HEA Teaching and Learning Conference December 2025

Leading Change Together: Building the Future of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

Find Out More

Scaling UDL Across Campuses: Harnessing Peer Networks for Inclusive Learning

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta an Atlantaigh

Atlantic Technological University

Institution(s) and Partner Organisations Involved

Atlantic Technological University (ATU) | Under the Teaching & Learning Centre, coordinated by ATU's UDL Centre of Excellence

Contributor(s)

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What level(s) of your institution does this work affect?

- Module level
- Across multiple modules
- Programme level
- Across multiple programmes
- Across multiple units/schools/faculties
- Institutional level

Date and Timeframe

Pilot phase: 2023-2024 - ongoing

Alignment and Focus

Focus
- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Frameworks, Policies, or Strategies Aligned
1. UNCRPD Article 24: Supports universal design in education.
2. UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – Goals 4 & 10: Promotes inclusive, equitable quality education.
3. National Access Plan: Advocates for inclusivity and UDL integration in higher education.
4. Progressing a Unified Tertiary System: Encourages UDL across tertiary education.
5. Irish Legislation (EPSEN Act, Equal Status Acts, Disability Act 2005): Provides legal frameworks supporting UDL goals.
6. ATU Strategic Plan (ENABLING EDUCATION - OBJECTIVES 2024 to 2028)

Discipline

- Agriculture Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary
- Arts and Humanities
- Business, Administration and Law
- Education
- Engineering, Manufacturing and Construction
- Generic programmes and qualifications
- Health and Welfare
- Information and Communication Technologies
- Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics
- Services
- Social Sciences, Journalism and Information
- Teaching and Learning

Impact, Lessons Learned and Future Directions

Impact and Evidence of Success

Impact is measured through evaluations, feedback surveys, peer reflections, and Review outcomes. Peer-led workshops and events show increased staff awareness, confidence, and adoption of UDL principles. Quantitative indicators include the number of network events, participation rates, and the extent of UDL integration in programme redesigns. The initiative has engaged 250–300 staff and students across campuses, strengthening collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Evidence of success includes improved accessibility, engagement in Reviews, and sustainable peer-led UDL supports—demonstrating a growing culture of collaboration, inclusivity, and lasting institutional change.
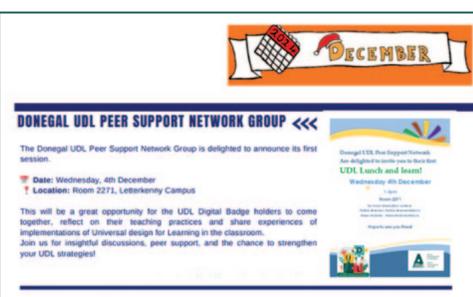

Future Plans and Sustainability

The initiative will continue to expand UDL adoption across campuses by growing peer networks and increasing peer-led events. Future steps include embedding UDL training into staff development programmes, extending engagement in Inclusive Programme Reviews, and creating a repository of shared resources and best practices. Sustainability is ensured through institutional support, ongoing peer leadership, and a collaborative model that can be scaled to new programmes and campuses, fostering a lasting culture of inclusive teaching and learning.

Top Tips

- Leverage Peer Leadership: Empowering staff and students to lead workshops and events fosters ownership, builds capacity, and encourages authentic knowledge-sharing across campuses.
- Embed UDL in Structures, Not Just Events: Integrating UDL principles into programme reviews and curriculum design ensures lasting impact beyond individual workshops or sessions.
- Foster Collaboration and Communication: Multi-campus initiatives succeed when clear channels for collaboration, resource sharing, and regular reflection are established, enabling consistency while allowing local adaptation.
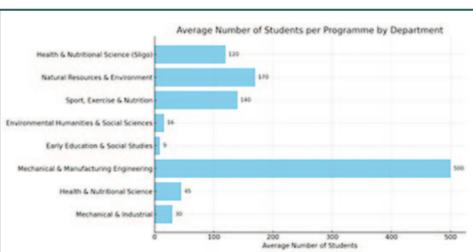
Initiative Description

Aims and Objectives

- Expand UDL adoption across multiple campuses through collaborative peer networks
- Empower peers to lead events and share best practices in inclusive teaching.
- Enhance programme inclusivity via active participation in Inclusive Programme Reviews.
- Foster lasting impact on curriculum design and learning experiences.

Outline or Description

The initiative aims to scale Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles across multiple campuses by establishing and supporting peer networks. The core objective is to foster collaboration among staff and students, enabling the sharing of best practices in inclusive teaching and learning while embedding UDL into programme design and review processes.

Planning and Implementation:

The initiative began with the formation of cross-campus peer networks composed of academic staff who have previously completed either the National Forum UDL Teaching & Learning Digital Badge or ATU's Post Graduate Certificate in UDL. Strategic planning involved identifying key programme areas for UDL integration, designing peer-led workshops and events, and coordinating multi-campus communication channels. The initiative emphasizes co-creation and collaboration, ensuring that network activities respond to local needs while contributing to a broader institutional strategy.

Teaching and Learning Approaches:

Peer networks facilitate a blend of participatory workshops, knowledge-sharing sessions, and collaborative problem-solving. These sessions are designed to model UDL principles in practice, including multiple means of engagement, representation, and action/expression. By enabling peers to lead events and discussions, the initiative encourages experiential learning and reflective practice among staff and students. Teaching and learning approaches are inherently inclusive, adaptable, and evidence-informed, supporting varied learning styles and accessibility needs.

Assessment and Evaluation:

The initiative uses a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate impact. Feedback from participants, peer reflections, and case studies provide insights into changes in teaching practice and programme design. Additionally, outcomes from the Inclusive Programme Review process are tracked to measure the extent of UDL integration in curricula and to identify areas for continuous improvement.

Outcomes:

The initiative has led to increased awareness and adoption of UDL principles across campuses. Peer-led events have strengthened professional networks, fostered knowledge-sharing, and built capacity among staff to implement inclusive teaching strategies. Engagement in Inclusive Programme Reviews has ensured that programme redesigns are more inclusive, accessible, and aligned with UDL best practice. Overall, the initiative has contributed to a sustainable model for scaling inclusive teaching practices and promoting a culture of collaboration and shared learning.

DONEGAL UDL LUNCH & LEARN POSTER SHOWCASE EVENT

UDL Academic Peer Network team Patrick Brennan and Eloise McGinty hosted the Donegal UDL Lunch & Learn - Poster Showcase event recently. This event was sponsored by NTUTORR and supported by the ATU UDL Centre of Excellence. The showcase featured an array of outstanding UDL posters from this year's Master's in Teaching & Learning (MALT) cohort. Michael Murphy, Head of Sport at ATU Donegal, drew the winning ticket for the UDL academic poster competition and Catherine Carr emerged as the fortunate recipient of the Google Fitbit Charge 6 watch. Congratulations Catherine! This event marked the start of UDL Lunch & Learns for the Donegal campus, so, keep your eye on future invites for these events!