Teaching & Learning Centre
Newsletter | September 2021

Teaching & Learning Centre
Institute of Technology Carlow

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Welcome back to a new academic year

On behalf of the Teaching and Learning Centre team, welcome to the new academic year.

The last 18 months have presented us with both challenges and opportunities—we have witnessed significant changes in the way we think and approach our teaching and, as a result, have reimagined and embraced more progressive pedagogical practices. Together, we transgressed the boundaries of the physical classroom and, with our students, created a genuine community of practice, reaching out to learners wherever they were located and being there to listen to their needs.

The one constant throughout has been that our learning has been a real collective effort.

This academic year in Teaching and Learning, we will continue to work together to support staff and students through our **CPD offerings**, our accredited provision, and our learner-faced initiatives, such as the **Academic Writing Centre**, the **Maths Support Centre** and the **Hear to Help** initiative. We are also particularly pleased this month to be launching our new online **PACE programme**, which will support learners to access and use library resources effectively and you will find details of this in the current edition of the Newsletter. In addition, we will be announcing funding details later this month for upcoming national projects, and have an exciting series of seminars lined up for the year, so we would strongly encourage you to get involved.
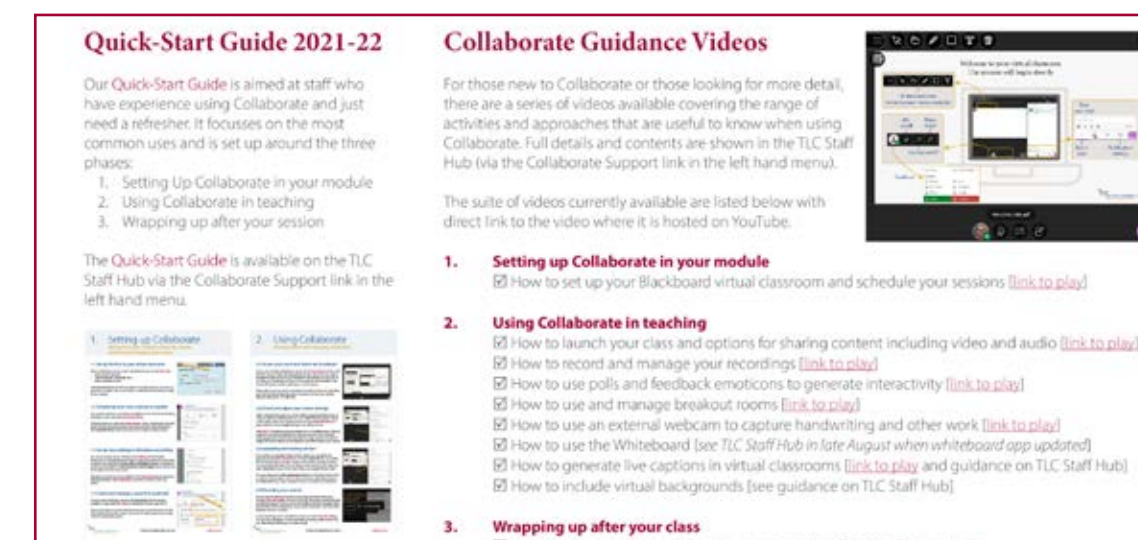
Finally, this is an exciting time for us all in higher education and we very much look forward to working with you all again this year and to building on all the great practices that we have developed together over the last year. Wishing you, and all learners, every success for the year ahead.

Dr Gina Noonan
Head of Teaching and Learning Centre
Institute of Technology Carlow

INSTITUTE *of* **TECHNOLOGY CARLOW**
Institiúid Teicneolaíochta Cheatharlach

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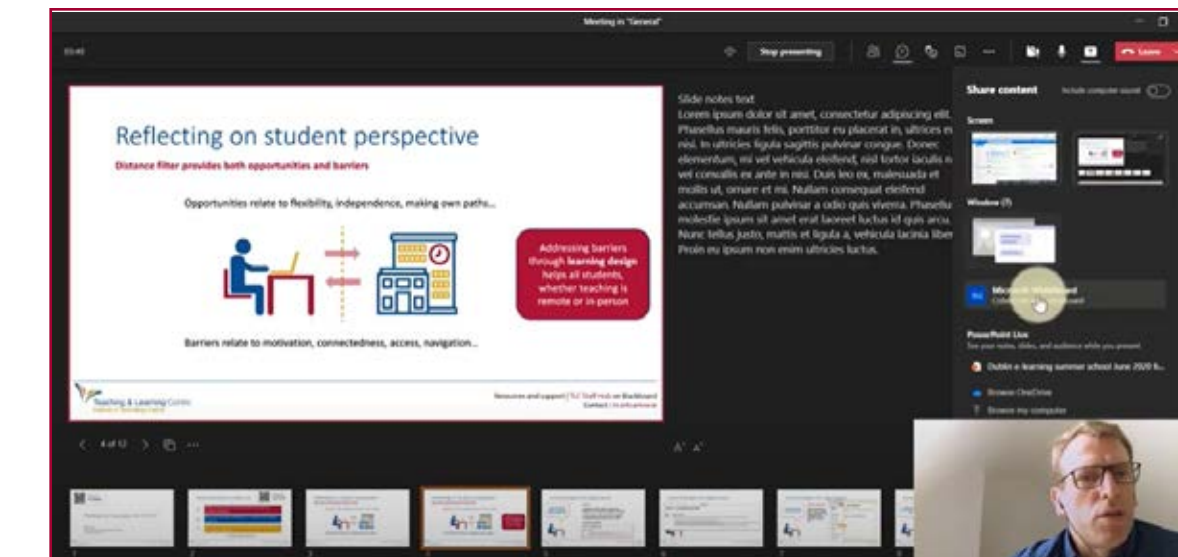
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New Resources

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## Launch of new PACE modules:

A National Forum funded project has resulted in development of a series of self-study units that support students in their use of the library and online library, focussing on a variety of information literacy skills.

Programme staff can opt to include the resources directly in their modules if they wish.

The modules were developed in a partnership between the Library and Teaching and Learning Centre. They focus on inducting students to some aspects of the library and online library, supporting them in their first assignment, and learning about the IT Carlow Harvard citation and referencing system.

Modules are available through the online library. To connect, go to:
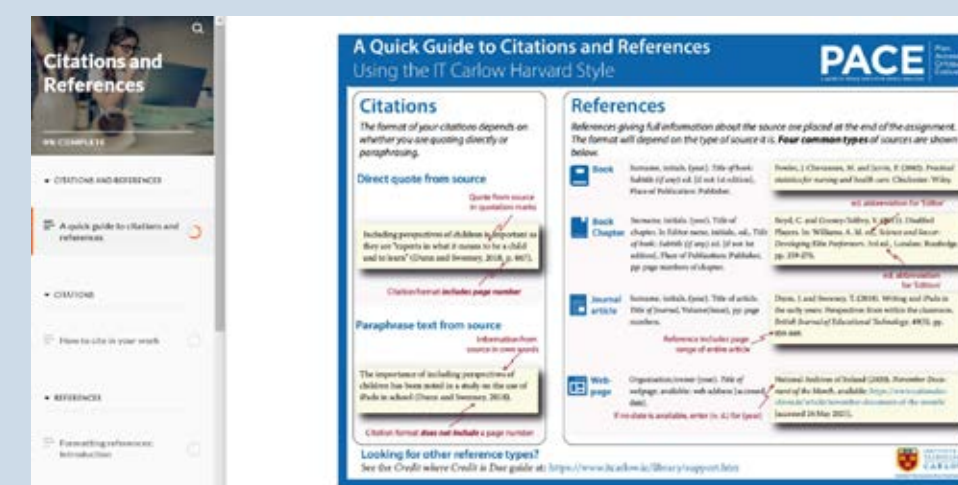- https://www.itcarlow.ie/library/pace-programme-library.htm

For further information on the PACE programme, please contact Breda Connell, Lifelong Learning & Research Services, Assistant Librarian: breda.connell@itcarlow.ie.
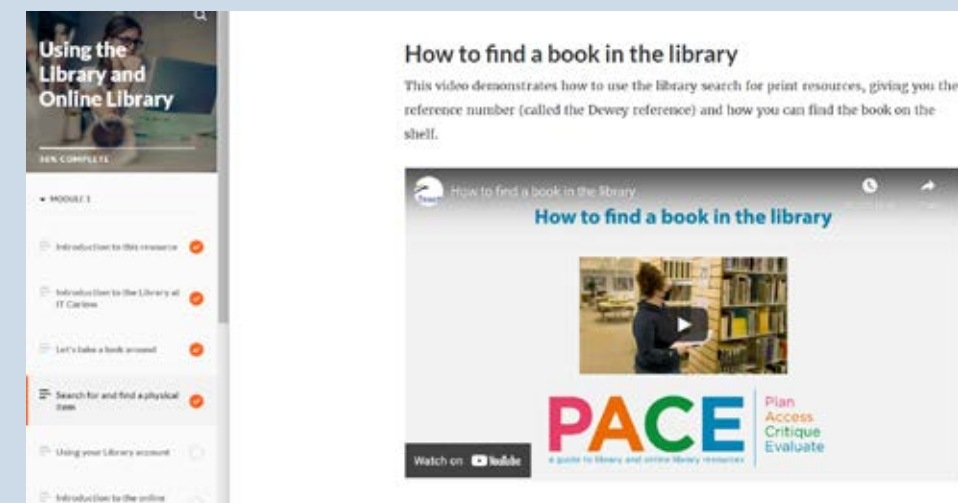
Module 1: Using the library and online library
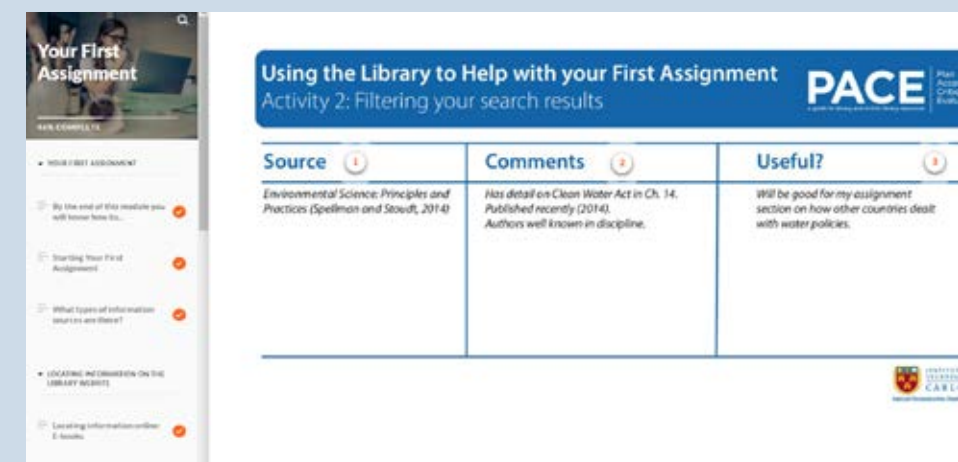
Module 2: Your first assignment

Module 3: Citations and References

An Open Course on Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in STEM

The Open University recently launched a new open course titled **Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in STEM** which is available on OpenLearn. This one-of-a-kind course provides a toolkit for conducting Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) within STEM.

The course is designed around the stages of completing a SoTL inquiry or project, guiding participants in the design, completion, reflection, and evaluation of a SoTL project. Issues relating to dissemination of SoTL research is also covered.

The course should be of interest to anybody interested in integrating Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) in their academic practice. To find out more visit:
- www.open.ac.uk/scholarship-of-learning-and-teaching-in-STEM on OpenLearn.

Those interested in this course should also note that a National Forum funded seminar *Models of Engaged Learning and Thinking (MELT)* is scheduled for 1st October. See *CPD*, p. 7.

Academic Writing and Maths Support

TLC will be supporting our learner-faced initiatives in academic writing and maths support again this year from 4th October. Please direct students with queries to TLC Student Hub.

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Learning Technology News

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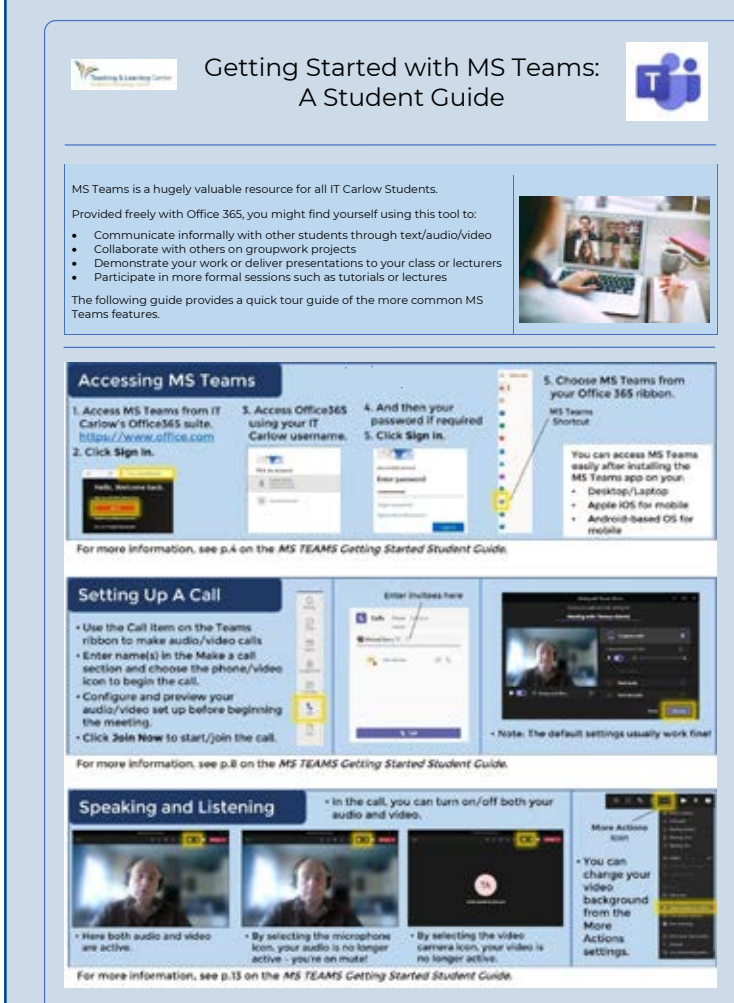
Blackboard News

Updates to Blackboard Learn (new editor, updated interface)
Over the summer, Computer Services have migrated Blackboard Learn to Blackboard's dedicated cloud hosting service. We are now on the most recent version of the Original experience of Blackboard Learn. Within Blackboard courses, the main change is the editor, see Blackboard's help for details. There is also an updated interface—a modern look & feel, consistency across devices, and a better mobile experience.

There are ongoing updates to the help resources in the *Blackboard Support* section of TLC Staff Hub (or see Blackboard's help for Learn), and please contact us if you have any questions.
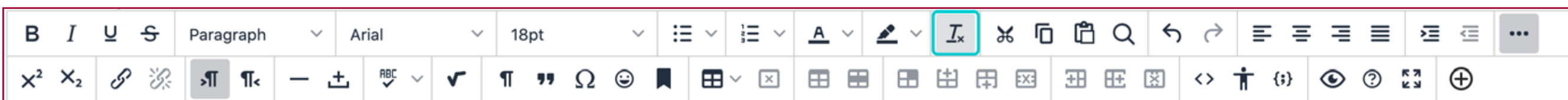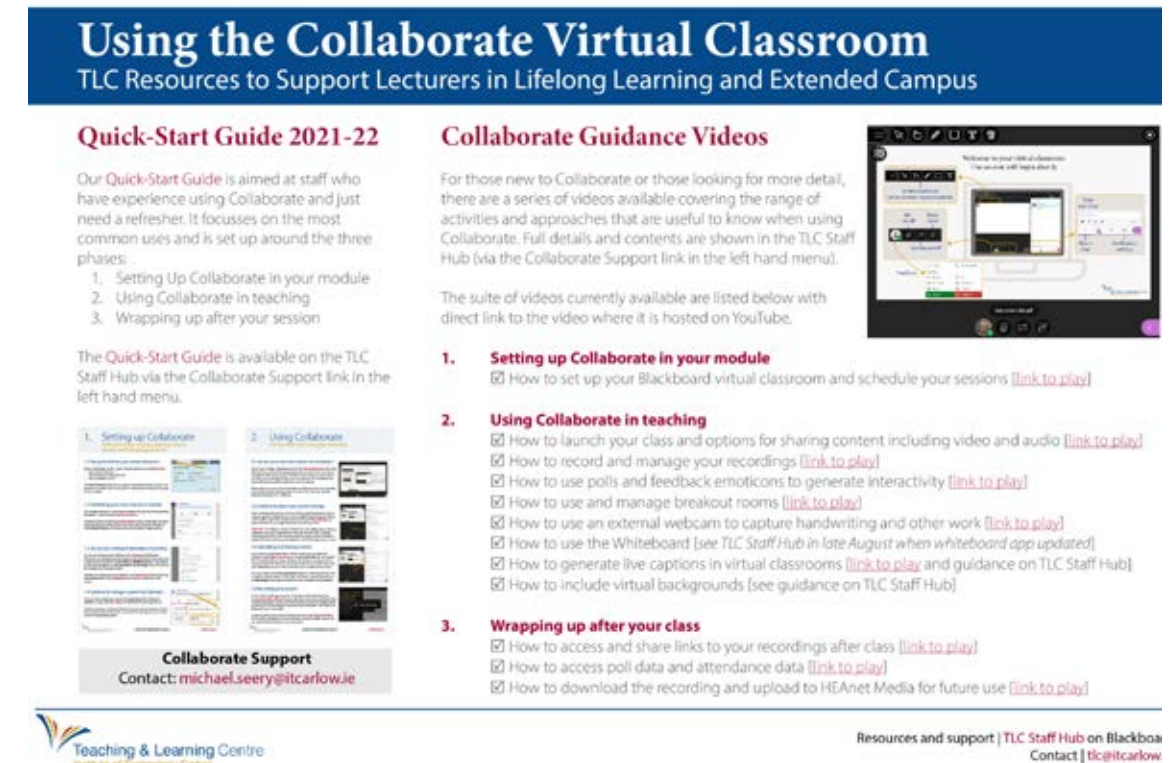
Student Quick Guides on MS Teams and Netiquette

MS Teams is becoming increasingly ubiquitous for meetings with students online, facilitating small group work, etc. In order to support students' use of MS Teams in cases where it is used, we've supplemented our extensive guide on MS Teams with a short graphic-led *How To* guide; both are available on TLC Student Hub.

An additional document in a similar style on Netiquette protocols—good practice for behaviour online—is also now available in the TLC Student Hub. We hope these resources will be valuable for staff and students engaged in any aspect of teaching in online and blended modes.

Collaborate Support
Renewed resources available include a **Quick Guide for Staff** who have previously used Collaborate and need a refresher as well as a series of short videos on a range of activities associated with setting up classes, managing live sessions, and post-class activities. We've also made a **Quick Guide for Students**, available on TLC Student Hub. For training or support associated with Collaborate, please contact: michael.seery@itcarlow.ie.

Screencast-o-matic PRO licences
Screencast-o-matic is a free tool enabling recordings up to 15-minutes, download as MP4 (watermarked). The PRO version is available to enable editing and much more (contact tlc@itcarlow.ie to request). Support resources:
- Help videos
- Video Editor Cheat Sheet
- Download and install at this link

As well as uploading to HEAnet Media Hosting or MS Stream to share, Screencast-o-matic can host your screencasts for you - see their help video on hosting, plus this on adding captions manually or automatically (editing as appropriate) and then uploaded to Screencast-o-matic or added as always visible open captions when saving a video.

See *eLearning* section of TLC Staff Hub for more information.

Mentimeter Pilot
Mentimeter is a user-friendly classroom response system to engage your students, with a limited free version. As part of a National Forum-funded local project, we are piloting the PRO version.

There are a few places left, contact damien.raftery@itcarlow.ie to register interest for this term or next.

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Staff-Student co-produced conference

Susan Barnes is Course Director of the Social Care Programme on the Wexford Campus. In May 2021, Susan co-organised a conference with students on her course, and she shares her experiences.

What gave you idea for conference?

In 2019, I was successful in securing funding for a small project through the Carlow IT Teaching and Learning Centre prior to the Covid outbreak. I had planned to run a conference focusing on social care placement. Due to Covid pandemic, I like many other colleagues went online teaching and placements were postponed for the foreseeable future. I now had to reimagine my initial project and come up with an idea that would work in a virtual arena.

I contacted Dr Gina Noonan to float a tentative idea I had to bring the social care community together and provide a space to build resilience through shared learning. Dr Noonan's response was so positive to initial concept and her support and input moved it from an idea to a three-day webinar series targeting social care students and practitioners. It was important for me that this newly imagined project was co-produced with students and provided a space to share new learning from the Covid experience in social care. (*Continued on next page*)

Building Resilience Through Shared Learning

A National Forum Funded Initiative as part of SATLE19 Funding

Student Perspectives

Emily Murphy and Laura Finan were student co-organisers of the 'Building Resilience Through Shared Learning' conference.

As a student returning to college on completion of a Bachelor of Arts Level 7 degree followed by a year working in the social care field this experience was filled with different experiences. Firstly for me the experience was slightly daunting due to still finding my feet with online learning and speaking. Online speaking was something I had never done before and to begin the online speaking with chairing the webinar sessions caused slight anxiety. However with the support of the team and the planning that was conducted for the webinars, excitement began to kick in. I was excited to begin the webinars and impressed with myself and the team on how well the webinars ran. To plan for the sessions I arrived on time to all the meetings of the planning of the webinar, took notes at each and gave my input into these meetings in relation to the planning of the webinars. Once the planning stage ended the organisation stage began. In this stage I had a to-and-fro message system with the partner I was chairing the sessions with to organise who was doing what at the webinar. Once the decisions were made regarding who was doing what, I wrote some speaking notes and sent same to my partner to see if I had missed anything. The final stage of preparing for this session was enjoying a nice camomile tea and sitting somewhere comfortable in my house to begin the sessions. The webinars began then and they ran very smoothly and were a great experience to be involved in. I am so grateful I got a chance to be part of this three-day series and gain the learning that if you put your mind to something, you can do it!

Emily Murphy

Coming in as a mature student and putting myself forward to be apart of this project, I felt completely out of my comfort zone, and felt quite overwhelmed at first.

However, I found the experience to be fulfilling and also an achievement like facing a fear of speaking out in public and leaving myself vulnerable. It was very educational—not just of the topics we discussed but also from a technical side of things I learned so much.

We had the pleasure of meeting like-minded people, and listening to their experiences, opinions, and perceptions on things gave me insights I might not have thought about. Having my fellow peers, along with Susan Barnes and the team for support and guidance meant that I felt I wasn't on my own. It's something I'm very proud to say I was a part of.

Preparing for the conference was quite enjoyable, meeting online weekly with my peers, Susan, and the team to discuss what way the conference would be led and to give our input from a student's perspective regarding what would be beneficial to be included within the topics to ensure that everyone took something away over the three days.

If I was to take one thing from the whole experience it would be that I can do anything if I put my mind to it. I really thought I'd fail, and I didn't! So, if your given an opportunity take it as frightening as it might be, it will be worth it.

Laura Finan

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Student News

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Staff-Student co-produced conference
(continued from page 4)

During 20/21 academic year I heard the following themes consistently from students, colleagues, and practitioners—reflective writing, self-care, and supervision. Social care landscape had changed overnight for academics, practitioners, and students. These core themes were addressed from a student, recent graduate, and academic perspective in our webinar series. Building resilience through shared learning webinar series was co-produced with four social care students, four recent Carlow IT Wexford Campus social care graduates and the Teaching and Learning team Dr Gina Noonan, Michael Seery and Cathy Fennelly. It involved three standalone webinars focusing on reflective writing, self-care, and supervision from an academic and new graduate perspective with time allocated for break out groups for students to discuss each theme with their peers and professionals.

How did you get student involvement?
I sent out an email to the Wexford Campus full-time social care students with a loosely formed concept for an online event exploring the broad areas of reflective writing, self-care, and supervision. I purposely did not move the project along until I had student involvement. I was delighted when 3 first year students and 1 fourth year student agreed to meet me for an initial meeting where I could promote the concept of co-production and how this project provided an opportunity to take responsibility for their learning and their journey to professionalism. Emily, Mark, Laura, and Becky were immediately on board and their input was key to the webinar series success. They worked with me on every aspect of the webinar series from planning, researching speakers, designing promotional materials, and taking lead to contact academic speakers and sharing their ideas/needs for building resilience through shared learning webinar series. Their input was so important regarding how to engage students in an online learning environment.

How does it relate to your modules/programme content?
Reflective writing, self-care, and supervision are integral to social care practice and links to core modules across all years of study. These areas were highlighted by students due to the postponement of placement and they wanted to hear from academics and new graduates on how they use reflective writing, self-care, and supervision in the new social care landscape caused by the Covid pandemic.

What was your thinking behind speaker selection?
This project was co-produced with students, and we discussed and agreed the webinar themes and then targeted academics who had published research in these areas. We were absolutely delighted with the response from academics, all of whom were so intrigued by the co-production element and student ownership of the project. For our newly qualified social care practitioners we targeted professionals working in residential, Intellectual disability and Family support to offer broad experiences for webinar attendees.

What would you change or do differently?
I would recruit students before applying for funding so that students are involved from the first step. I believe that having student voices at this early stage is integral to co-production principles and adds immeasurable value to any future project planning.

What's next?
It's funny you should ask that; we would love to work collaboratively with another college—staff and students—to develop a follow-on webinar series to explore other topics to develop resilience through shared learning. Any takers?
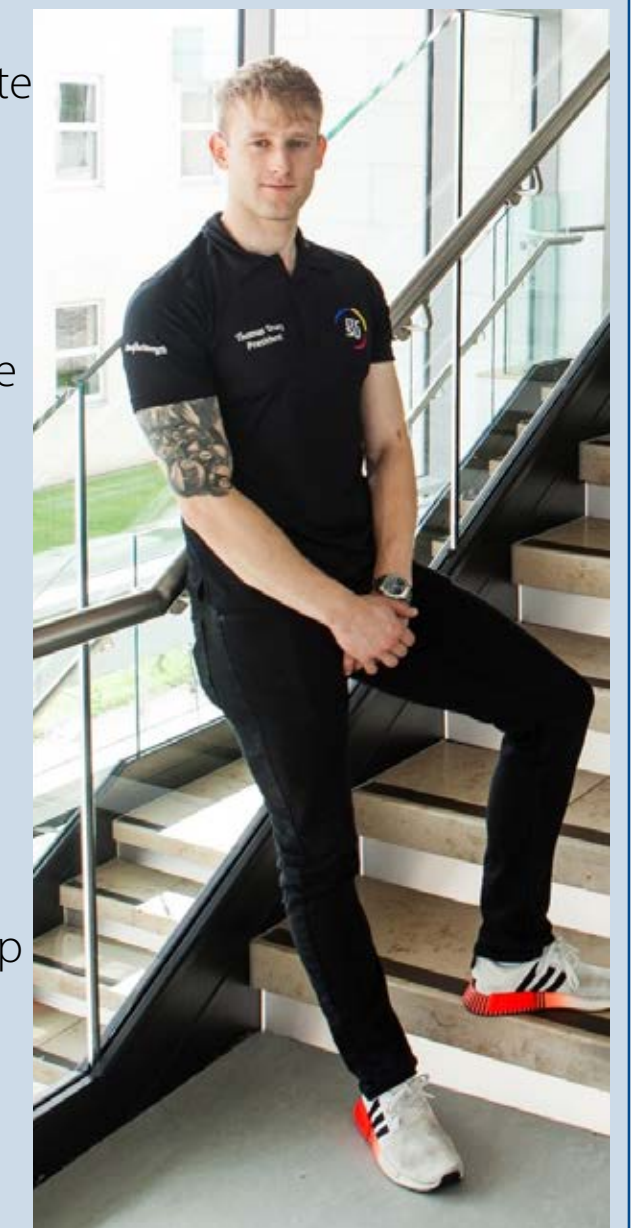
ITCSU-TLC Connections
SU President Thomas Drury reflects on a year of collaboration between the Students' Union and TLC

The Students' Union and the Teaching and Learning Centre have worked tightly together on many Institute projects and initiatives to benefit all students of IT Carlow. The first major collaboration between ITCSU and TLC was the co-creation of a **Returning to Campus Student Survey** which received a response rate of 20% full-time students. This survey was analysed by both departments for the aid of creating a student focused return to campus plan during the winter break of 2020.

As a result of the Student Survey, TLC and ITCSU were able to develop workshops and campaigns to aid students where they felt help was most needed. This included a **Building a Resilient Brain** Workshop and a **Lift Your Spirits** Week-long campaign.

Other initiatives include a **Hear to Help** programme which involved the use of postgraduate students to mentor undergraduate students who may be finding the learning-from-home situation difficult. The head of the Teaching and Learning Centre worked very closely with the Students' Union's mature student officer to create evening **Ask & Answer** sessions where students could drop in into the Zoom session and use it as a platform to ask any questions relating to their course or any Covid-related questions. This received a large uptake and was incredibly beneficial to all cohorts of students.

The Students' Union are very proud of the strong working relationship the Teaching and Learning department and look forward to working closely again for this new academic year.

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Student News

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Digital Hustle Summer School

Dr Irene McCormick ran a "Digital Hustle" summer school for school pupils, and shares her experience

This year I undertook my first ever Summer School as director, producer, and general dogsbody and in teaching and learning terms it was quite an eye-opener. The genesis of the school came in February when my boss Maebh Maher, head of the faculty of Business and Humanities, told me that the HEA had some cash going for summer schools. I'd been made leader of The Creative Hub and it was great to be able to get a project underway that showed the potential of the Hub. I put a lot of thought into coming up with a good idea for the school. Barrow River walks are an excellent backdrop to thinking big thoughts as is listening to BBC Radio 4. The latter gave me the idea of the 'Hustle' as I had heard an item on BBC Radio 4 on the growing popularity of side-hustles in the UK. This is what we Irish call 'a nixer' and side hustles are getting very popular with many people having a central job and a little side-hustle which pays for the cream and allows people to pursue their dreams.

Personally, I wanted to do a nice, quirky five-day summer school for senior-cycle school goers and make it relevant and engaging and creative. I wrote a proposal and the HEA were brilliant, getting back in a timely fashion and giving me a big green light on all elements, including the budget.

I was very prepared and drew on my 20 years in TV production to develop the event. I hired two of my media students to source the ultimate digital hustlers; our star online influencers, and to design the merchandise. They also did a fantastic online campaign and Digital Hustle was trending all over the place for weeks. This was my cleverest move as I know nothing about influencers or trending... but I know a good bit now.

I got great support from Gemma in IT Services to create an online application for our website and Shaun Dowling in Development did a brilliant page for us. I had a great time choosing the best international experts in online influencing by trawling ejournals via our online library and everyone I approached said 'yes'. We had super academics from the UK, Holland, Turkey, the US, and of course our own amazing IT Carlow Media and Marketing experts. It was a hefty line-up.

As an academic I was very pleased with the content and the calibre of the speakers but as a media practitioner I was caught off guard by how much media interest there would be in the course. In one week I had *Newstalk Lunch*, *DriveTime*, Brendan O'Connor, some breakfast TV show I had never heard of and a plethora of other local and national outlets banging on my door about this 'novel' course. The *Sunday Independent* did a piece on it and my applications went from 30 to 157 overnight. In the end there were over 240 applications. I accepted all knowing that the actual numbers would be a lot less and they were, but still a lot more than my hoped-for 40 applicants. It was all pretty crazy for a while.

The actual summer school worked out really well. It wasn't actually a course in 'how to be an influencer'. It was a course that aimed to help young people think about a business/campaign/persona online they would like to cultivate. The day started with give-aways (our hoodies are selling for big money on eBay). Then at 10am there was the tuition hour. After coffee we had internet entrepreneurs, all under 30 years of age. I loved those sessions, though the 19 year-olds with
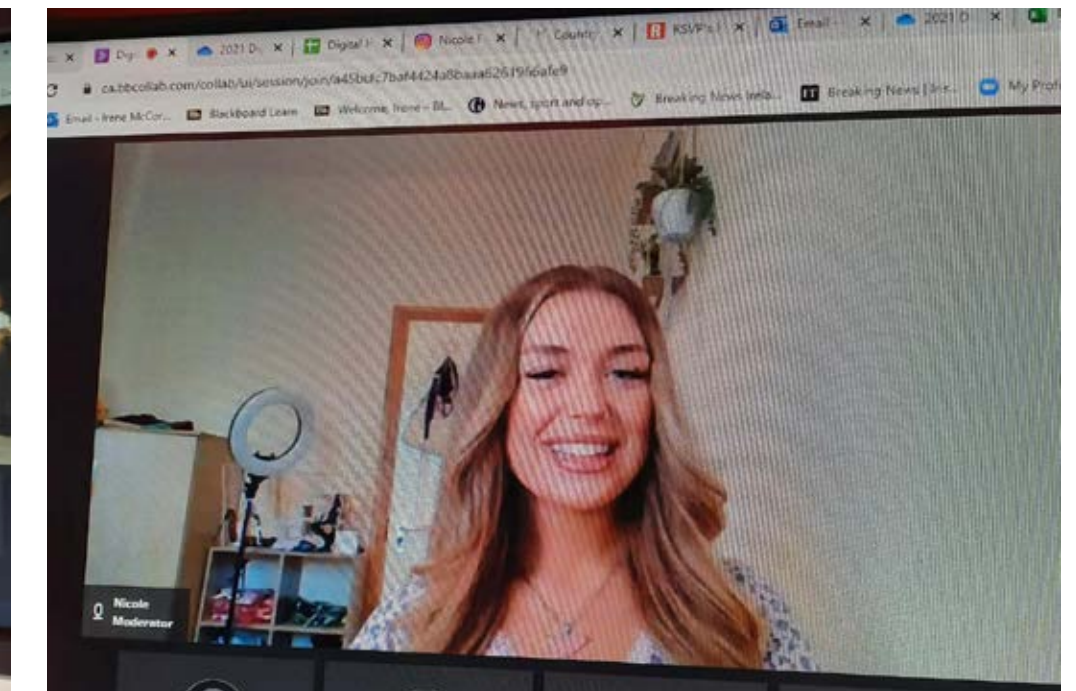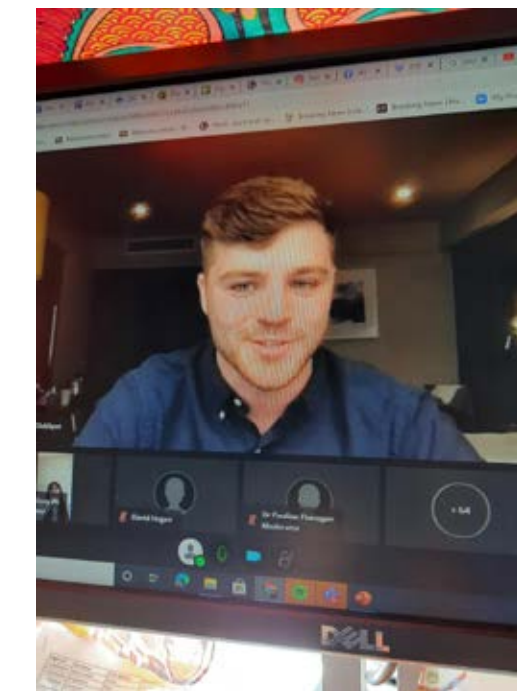
the ethical online clothes company made me feel pretty lazy. After lunch we had amazing young influencers who were both lovely, kind, hard-working and inspirational. I wish I had their chutzpah.

The 100 or so students who attended were very engaged. Maybe it was because they were so invested in influencing as a goal in their lives. They really loved the influencers and the entrepreneurs. IT Carlow staff moderated these sessions and Dr Pauline Flanagan, Dor Keane, Dr Denise Earle, Dr Eleanor O'Leary and Ciaran O'Loan kept it lively and interesting. There was a great podcast feel to the session, intermingled with Q&As and give-aways. My media students did some of the influencers sessions and I acted as the great and munificent Oz from behind my virtual curtain for the whole week. I needed a decompression chamber by the end of it... and some Buckfast. A special mention goes to Dr Flanagan who stayed with me online for the most of the week out of pure collegiality. She is something else that Limerick lady.

So what did the learners think? I did a feedback session and a survey on the last day. It was a bit late as we were all getting tired. I should perhaps have tackled that earlier but I got some good information. The feedback was very

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Student News & CPD News

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Digital Hustle Summer School

positive. I found that it was appropriate to do this summer school online as the whole subject matter lent itself to online and it was a natural environment for the young people. Basically the learners were well into it. I was a bit rigid about giving everything the same hour long session but I learned that some sessions needed more time and some less. Next time I would have more activities for the learners to do and reduce the time of the heavier sessions. But it's hard to know what is going to work and what isn't. The session I was most excited about as an academic was the flattest and some speakers that looked a little light turned out to be stellar.

The whole Digital Hustle summer school was a great success. Some of this was by accident of publicity although I did start that ball rolling with a call to the *Sunday Indo*. Some of its success was down to it being a very current idea that resonated with the intended audience. Next time I hope to run it in conjunction with TY coordinators in schools, during the winter (I want my summer back!). I'll never get the same lift–off as I did this year but there are lots of kids who would love to do the course and lots of TY coordinators looking for a project. From my end it was a ton more work than I ever conceived and dripped on for most of the summer, but isn't that always the way? Some of the work was well outside my comfort zone but the likes of Clare O'Shaughnessy in Finance and David Horgan in HR really helped and I learned a lot about budgets and payments and hiring.

The Digital Hustle Summer School was a cute idea that ran away with itself and turned out to be a very enjoyable learning opportunity for a lot of young people all over Ireland, and for a 50 something lecturer in Carlow. Check out my Instagram @dr.iro. I'm influencing away like goodo...
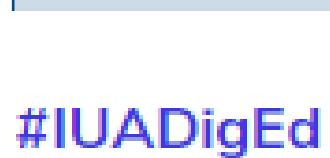
Dates for the Diary

1st Oct 2021	Models of Engaged Learning and Thinking (MELT) Online (see TLC Staff Hub for announcement) Organised by Dr Dina Brazil
18-22 Oct 2021	Academic Integrity Week See TLC Staff Hub for announcements
08-30 Nov 2021	National Forum VITAL Showcase week See https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/vital

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

We were very successful in bids to the National Forum Seminar Series this year, with 100% of requests supported, including MELT, above. We'll be sharing details of dates and times as they are confirmed on TLC Staff Hub.

Recent webinars

EDEN — Recordings of the sessions from the European Distance and E-Learning Network (EDEN) 2021 Virtual Annual Conference
- https://www.eden-online.org/2021.madrid/resources/

#IUADigEd — Recordings of #IUADigEd webinars
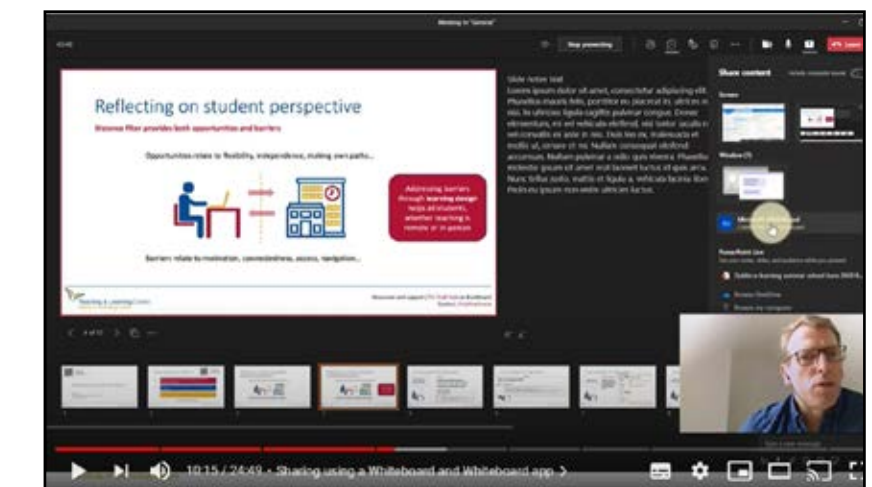- https://edtl.blog/webinar-series/

CPD Recordings

Some recordings from recent CPD sessions are available for staff to view in their own time

Teaching online using MS Teams

A video giving an overview of various aspects of teaching on MS Teams. Available at:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chKAIkvkbqo

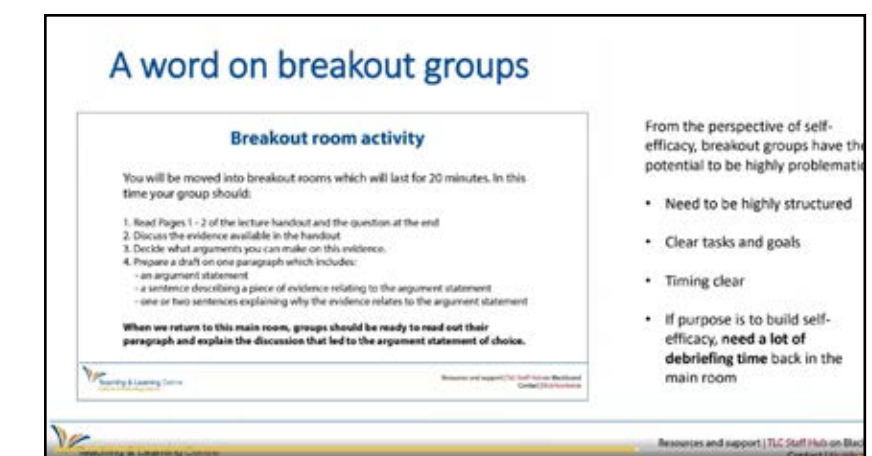## Approaches to blended and online teaching

Recording of a session on approaches to blended and online teaching. Available at:
- https://media.heanet.ieage/913d6eca274746358eb044e07b755311

[IT Carlow Log in Required]

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Ideas for Practice

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Supporting students' transition into higher education

Lessons learned from the "What Works?" initiative offer some pragmatic actions and ideas that can be used in supporting transition into HE. A key factor is developing a sense of belonging.

Much of what we know about transition into higher education leads us to focus on a crucial period between students accepting their offer to join their course and about six weeks into their first teaching year. Supporting students during this period with a focus on helping manage new educational and social settings, perhaps new accommodation, and new cultures has been shown to have substantial long term benefits. So what does this support look like from a teaching and learning perspective?

A large scale study *What Works?* explored transition in several English universities over a three year period and led to a greater understanding of tangible measures that can be taken (Thomas, 2013). This work found that up to 2 in 5 students consider withdrawing from their studies.

Improving retention

It is well established that several approaches improve student retention and success. The *What Works* programme led to consideration of the overarching importance of sense of belonging, and explored options for increasing sense of belonging, noting that the exact type of intervention or approach is less important than the way it is implemented and its intended outcomes. Some highlighted examples that resulted in increased belonging are shared in the right-hand column.

The exact type of intervention or approach is less important than the way it is implemented and its intended outcomes.

Example initiatives to promote belonging

- *Welcome lunch and study skills session for mature students*
  Aims to form networks among peers, increasing confidence and skills, and created a strong cohort identity.

- *T-shirt induction activity*
  Each student given a t-shirt, marker pen, and instructions to draw representations of their interests on t-shirt, and then to find others with similar interests. Interventions focussed on steering participants to increase diversity in groups, away from "comfort zones".

- *Curriculum design to increase interaction and belonging*
  A problem-based learning activity was included in a first semester module to include an activity where students had to work in groups of eight. Focus of work is social: getting to know staff and other students on their programme.

Strategy to improve retention (Jones, 2008)	Example initiative
Pre-entry information & preparation	• Clear programme structures and activities shared in advance • Sample materials and knowledge checks (*e.g.* in Maths) to bolster confidence
Induction and transition support	• Activities that place emphasis on socialisation with staff and peers to create sense of belonging • Information about timetables, module outlines, and expectation setting • Guidance and activities supporting adjusting to university life, including activities that promote engagement in general academic skills development
Student support	• Signposting and engagement with student support services • Clear guidance shared on assessment deadlines and protocols for extensions
Data and monitoring	• At course level, monitoring of engagement in assessments, attendance *etc* and following up

Further reading

- Jones, R. (2008) *Student retention and success, Research Synthesis for the Higher Education Academy*, York: Higher Education Academy at https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/student-retention-and-success-synthesis-research (accessed: 22nd August 2021).
- Thomas, L. (2013) What works? Facilitating an effective transition into higher education. *Widening Participation and LifeLong Learning*, 14, pp. 4—24.

Teaching & Learning Centre
MA (Teaching & Learning) News

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MA Graduate Profile

Christina Sieber is the Practice Placement Coordinator for Social Care (Wexford Campus), Programme Director and Associate Lecturer for Social Care and Early Years LLL.
She shares her experiences of completing the MA (Teaching and Learning).

What does your role involve?
As Practice Placement Coordinator, I coordinate the social care placements for the Wexford Campus which involves preparing students for 2nd and 3rd year social care practice placement. I liaise closely with outside agencies who provide placement for our students and offer training regarding supporting placement and supervision to those agencies.

As Associate Lecturer and Programme Director LLL, I lecture on the social care and early years courses for LLL mainly in the area of research where I deliver the research methods modules and supervise students with their theses. I also teach the research methods module and supervise MA students in LLL's masters programmes in Child, Youth and Family and the MA in Leadership in Early Years. I coordinate and deliver the certificate in Family Support for the LLL programme. In my role as Programme Director for social care and early years I support the associate lecturers in those programmes with any queries/concerns they may have regarding the programme, and am involved in the design and delivery of the programmes.

Why did you decide to do the MA (Teaching & Learning)?
I was particularly interested in the research supervision module.

My role as a supervisor can be a challenging one and any further knowledge on the area is useful. I also wanted to improve my teaching skills both from a face-to-face point of view but also from a blended learning perspective.

What module(s) did you find valuable?
I really enjoyed the research supervision module. The lecturer was excellent, and I took a lot of knowledge from the module. I was surprised at how interesting I found the curriculum design module and the assessment and feedback module.

Has completing the MA influenced your own practice?
Yes greatly. I feel much more confident in how I deliver and organise my classes. My assessment and feedback strategies have improved and I find I can engage my students better.

What one recommendation would you give to those joining the programme?
Time – make sure you have enough time in your schedule to fully commit to the programme

Final comments?
I really enjoyed the delivery of this programme. Getting to know other colleagues from across different disciplines gave great insight into the work that others are doing.

About the MA (Teaching & Learning)
The Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning aims to provide participants with the skills, knowledge and competencies to design, teach, assess and evaluate educational programmes and to enable them to become professional, reflective practitioners. It will also equip graduates for roles in academic leadership and/or research supervision. The embedded Postgraduate Diploma comprises five mandatory modules and one elective module.

Individual modules on the programme are also available as stand-alone modules.
- Teaching and Learning 1
- Teaching and Learning 2
- Assessment and Feedback
- Curriculum Design
- Technology-Enhanced Teaching & Learning
- Education Research Methods
- Masters Research Project

Elective Modules
- Coaching and Mentoring in Education
- Academic Leadership
- Research Supervision

For more information on the MA, see our website and/or contact tlc@itcarlow.ie.
- https://www.itcarlow.ie/study/teaching-learning-centre/masters-teaching-learning.htm