher education sector. The sessions were attended by the same representatives from the 11 networks (see Appendix D) on both days and this made the process more productive and consistent in terms of input and feedback. This short report will attempt to capture the key issues and concerns that emerged over the two days, identify possible areas for development and reflect on the process as a model for future engagement with the networks. The two days were facilitated by Martin Fitzgerald (LIT), Niamh Rushe and Eloise Tan (NF).

Emerging issues and reflections from the Dialogue Days

What thoughts, plans, actions and reflections have emerged from the dialogue with the Network?

Firstly events like this need to occur on a regular basis if real progress is to be made. The trust and openness that was created between the networks themselves and between the networks and the NF was tangible and substantive. This was evident from the evaluation forms that were completed on both days. Secondly the willingness of the networks to engage and collaborate with the Forum and each other was very evident and will be realised in the funding submissions that will follow on June 27th. Thirdly, a number of key action areas have been identified and will constitute the main thrust of the work to be carried out over the short to medium term (one to three years).

Concerns will continue to exist among the networks in relation to the sustainability of their unique contribution and identity within a rapidly changing HE T&L landscape. The NF can only assuage this by its actions and consistent support for the work being carried out by the networks over time.

The central elements that the NF plan to develop over the next three years may at some point generate conflict within the networks themselves and between the networks and the NF. Two areas that immediately spring to mind are;

- the issue of a required T&L qualification for academics in the HE sector and how that can be resolved

- digital capacity and E-learning as either a foundation stone for T&L or a useful tool for the enhancement of the student learning experience.

These strike at the core of many of the values and practices that drive the networks in terms of best practice in the area of T&L. Funding will always remain as the apparently explicit motive but there are other sub textual concerns that influence the principles and practices of these excellent networks. Dealing with funding is essential but maintaining a philosophical congruence with the networks will define the success of this new dynamic and relationship over the coming years.

Proposed areas of support

Administration /Operations

- Network administration; two options here; either the forum can provide this for the networks or when the need arises the forum can delegate someone of their team to help with administration. This would be helpful for conferences or other events with the admin demand is greater.

- Assistance with event management

- Set up a database of T&L expertise

Dissemination

- Calendar of events

- Circulate events, outcomes etc to and from the networks; sharing different activities

- Circulate/post online Irish teaching and learning writings from various journals/conferences/cook chapters/other publications

- Develop a repository of activities/resources

International Network Building

- Research and development fellowships for members

- Recognition of network leadership within HEIs

- Highlight/share research outputs

- Awareness of cross-disciplinary research activities

- Support to attend conferences/meetings etc

- Identify EU funding opportunities

- Workshops to develop collaborative bids

Scholarship

- A network forum board member

- Forum disseminates calls for publications

Sectoral collaboration

- Conduit to disseminate work of networks

Debate/dialogue/policy/strategy

- Facilitate events for us to talk to each other; a "network of networks"

- Planning/on theme/dovetail with each other

- NF to feed institutional management of outcomes so top down as well as bottom up

- What are the barriers to excellence?

- Challenge organisations to make changes in order to address these barriers to excellence, e.g address the gender imbalance

- "be a disruptive influence"

Communication

- Use website analytics results for marketing opportunities

- Website: review design. Not very interactive and that needs to change. Should facilitate keyword searching such as expertise t&L, professional development

- Develop as a portal/resource bank

- Put information on the networks on the NF site including their events and their key contacts

- Set up a mailing list between networks

- Need a calendar template. Networks should be able to add events to the calendar themselves

- Set up a themed resource bank, e.g. curriculum design

- Facilitate events for groups to come together to share practice

- Promotion/marketing of events and other network materials

- Investigate existing platforms such as LinkedIN.

Personal Development/Leadership

- Endorsing and recognising activities of networks

- Tap into wealth of leadership skills in the networks to encourage others to join these voluntary groups

- CPD credits for those who complete non-accredited activities such as conferences/workshops etc

- Badging these non-accredited activities under the NF brand, e.g. teaching and learning champions become T&L practitioners within their institutions.

APPENDIX F: Proforma for Open-educational Resource

Discipline/Subject-Area or CoP
1: What does "Teaching and Learning" in your particular discipline/ subject-area or using your particular pedagogical practice look like?
2: What are the challenges to teaching in your particular discipline/subject-area or using your particular pedagogical practice?
3: What journals, publications and web links would be useful for a teacher in your discipline/subject or using your particular practice? (e.g. journals relating to teaching in your discipline, or using the particular pedagogical practice you support; links to associations, societies etc. that have useful reading materials, teaching resources etc.)
4: Pro forma for open-educational resource: please complete one per resource (OERs can take the form of video clips, in-class exercises, lecture slides, assessments, lesson plans, reading lists etc. Alternatively you may wish to share resources relating to a particular pedagogical practice, e.g. problem-based learning, integrative learning etc.)

Title of Resource	
Resource Type	
Description of resource (50-100 words)	
Type of activity (group/individual)	
Keywords	
Educational Level	
Learning objectives (3-4)	
Acknowledgment	Resource developed by Further details and contact information
Date	