4th Annual Conference on Teaching & Learning

The Challenge of Diversity:
Teaching, Support & Student Learning

8th June – 9th June 2006

Programme

&

Book of Abstracts

National University of Ireland, Galway

In association with

the

Dublin Institute of Technology

& the

National University of Ireland, Maynooth
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1. **FOREWORD BY PROFESSOR JIM BROWNE, REGISTRAR & DEPUTY PRESIDENT AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY**

Fáilte romhaibh go Gaillimh agus go hOllscoil na hÉireann Gaillimh. Tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh tairbhe as bhur gcuid ama anseo agus as an bplé agus an diospóireacht a bheidh againn faoi na hábhair thabhachta atá ag croílár na comhdhála seo.

Welcome to the 4th Annual Teaching & Learning Conference, focusing this year on the theme of “The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning”. This is a highly topical subject, particularly given the increasing emphasis on widening participation in higher education, the importance of which is emphasised by the presence of Ms. Mary Hanafin T.D., Minister for Education and Science. Access, Diversity and Learning Support are issues which strike a particular chord in this institution, given our desire to more closely serve the needs of our regional community whilst also strengthening our international links and welcoming overseas students and researchers. In addition, our civic and social commitment is reflected through, for example, our Community Knowledge Initiative, the recent establishment of Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, the Irish Centre for Human Rights, our international studentship scheme and our extensive, and highly successful, access programmes such as “Sport for Success”.

I am particularly pleased that this conference will be welcoming participants from across the world and hope that you all have an opportunity to not only share your knowledge and experience with one another, but also take the opportunity to see more of our institution and the local area.

I would also like to pay particular thanks to the keynote speakers: Dr. Mary-Liz Trant, the Head of National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education; Dr. Liz Thomas, Senior Adviser for Widening Participation at the Higher Education Academy (UK); Dr. Kerri-Lee Krause from the Centre for the Study of Higher Education (University of Melbourne, Australia); Professor Alan Hurst (University of Central Lancashire), Professor Dai Hounsell (University of Edinburgh) and Dr. Janette Ryan (Monash University, Australia).

[Signature]

**Professor Jim Browne**
Registrar and Deputy President
National University of Ireland, Galway
2. **WELCOME & INTRODUCTION BY MS. ELAINE KEANE AND DR. IAIN MACLABHRAINN, CENTRE FOR EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING AND TEACHING (CELT), NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY**

Dear Delegate,

Welcome to the National University of Ireland, Galway! We are delighted with the response to this, our 4th Annual International Conference on Teaching & Learning in Higher Education. This year's event is in association with the Dublin Institute of Technology and the National University of Ireland, Maynooth. We were inundated with submissions for oral presentations and posters and were also heavily oversubscribed in terms of registrations. We take this as evidence of the clear need for dialogue on topics relating to increasing student diversity in higher education.

Within the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching, we have been running a research project for the last few years, which explores learning and teaching in the context of increasing student diversity. Using individual interviews, focus groups and a comprehensive staff survey, the views and experiences of academics, those working in student and learning support, and students have been elicited. Over the coming months, the data will be collated, analysed and the findings disseminated. From the outset, the need for both a firm evidence base and increased discussion and debate on this issue has been clear to us and this conference, its associated publication and ongoing collaborative work represent our first response to these challenges.

The HEA, through its Strategic Initiatives scheme has supported our endeavours by funding a collaborative project with DIT and NUI Maynooth on the topic of “Supporting Non-Traditional Students in Higher Education”, which encompasses a range of activities including the creation of a database of examples of practice and policy. Information about this is in your conference pack and we hope to mark the official launch of this important new resource on day two of the conference (see detailed schedule for further information).

A further, significant output will be the publication of a book on this theme, contributions to which will come from some of the presenters at this conference. We hope that this contribution to the literature will raise the profile of the vital issues underlying widening diversity in the student population and, in particular, focus on teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

We are honoured, and delighted, that Ms. Mary Hanafin T.D., Minister for Education and Science will formally open the proceedings and provide the Conference Keynote Address. We are also greatly appreciative of the contributions of all presenters from whom we will hear over the next two days. In particular, we would, like to extend our thanks to those who have travelled some considerable distance to be with us, a welcome reflection on the extent to which the annual Galway conference is becoming a recognised event in the international higher education calendar.

Wishing you an enjoyable and successful conference,

Ms. Elaine Keane and Dr. Iain MacLabhrainn
Centre for Excellence in Learning & Teaching
National University of Ireland, Galway

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**Elaine Keane**
**Iain MacLabhrainn**
2.1 **CONFERENCE ORGANISING COMMITTEE**

**Ms. Elaine Keane** – (Conference Organiser), Research Assistant, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), National University of Ireland, Galway

**Dr. Iain Mac Labhrainn** – Director, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), National University of Ireland, Galway.

**Dr. Alison Farell** – Teaching Support Officer, Quality Promotion Office, National University of Ireland Maynooth

**Dr. Jen Harvey** – Head of Lifelong Learning, Dublin Institute of Technology

**Ms. Bernadette Henchy** – Administrative Assistant, Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), National University of Ireland, Galway

**Ms. Mary Bernard** – Administrative Assistant, Community Knowledge Initiative (CKI), Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), National University of Ireland Galway.
SECTION 3.0

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR DELEGATES
3.1 General Information
(Source: www.conference.ie)

Climate: Ireland has a mild climate with the warmest months being July and August. For more information and the current temperature check http://www.meteireann.ie/

Currency: The currency of Ireland is the Euro which is made up of 100 cents, for daily exchange rates check http://www.ecb.int/stats/eurofxref/eurofxref-xml.html

Language: There are two official languages in Ireland: Irish, which is the national language, and English which is the language of the majority of the population.

No Smoking: Smoking is now forbidden in enclosed places of work. This includes office blocks, various buildings, public houses/bars, restaurants: for more information: http://www.oasis.gov.ie/employment/health_and_safety_in_employment/ban_on_smoking_in_the_workplace_in_ireland.html

Time Zone: Ireland is on GMT.

Tipping: Most hotels and restaurants include a service charge of 10-15% to your bill. A small tip is appreciated for good service. Tipping is not usual in pubs. Taxis are tipped 10%.

Useful facts: More useful information can be found at http://www.irelandwest.ie/practical_info

Vat Refunds: Value Added Tax (VAT) is usually included in the price of goods and services in Ireland. Visitors to Ireland from outside the EU can obtain a refund of VAT. www.fexco.com

Visas: For the latest information on visa requirements check. www.foreignaffairs.gov.ie/services/visas/


3.2 Galway – The ‘City of the Tribes’
(Source: http://www.nuigalway.ie/about/introduction.html)

Galway was founded in the 13th century by the Anglo-Norman de Burgos as a medieval settlement on the eastern bank of the River Corrib. It became a walled and fortified city state ruled by fourteen powerful merchant families, later known as the “Tribes of Galway”. Today the city is a vibrant, bustling centre of the arts and commerce, though it still retains a relaxed and intimate atmosphere. Galway is also one of the most popular tourist destinations in the country. The city, with its medieval streets, waterways, extensive range of shopping facilities, wealth of music sessions and other cultural events, is a place to be treasured. The seaside town of Salthill, a Galway suburb, is a renowned summer resort. Its fine beaches open directly onto spectacular Galway Bay. Galway’s numerous annual festivals and celebrations – among them the ‘Cúirt’ International Festival of Literature, the Galway Arts Festival, the Galway Races and the Oyster Festival – are famous throughout Ireland and beyond. Galwegians can justly claim a quality of life that is surpassed nowhere in the world.

Being a University City, Galway is a lively energetic place throughout the year. The University, situated close to the heart of Galway, enjoys an intimate relationship with the city and during the academic year, 15% of the population of the city are students. A compact, thriving city, Galway caters to youth like few other places can. The University’s graduates have played a pivotal role in all areas of the development of Galway, including the arts, industry and commerce.
3.3 Conference Registration and Information Desk
Registration will be from 8.30 – 9.00am on Thursday 8th June & 9.00 – 10.00am on Friday 9th June. The Registration desk will be located in the main Foyer of the Arts Millennium Building opposite Na Bialanna (Restaurants).

3.4 Car Parking
There is limited parking on campus, for conference delegates, Monday to Friday from 08.30 to 17.30. Permits have been organised to facilitate access to two car parks on campus, Ref: Car Parks J and K. (highlighted on map overleaf).

Permits (example overleaf) are available to download from the website, www.conference.ie. These permits are available to registered delegates only and must be displayed at all times.

There are also a number of pay and display parking areas on campus (highlighted on attached map). Access is available to all car parks evenings (after 17.30) and weekends. All illegally parked vehicles, including cars not displaying a permit will be clamped.
CONFEREE DELEGATE
VALID ONLY FOR CARPARK(S):

J and K

CONFERENCE: 4th Annual Conference on Teaching & Learning
REGISTRATION IN Arts Millennium Building

VALID FROM: 8th June 2006
VALID TO: 9th June 2006

WARNING! Clamping in operation. Please observe the following rules:
- Park only in marked parking spaces in the above car park(s), or in Pay-and-Display (P&D) spaces.
- Delegates must clearly display this permit (or a valid P&D ticket) on the vehicle dashboard.
- Do not leave your car overnight, except by prior arrangement.
Off-campus, parking spaces around the city (except private car parks) are Pay and Display. Please ensure you check the maximum duration allowed as it varies from street to street. The Cathedral car park allows all day parking, as does the car park across the street from it. Both these car parks are within walking distance of the University.

Drivers of vehicles requiring the use of 'universally accessible parking bays' may only do so if their vehicle displays a valid and registered "blue badge". If they have a blue badge, drivers may use these bays for free. The Road Traffic Regulations, 1997, governs the issue of disabled persons’ parking permits in Ireland. Local Authorities, the Irish Wheelchair Association and the Disabled Drivers Association issue the permits. Permits are granted to all eligible disabled persons, irrespective of whether they are drivers or not, and they have National application. Any person who is suffering from a disability that prevents that person from walking or causes undue hardship in walking is eligible for a permit. For those permits not issued by the above agencies, the displayed permit must comply fully with EU recommendation (98/376/EC), which allows for its recognition in other EU member States. If you display a blue badge, you may use ANY of the universally accessible bays for free throughout the University, regardless of whether you hold a permit or not. Please see areas marked on map Page 13.

3.5 **Transport**
Information on the best way to get to the National University of Ireland Galway by train, road or air is available on our website at [www.nuigalway.ie/about/getting_to_nuigalway.html](http://www.nuigalway.ie/about/getting_to_nuigalway.html).

3.6 **Internet Access**
Please check with the Registration desk.

3.7 **Messages**
During the conference hours urgent messages for delegates can be taken at the conference desk. Due to the nature of the event it may be difficult to pinpoint their location. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the delegate to regularly visit the registration desk to check for messages.

3.8 **Personal Property**
Neither the University nor the Conference organisers can accept any responsibility for loss or damage to personal property.

3.9 **Conference Dinner**
The official Conference Dinner will be held on Thursday, 8th June 2006 at 7.30pm (for seating at 8.00pm) in the Inismore Ballroom of the Radisson SAS Hotel. For those who have booked a place for the Conference Dinner, your ticket will be issued at registration.
SECTION 4.0

CONFERENCE VENUE
4.1 ABOUT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND GALWAY
(Source: http://www.nuigalway.ie/about/introduction.html)

The University was founded in 1845 as Queen's College Galway. It was one of the three Queen's Colleges founded under the Queen's Colleges (Ireland) Act, 1845, the others being located in Belfast and Cork. The College opened for students on 30th October 1849. By the Irish Universities Act (1908), Queen's College Galway became a Constituent College of the new National University of Ireland, and under a new Charter the name of the College was changed to University College, Galway. In 1929, the College was given a special statutory responsibility under the University College Galway Act in respect of the use of the Irish language as a working language in the College.

Under the Universities Act, 1997, University College, Galway was reconstituted as a University, under the name of **Ollscoil na hÉireann, Gaillimh / National University of Ireland Galway**, and became a Constituent University of the National University of Ireland (together with NUI Dublin, NUI Cork and NUI Maynooth). Since the 1960s the university has experienced significant and continuous growth, both in stock of buildings, facilities and physical resources and also in the numbers of its students and staff. Its total student enrolment currently is about 15,000 (including students from over 40 countries), with academically strong programmes of teaching and research throughout its seven Faculties, namely Arts, Science, Commerce, Engineering, Celtic Studies, Medicine & Health Sciences and Law.

4.2 THE ARTS MILLENNIUM BUILDING

The conference will be held in two venues; the Arts Millennium (AM) Building and the Arts Concourse. All main sessions (Keynotes, etc.) will take place in the O'Flaherty Theatre in the Arts Concourse. All parallel and other sessions will take place in the Arts Millennium Building; in the Colm Ó hEocha, Patrick F. Fottrell & Máirtín Ó Tnúthail theatres – all on the first floor. Some sessions may also take place in the rooms on the ground floor of the Arts Millennium Building (AM107, AM108, AM109 AM110 and AM112). An update, if required, with regard to the venue of parallel sessions will be provided during the conference. Posters will be exhibited in the foyer of the Arts Millennium Building during the two days of the conference and the Registration Desk, as previously noted, will also be located here. The first floor can be accessed both by stairs and lift, the latter which is located to the left as you enter the main entrance of the Arts Millennium Building.

4.3 CAMPUS MAP

A campus map is provided overleaf. The Arts Millenium Building, the main conference venue is marked as ¤; The O'Flaherty theatre (in the Arts Concourse) where all main sessions will be held is marked as ¥; Na Bialanna, where lunch will be served each day is marked as ø. Car parks J & K where delegates can park once they display the official Conference parking permit are marked as ø & ø. Universally accessible bays are available in areas marked ß.
SECTION 5.0

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME
### 5.1 PROGRAMME SUMMARY

**THURSDAY JUNE 8TH 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.00 – 09.00</td>
<td>Registration &amp; Tea/Coffee</td>
<td>Foyer Arts Millennium (AM Building)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09.00 – 09.05</td>
<td>Conference Welcome</td>
<td>O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 09.05 – 10.15 | Keynotes I & II  
**Dr. Mary-Liz Trant**  
**Dr. Liz Thomas** | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 10.30 – 11.00 | Official Opening Address and Conference Keynote  
**Ms. Mary Hanafin T.D., Minister for Education and Science**  
(Introduced by **Dr. Iognáid Ó Muircheartaigh, President, NUI Galway**) | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 11.00 – 11.30 | Poster Exhibition & Tea/Coffee                                                              | Foyer (AM Building)                |
| 11.30 – 13.00 | Parallel Sessions (A)                                                                       | AM Building                        |
| 13.00 – 14.15 | Lunch  
Poster Exhibition                                                                 | An Bhialann Foyer (AM Building)    |
| 14.15 – 14.50 | Keynote III  
**Dr. Kerri-Lee Krause**                                                                    | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 14.50 – 16.30 | Parallel Sessions (B)                                                                       | AM Building                        |
| 16.30 – 16.50 | Poster Exhibition & Tea/Coffee                                                              | Foyer (AM Building)                |
| 16.50 – 17.30 | Keynote IV  
**Professor Alan Hurst**                                                                    | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 17.30 | Concluding Remarks                                                                           | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 20.00 | Conference Dinner                                                                            | Radisson Hotel, Galway             |

**FRIDAY JUNE 9TH 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09.15 – 10.00</td>
<td>Poster Exhibition &amp; Tea/Coffee</td>
<td>Foyer (AM Building)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 10.00 – 10.45 | Keynote V  
**Dr. Janette Ryan**                                                                 | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 10.45 – 12.15 | Parallel Sessions (C)                                                                       | AM Building                        |
| 12.15 – 12.45 | Launch of Database                                                                          | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 12.45 – 14.00 | Lunch  
Poster Exhibition                                                                 | An Bhialann Foyer (AM Building)    |
| 14.00 – 14.50 | Keynote VI  
**Professor Dai Hounsell**                                                                | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 14.50 – 15.30 | Panel Discussion                                                                            | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |
| 15.30 – 15.45 | Concluding Remarks                                                                           | O' Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse  |

**PLEASE NOTE: THIS PROGRAMME IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**
# The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning

**5.0 Programme — (Please note: This programme is subject to change)**

**5.1 Thursday, 8th June 2006**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>08.00 –</td>
<td>Registration &amp; Tea/Coffee</td>
<td>Foyer, Arts Millennium (AM) Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.00 –</td>
<td><strong>Conference Welcome</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dr. Iain MacLabhrainn (Director, Centre for Excellence in Learning &amp; Teaching, NUI Galway)&lt;br&gt;Ms. Elaine Keane (Research Assistant, Centre for Excellence in Learning &amp; Teaching, NUI Galway)</td>
<td>O’ Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>09.05 –</td>
<td><strong>Keynotes I &amp; II</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dr. Mary-Liz Trant (Head of the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education, Higher Education Authority)&lt;br&gt;Dr. Liz Thomas (Senior Adviser on Widening Participation, Higher Education Academy)</td>
<td>O’ Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30 – 11.00</td>
<td><strong>Official Opening Address and Conference Keynote</strong>&lt;br&gt;Ms. Mary Hanafin T.D., Minister for Education and Science (Introduced by Dr. Iognáid Ó Muircheartaigh, President, NUI Galway)</td>
<td>O’ Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.00 – 11.30</td>
<td><strong>Poster Exhibition &amp; Tea/Coffee</strong>&lt;br&gt;Session I Chair: Ms. Ann O’Brien (Access Officer, NUI Maynooth)</td>
<td>Foyer, (AM) Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 –</td>
<td><strong>Session I</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chair: Ms. Ann O’Brien (Access Officer, NUI Maynooth)</td>
<td>AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.30 – 13.00</td>
<td><em>Paper I</em>&lt;br&gt;Bentley, H. (University of Wolverhampton)&lt;br&gt;A three dimensional analysis of the factors influencing student engagement among socially and academically diverse students within a widening participation context</td>
<td>AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 – 13.00</td>
<td><em>Paper II</em>&lt;br&gt;Brodie (Caldwell), J. (Glasgow Caledonian University)&lt;br&gt;Diversity and difference in the learning experience of students in contemporary mass higher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 – 13.00</td>
<td><em>Paper III</em>&lt;br&gt;O’Shea, S. (University of Sydney)&lt;br&gt;Bridging the Great Divide – Researching the First Year Experience of Students who are First in the Family to Attend University</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 – 13.00</td>
<td><strong>Session II</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chair: Ms. Ann Monahan (International Students’ Officer, NUI Galway)</td>
<td>AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 – 13.00</td>
<td><em>Paper I</em>&lt;br&gt;Magne, P. &amp; Dawson, J. (University of Plymouth)&lt;br&gt;Working with lecturers to support international students in their academic writing</td>
<td>AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.30 – 13.00</td>
<td><em>Paper II</em>&lt;br&gt;Cogan Tangney, P. (University College Cork)&lt;br&gt;Effects of Cultural Differences in the Medical Undergraduate Clinical Years. A Qualitative Study</td>
<td>AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA</td>
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### Session III
**Chair:** Dr. Marie Morrissey, (Open Learning Centre, NUI Galway)

**Paper I**
Munro, K. *(University of the Witwatersrand)*
Non traditional organisational and teaching models for non traditional learners

**Paper II**
Laird, H. & Russell, C. *(The Open University in Ireland)*
Meeting the needs of the non-traditional learner in distance education

**Paper III**
Kelly, K. *(Dublin Institute of Technology)*
Experiences in the Dublin Institute of Technology Moving to a Student Centred Paradigm for Part-Time Mature Engineering Students

### Session IV
**Chair:** Dr. Thomas Cooke *(Community Links Programme, Dublin Institute of Technology)*

**Paper I**
Smailes, J. *(Northumbria University)*
Diversity, What's the problem?: Considering Barriers to Learning

**Paper II**
Chan, C. *(Dublin Institute of Technology)*
Opening the educational doors to modern China – expectations met?

**Paper III**
Moon, J. *(Bournemouth University)*
A ‘story-development’ workshop: a workshop method for reflective exploration of the learning of non-traditional students (or other aspects of student learning)

### Session V
**Poster Exhibition**

### Parallel Session (A) Contd.

### AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA

### Session I
**Chair:** Dr. Jen Harvey *(Head of Lifelong Learning, Dublin Institute of Technology)*

**Paper I**
Mason, C. *(University of New South Wales)*
Valuing Diversity within a Faculty Environment: Fostering the Opportunities and Meeting the Challenges.

**Paper II**
Keane, E. *(National University of Ireland, Galway)*
Experiencing the Challenge: The Views & Experiences of Students & Staff in the Context of Increasing Student Diversity

**Paper III**
Hamilton, S. & Lane, K. *(Indiana University)*
Addressing Challenges of Diversity with a Teaching Academy Devoted to Excellence in Teaching and Learning

### Session V Poster Exhibition

### AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA

### Session II
**Chair:** Dr. Thomas Cooke *(Community Links Programme, Dublin Institute of Technology)*

**Paper I**
Smailes, J. *(Northumbria University)*
Diversity, What’s the problem?: Considering Barriers to Learning

**Paper II**
Chan, C. *(Dublin Institute of Technology)*
Opening the educational doors to modern China – expectations met?

**Paper III**
Moon, J. *(Bournemouth University)*
A ‘story-development’ workshop: a workshop method for reflective exploration of the learning of non-traditional students (or other aspects of student learning)

### Session V
**Poster Exhibition**

### An Bhialann Foyer, (AM) Building

### 13.00 – 14.15
**Lunch Poster Exhibition**

### 14.15 – 14.50
**Keynote III**
Dr. Kerri Lee Krause *(Senior Lecturer in Higher Education, Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne, Australia)*

### 14.50 – 16.30
**Session I**
**Chair:** Dr. Jen Harvey *(Head of Lifelong Learning, Dublin Institute of Technology)*

**Paper I**
Mason, C. *(University of New South Wales)*
Valuing Diversity within a Faculty Environment: Fostering the Opportunities and Meeting the Challenges.

**Paper II**
Keane, E. *(National University of Ireland, Galway)*
Experiencing the Challenge: The Views & Experiences of Students & Staff in the Context of Increasing Student Diversity

**Paper III**
Hamilton, S. & Lane, K. *(Indiana University)*
Addressing Challenges of Diversity with a Teaching Academy Devoted to Excellence in Teaching and Learning

### O’ Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse

### AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA
### Session II
Chair: Ms. Lorraine McIlrath (Academic Staff Developer – Service Learning, NUI Galway)

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<tr>
<th>Paper I</th>
<th>Horntvedt, T. (Oslo University College)</th>
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<td>A classroom viewed in the light of multiculturalism or diversity thinking might lead to different consequences.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Paper II</th>
<th>McLean, D. (University of Teesside)</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Managing Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Diversity in the Classroom</td>
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<td>Mapping Exclusion in Undergraduate Psychology: Towards a Common Architecture of the Minority Student Experience</td>
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### Session III
Chair: Ms. Saranne Magennis (Director, Quality Promotion Office, NUI Maynooth)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paper I</th>
<th>Kiely, E. (Institute of Technology, Sligo)</th>
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<td>A Framework for Facilitating Student Learning along a ‘Support and Challenge Continuum’ through Mentoring Initiatives</td>
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<th>Paper II</th>
<th>Pillai, M., Bloy, S. &amp; Buckingham, L. (De Montfort University)</th>
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<td>Using a developmental approach to enhance students’ learning: a model of learning support for both traditional and non-traditional learners</td>
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<tr>
<th>Paper III</th>
<th>Flood, B. &amp; Byrne, M. (Dublin City University)</th>
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<td>Developing an understanding of the influence of background variables on academic success of first-year accounting students</td>
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### Session IV
Chair: Ms. Rita O'Donoghue (Mature Students’ Access Co-ordinator, NUI Galway)

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<tr>
<th>Paper I</th>
<th>Rooney, P. (Dublin Institute of Technology)</th>
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<td>Using learning technologies to support dyslexic students at third level</td>
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<tr>
<th>Paper II</th>
<th>Harvey, J., Buckley, D., Dixon, N., Behans, C., Byrne, P. &amp; Cooke, T. (Dublin Institute of Technology)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Hopes, fears, expectations: staff and student perspectives on an introductory train the trainers course designed to support the development of core computing skills within Dublin inner-city community groups.</td>
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<th>Paper III</th>
<th>Foster, C. (Aston University)</th>
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<td>Involving the family.</td>
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### Session V
Poster Exhibition

Foyer, (AM) Building
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<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>16.30 - 16.50</td>
<td>Poster Exhibition &amp; Tea/Coffee</td>
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| 16.50 - 17.30 | Keynote IV  
*Professor Alan Hurst (Professor of Education Studies, University of Central Lancashire, England)* | O’ Flaherty Theatre  
Arts Concourse                                  |
| 17.30  | Concluding Remarks                                        | O’ Flaherty Theatre  
Arts Concourse                                  |
| 20.00  | Conference Dinner                                         | Radisson Hotel,  
Galway                                        |

TBA – TO BE ANNOUNCED
## The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning

### 3.2 Friday, 9th June 2006

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<tr>
<td>09.15 – 10.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.00 – 10.45</td>
<td><strong>Keynote V</strong>&lt;br&gt;Dr. Janette Ryan (Senior Lecturer (Curriculum and Pedagogy), Faculty of Education, Monash University, Australia)</td>
<td>O’Flaherty Theatre&lt;br&gt;Arts Concourse</td>
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<td>10.45 – 12.15</td>
<td><strong>Session I</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chair: Mr. Enda Guinan (Assistive Technology Adviser, NUI Maynooth)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Paper I</strong>&lt;br&gt;Boyd, V. &amp; Mooney, E. (Glasgow Caledonian University)&lt;br&gt;Supporting disabled students – Improving the FE-HE transition</td>
<td>AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA</td>
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<td><strong>Paper II</strong>&lt;br&gt;O’Shea, A., Clarke, E. &amp; Murray, W. (Trinity College Dublin)&lt;br&gt;“What has that project done to you?” and what has it done for us?: Reflections on a User-led Philosophy for Developing Innovative Supports with Deaf Students</td>
<td>AM Building Theatre/Room - TBA</td>
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<td><strong>Session II</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chair: Dr. Tim Higgins (Department of Chemistry, NUI Galway)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Paper I</strong>&lt;br&gt;Paulusz, W. (Monash University)&lt;br&gt;Inclusive Practices in Action: Breaking down barriers for an integrated and collaborative approach to fostering greater learner engagement of non-traditional learners at university.</td>
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<td><strong>Paper II</strong>&lt;br&gt;Wynn, J. &amp; Woodbridge, P. (Coventry University)&lt;br&gt;Same But Different: Working with Student Diversity in HE – a film-based resource pack for staff</td>
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<td><strong>Session III</strong>&lt;br&gt;Chair: Dr. Deirdre Byrnes (Department of German, NUI Galway)&lt;br&gt;<strong>Paper I</strong>&lt;br&gt;Royce, M. (Liverpool John Moores University)&lt;br&gt;Moving towards a mainstream diversity culture – a study of support systems designed to encourage academic staff to take personal responsibility for equality issues in teaching and learning.</td>
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<td><strong>Paper II</strong>&lt;br&gt;Millar, G. (Monash University)&lt;br&gt;Coals to Newcastle? Providing support for teaching staff</td>
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<td><strong>Session IV</strong>&lt;br&gt;Poster Exhibition</td>
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<td><strong>Session V</strong>&lt;br&gt;Roundtable Session</td>
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<td>12.15 –</td>
<td><strong>Launch of Database</strong> – ‘Supporting Non-Traditional Groups in Higher Education’ – NUI Galway, NUI Maynooth and the Dublin Institute of Technology (Collaborative Project)</td>
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<td>12.15 –</td>
<td>Mr. Michael Kelly, Chairman, Higher Education Authority</td>
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<td>12.45</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
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<td>12.45 –</td>
<td><strong>Poster Exhibition</strong></td>
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<td>14.00 –</td>
<td><strong>Keynote VI</strong></td>
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<td>14.00 –</td>
<td>Professor Dai Hounsell (Professor of Higher Education, University of Edinburgh, Scotland)</td>
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<td>14.50</td>
<td><strong>Panel Discussion</strong></td>
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<td>15.30</td>
<td><strong>Concluding Remarks</strong></td>
<td>O’ Flaherty Theatre Arts Concourse</td>
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TBA – TO BE ANNOUNCED
SECTION 6.0

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

BIOGRAPHIES

&

ABSTRACTS
6.1 **PROFESSOR DAI HOUNSELL**

Dai Hounsell

Dai Hounsell is Professor of Higher Education at the University of Edinburgh, where he was founding director of the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Centre and has led the Enhancing Teaching-Learning Environments in Undergraduate Courses Project [2001-2005] funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council. He was until recently Coordinating Editor for teaching and learning of the international journal *Higher Education*, and his many publications include *The Experience of Learning, Changing Assessment in Scottish Higher Education* and *Reviewing Your Teaching*.

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**Title:** Reviewing and Enhancing Students' Learning: The Role of Research Evidence

**Abstract**

This presentation explores how research evidence can play a role in efforts to improve the overall effectiveness of undergraduate courses as 'teaching-learning environments' catering for larger and more diverse student intakes. By way of illustration, it focuses on research findings on the provision of guidance and feedback to first and final-year students on both coursework and examinations. The findings are drawn from both questionnaires and interviews, and grew out of close collaboration with the relevant course teams to identify action which could be taken to address students' perceptions and experiences of guidance and feedback. The analysis of the impact of the measures taken to enhance guidance and feedback undertaken revealed a mixed set of outcomes: strikingly apparent in one setting, less evident in others. Possible reasons for these variations in impact are explored, including fundamental differences between first- and final-year undergraduate courses which may affect the ease with which changes can be implemented. The presentation concludes by outlining a model of the guidance and feedback 'loop' which has resulted from further analysis of the data, and which may help course teams to pinpoint potential trouble spots which can arise for different students.
6.2 **PROFESSOR ALAN HURST**

Professor Alan Hurst

Born in Atherton, Lancashire, Alan has degrees from Hull, Manchester and Lancaster universities. After teaching history in school he became a lecturer in education at Poulton-le-Fylde College of Education, part of Preston/Lancashire Polytechnic. He was an early member of the National Bureau for Handicapped Students (now Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities). He investigated access to higher education and disabled students for his doctoral thesis, published later as “Steps Towards Graduation”. The title of Professor was awarded by the University of Central Lancashire for his work with disabled students in the university, nationally and internationally. He remains a trustee of Skill. He continues to publish papers and to lecture and lead workshops at conferences both in the UK and overseas. Currently he is completing a project on developing and disseminating materials for use by mainstream staff in training and continuing professional development. His growing interest is in how disability can be introduced into the curriculum content of courses.

**Title:** Making the Curriculum Inclusive – Learning from Working with Disabled Students

**Abstract**

There are two parts to the presentation. Having set the scene briefly in terms of policy, provision and legislation in England, the first part will focus on some characteristics associated with the development and implementation of inclusive learning and teaching. It will examine provision of information and publicity, course design, learning and teaching, assessment and quality monitoring and enhancement. The foundation for making progress will be seen in terms of the initial and continuing professional development of faculty staff. This leads into the second part of the presentation which will be to explore issues in relation to staff development for those working with students with disabilities for example who should deliver it and who should participate, when it might be done, how it could be delivered and what it could contain. The session will draw on examples from a recently completed, HEFCE-funded project aimed at developing materials for use by mainstream professional developers working in partnership with their specialist disability services colleagues.
6.3 **Dr. Kerri-Lee Krause**

Dr. Kerri-Lee Krause is a higher education policy researcher at the Centre for the Study of Higher Education, University of Melbourne, Australia. She is internationally recognised as a leading scholar on the student experience. Most recently she directed a national study of the first year experience in Australian universities with a team of colleagues. While her research focus lies with the student experience, her expertise spans broadly across higher education policy areas, including disciplinary cultures and their role in pedagogy, assessment and student equity issues. A significant part of her work involves providing policy and practical advice to institutions, academics and student support staff both within Australia and internationally on managing and responding to the changing student experience. Her role also includes supervising graduate research students and facilitating academic development workshops. She has co-authored two books including *Cyberlines: Languages and cultures of the internet* (JNP), which reflects her research interest in the role of changing technologies in learning and teaching.

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**Title:** Student Diversity in the First Year: Challenges and Rewards

**Abstract**

With the momentous global shift to mass higher education, the diversity of the undergraduate student population has become an issue of international import for higher education researchers and practitioners. The Australian national studies of the first year have been tracking changes in students' sociodemographic characteristics and university experiences over ten years. This presentation will feature empirical trend data on the relationship between student diversity and the quality of the first year experience. It will examine the challenges, as well as the rewards, of diversity for university students and learning communities. The focus will be on internationally relevant implications for teaching, learning and student support.
Dr. Janette Ryan is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education at Monash University, Australia. She has published extensively in the area of teaching and learning for diverse groups of students with particular reference to international students and students with disabilities. She has undertaken research involving both teaching staff and students in Australia and Britain. She is the author of *A Guide to Teaching International Students* (Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development, 2002) and co-editor of *Teaching International Students: Improving Learning for All* (London: Routledge, 2005).

**Title:** Responding to the Challenge of Diversity: Assumptions and Stereotypes

**Abstract**

Universities in Anglophone countries have in recent decades experienced a rapid expansion in the diversity of their student populations. For lecturers, this has meant that increasingly students’ experiences and expectations are different from their own. This is particularly the case with students with different cultural backgrounds and educational experiences. This can create challenges for lecturers as previously apparently successful teaching and learning strategies may not meet the learning needs of their new cohorts of students. This highlights tensions between what we see as ‘ideal’ student characteristics and how much these are influenced by our own assumptions and cultural perspectives of teaching and learning. In this paper, the implications of these changes for both staff and students will be examined. The various responses to this increased diversity will also be discussed in terms of the move from deficit views of students to more inclusive approaches. Finally, the appropriateness of much of the advice about teaching international students to contemporary Western and Anglophone concepts of scholarship and learning will be examined. It will highlight some of the inherent dangers of stereotyping and homogenising students’ cultural backgrounds, and the challenges (and rewards) that increased diversity of all students can bring for lecturers.
Dr. Liz Thomas is Senior Adviser for Widening Participation at the Higher Education Academy (UK). Liz is actively involved in research, policy and practice related to widening participation and improving students’ learning experiences. She is particularly interested in the retention and success of students from under-represented groups, and institutional change to support this. She has managed and participated in national and international research projects on these and related issues. Recent studies include a HEFCE-funded review of widening participation research literature, a national study of widening participation practice, funded by Universities UK and the Standing Conference of Principals and an international, qualitative study about young, working class students who leave higher education early, funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. In addition to research reports and journal articles, Liz has written and edited five books on access and widening participation and is co-editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*.

**Title:** Improving the Success of First Generation Entrants

**Abstract**

This session will draw from a number of national and international research projects to explore the factors that impact on the success of students from lower socio-economic and first generation backgrounds in higher education. The presentation will focus on socio-cultural barriers to participation and success, drawing a theoretical framework from the work of Bourdieu. This will be related to learning and teaching because for many non-traditional students the classroom is the key site of engagement, as they are less able to participate in extra curricular activities, more likely to live off campus and commute to study and likely to have high levels of external commitments. Curricular and pedagogic implications will be developed by contrasting the views of staff and institutions with those of students. Staff perception is largely that what is taught is of paramount importance, but research with students indicates that how they are taught is more important. Indeed, relational issues and a sense of belonging and engagement appear to be more important than curriculum contents.
6.6 **Dr. Mary-Liz Trant**

Dr. Mary-Liz Trant is the Head of the National Office for Equity of Access to Higher Education in Ireland. The National Office was established within the Higher Education Authority in 2003. Before that she worked as a development officer in further education and training, where her areas of responsibility included strategic planning, curriculum development and assessment and promoting access to higher education. She has worked as a teacher and lecturer in a range of educational institutions, including two centres for early school leavers, a Dublin vocational school, the University of Limerick and the Dublin Institute of Technology. Dr. Trant received her doctorate in 2002 from the Institute of Education, University of London. She has published on curriculum design and development, assessment, educational access and the liberal vocational ideal. She is currently working on a book on the liberal and vocational education traditions in Ireland.

**Title:** Creative and Innovative Teaching in the Context of Wider Access to Higher Education in Ireland

**Abstract**
Like in other European countries, achieving equality of access to higher education and providing a high quality education that enables people to reach their full potential have become important policy goals in twenty-first century Ireland. The definition of access includes not just entry to higher education but also participation and completion. For this reason, creative and innovative teaching and learning strategies are an essential part of the agenda for success. These strategies benefit all students, the average and the exceptional. This paper examines current teaching and learning initiatives in higher education in Ireland in the context of international research and practice. It reviews the changing role of teachers and lecturers and the challenges for institutions catering for an increasingly diverse student population. The paper also makes proposals on future strategies in teaching and learning in Ireland.
SECTION 7.0

ABSTRACTS

7.1 Oral Presentations
7.2 Posters
SECTION 7.1

Oral Presentations

7.1.1 Parallel Session A
7.1.2 Parallel Session B
7.1.3 Parallel Session C
7.1.1 PARALLEL A

PARALLEL A SESSION I PAPER I
Submitted By: Dr. Chris Hockings, University of Wolverhampton  
Dr. Marion Bowl, University of Birmingham  
Ms. Sandra Cooke, University of Birmingham
Presenter: Ms. Hilary Bentley  
Institution: University of Wolverhampton
Title: A Three Dimensional Analysis of the Factors Influencing Student Engagement among Socially and Academically Diverse Students within a Widening Participation Context

Abstract
The growth in the student population within Higher Education (HE) against a background of government policy promoting the concept of 'widening participation' has led to much debate about the nature of teaching within Higher Education. However, data continue to show a lack of engagement amongst some groups in HE (HEFCE, 2005/03) and the academic engagement of all students within increasingly large and diverse classrooms has proved difficult for some to achieve (Mann, 2001). The research that we report here is part of a two-year, ESRC/TLRP funded project entitled 'Learning and teaching for social diversity and difference'. The project is designed to explore the differences and similarities between students and teachers across a range of disciplines in order to develop strategies for improving the academic engagement and participation of all students, for creating inclusive learning environments and to inform the development of good practice. In this paper, we report on the first stage of this project by exploring some of the sociological, epistemological and pedagogical reasons why the learning environments within two universities (one pre- the other a post-1992 university) may impact differently on first year students. We do this by asking: what conceptions do students have about higher education, university teachers, their subject and themselves as learners prior to enrolment at university? How do these conceptions influence how they engage in, and benefit from, learning? To address these questions we focus on the experiences and conceptions of four groups of students whose educational, social, cultural and economic backgrounds vary considerably. We describe the range of qualitative and quantitative methods used to gather data including web-based questionnaires, focus group activities and semi-structured interviews and then draw upon three different theoretical perspectives to analyse the data. First, we take a sociological perspective, using theories of differentials in individual, family and institutional habitus (Bourdieu, 1977; Reay, 1998a, 1998b). Second, we take an 'approaches to learning' perspective (Marton and Saljo, 1976a, 1976b) and third, an epistemological perspective drawing on theories of knowledge and knowing (Belenky et al., 1997; Perry, 1970; Gilligan, 1982 ). We discuss the findings from this combined theoretical analysis and consider the implications for the wider academic and practitioner community of the factors that affect learners from diverse social and cultural backgrounds within the context of widening participation and mass higher education.

PARALLEL A SESSION I PAPER II
Submitted By: Ms. Joanne Brodie (née Caldwell), Ms. Nuala Toman, Mr. Jim Leahy
Presenter: Ms. Joanne Brodie  
Institution: Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning
Title: Diversity and Difference in the Learning Experience of Students in Contemporary Mass Higher Education

Abstract
Greater diversity amongst the student body can be observed particularly clearly in the ‘new’ university sector, established after the binary line was abolished in the UK. Universities within this sector have a much more diverse student group than older universities, and have seen increases in the diversity of students in terms of class, maturity, entry qualifications and ethnicity. This paper will examine the learning experience of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, mature students and direct entrants. It will explore the ways in which they interact with the institution, its staff and students, and examine the implications for institutions of this kind. It will draw on data from a longitudinal study of all full-time undergraduates
The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning

undertaken in a ‘new’ Scottish university. In particular it will focus upon qualitative data drawn from a series of in-depth interviews with students drawn from the complete range of schools within the institution. This qualitative data will be enhanced by quantitative data detailing the personal and social characteristics of undergraduates and their views on the context in which they learn.

PARALLEL A SESSION I PAPER III
Submitted By: Ms. Sarah O'Shea & Ms. Ann Jardine
Presenter: Ms. Sarah O'Shea
Institution: University of Sydney & University of Western Sydney

Title: Bridging the Great Divide – Researching the First Year Experience of Students who are First in the Family to Attend University

Abstract
This paper will examine what has been termed the ‘First Year Experience’ of students who are the first in their immediate family to attend university. Whilst the term ‘First Year Experience’ has only relatively recently gained currency within Australian higher education circles, interest in this particular period of student life has existed since the early fifties (McInnis, James & McNaught, 1995). Undoubtedly, this interest has become more apparent as student populations become more diverse and educational institutions are put under increasing pressure to be more economically efficient and accountable. This so-called massification of higher education has led to what Rendon (1994, p.33) terms a ‘tapestry of differentiation’ amongst students. No longer is the typical candidate a school leaver originating from predominantly white, middle class enclaves where the tradition of attending further education is well established. Instead, many students now access university through non-traditional modes of entry and as such, may not readily identify with or adhere to the values and practices found there. Mann (2001, p.11) compares the commencing student to a migrant or ‘colonised’ subject who is located powerless in a cultural environment that is attempting to thrust a particular perspective or worldview on them. This comparative is applied across student populations, Mann arguing that it is a common for students, regardless of background, to lack a ‘sense of ownership’ (p.11) about the university experience. Reay (2001) argues that mature age females in particular, experience a loss of sense of self. In this way, students are faced with the conflict of trying to ‘bridge’ between prior experience and the new world of knowledge they are entering, not as equal citizens but as powerless individuals. The presenters are both currently engaged in research that focuses on this particular student cohort, ultimately seeking to identify reasons for persistence in an often alien and difficult environment as well as strategies employed that aid this process. The desire to analyse these areas arises from the recognition that student populations should no longer be negotiated as a homogenous mass but instead research on student experience needs to recognise the diversity and heterogeneity characteristic of the global tertiary landscape. The presentation will showcase both qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative data of Sarah O’Shea will be discussed. This data is generated from interviews currently being conducted with female first generation students who have enrolled in a program of undergraduate study at a small regional university. The empirical data of Ann Jardine generated from surveying a random sample of first year students at a multicampus metropolitan university prior to the start of study will also be discussed. The presentation will thus define some of the key theoretical and research paradigms informing these studies and highlight the preliminary results.
### PARALLEL A SESSION II PAPER I

**Submitted By:** Ms. Pollyanna Magne  
**Presenter:** Ms. Pollyanna Magne & Ms. Julia Dawson  
**Institution:** University of Plymouth  

**Title:** Working with Lecturers to Support International Students in their Academic Writing  

**Abstract**  
Doyle and Robson (2002) tell us that the nature of the UK student population is becoming increasingly diverse. This is due to the growing numbers of students from non-traditional backgrounds, those with disabilities, mature students and so on. It also includes a significant proportion of international students who bring with them a wealth of differences in culture and thinking to enrich the student community. However academia in the Higher Education system of the U.K. poses its own cultural challenges to our international students, particularly where academic writing conventions are concerned. This paper will examine some of the underlying cultural differences in academic writing and explain how the Learning Development (LD) team at the University of Plymouth have worked with their academic colleagues to meet these challenges and better support their international students. The number of international students at the University of Plymouth has grown from 425 in 1998 to 1188 in 2005, an increase of 280% over a period of 5 years. With this growth both staff and international students have become more vocal about the issues concerning academic conventions and expectations in different cultures. These include issues of: student language ability; understanding of writing genre differences; attitudes to learning and the role of the teacher. Since our largest group of international students are from China it might be tempting to explain these issues simply as being in keeping with Confucian Heritage Cultures (CHCs), which supposedly promote rote learning and lack of critical thought (Biggs, 1999). However, CHCs are not wholly responsible and many of the challenges identified are also the experience of the wider student group (Ryan, 2000). The LD team at the University of Plymouth work with all eight of the university’s Faculties. Through collaborative work with academic staff and students LD has collated a rich set of feedback about some of the concerns focusing on academic writing skills in the UK context. Emerging from this is a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session entitled: ‘International students and academic writing: meeting the challenge’. The aim of this session is to unravel the underlying reasons behind these differences. This workshop was designed specifically for academic staff working with large groups of international students and aimed to provide staff with opportunities for discussion. It also intends to equip academic staff with a number of strategies that they can use within their teaching contexts to demystify academic writing for all students. This paper will feed back on the progress of this CPD event and outline the extent of its success in training and assisting academic staff in their endeavours to better support the writing skills of their increasingly diverse student body.

### PARALLEL A SESSION II PAPER II

**Submitted By:** Dr. Patricia Cogan Tangney  
**Presenter:** Dr. Patricia Cogan Tangney  
**Institution:** University College Cork  

**Title:** Effects of Cultural Differences in the Medical Undergraduate Clinical Years: A Qualitative Study  

**Abstract**  
**Aims:** The aim of this study was to investigate the experiences of international medical students in the later clinical years of a medical undergraduate course. **Methods:** An ethnographic case study was carried out in 2002, before a major curriculum review. A qualitative approach was considered most appropriate. 18 audiotaped semistructured interviews were conducted with 31 non EU students in the fourth and final years of medical school. The students were from Malaysia (Muslim and non Muslim), America, Canada, the Middle East and Africa. **Results:** Feelings of confusion and depersonalisation in the hospital setting were reported. This was present among all ethnic groups, but students reported that where there was consistent positive personal contact with an experienced staff member to guide them through clinical rotations, it greatly reduced the feelings of confusion and depersonalisation. **Conclusions:** Traditional methods of teaching may
need revision. Teachers need to be more flexible and aware of problems. The impact of the recent restructuring of the Medical school is currently being examined.

**PARALLEL A SESSION II PAPER III**

**Submitted By:** Dr. Helen Peters, Ms. Marie Turner & Mr. Julian Ingle  
**Presenter:** Mr. Julian Ingle & Dr. Helen Peters  
**Institution:** London Metropolitan University  
**Title:** The Construction and Reproduction of Knowledge in Different HE Cultures: An Alternative Approach to Plagiarism  
**Abstract**  
This paper will seek to address the theme of approaches to teaching that foster greater active learner engagement as well as that of supporting the needs of academic staff in relation to learning, teaching and assessment in the context of an increasingly diverse student body. We will be focusing on teaching and learning in the context of a student body inclusive of people from a range of cultural, educational and linguistic backgrounds. Many academics have written about plagiarism in student writing, often with particular reference to students from other than Anglo-Saxon cultural backgrounds. The terminology associated with plagiarism is often that of the law and criminality: Bamford and Sergiou (2005, p.17) talk about ‘ignorance’ as no ‘defence against accusations of plagiarism’, just as ignorance of the law is no excuse. The role of academics in relation to plagiarism likewise is often characterised as one of ‘detection’ and ‘deterrence’ (Carroll, 2002, p.23). As lecturers working with international students we spend a great deal of time considering plagiarism. Why do students do it? How do we explain to them that we don’t want them to do it? Why don’t we want them to do it? In researching for this paper we intend to conduct in-depth interviews with students and lecturers who have been educated in different cultures in order to find answers to these questions. Starting from an examination of different ways in which knowledge is constructed and produced in other HE cultures, our questions will focus on the processes of reading and understanding (or explaining) ideas, prior to the process of putting these into writing, and the expectations of students and teachers within these processes. We will also look at the way the Internet impacts on this and at how texts are reproduced and used by teachers and learners. In this way we would wish to develop a new approach to the issue, avoiding the negative, criminalising discourse and attitudes mentioned above, and perhaps starting from a different point, such as the point of reading a text and understanding and processing it before thinking about the writing process. Authors who have approached plagiarism from fresh perspectives in the past are, among others, Scollon (1999) and Angelil-Carter (2000), both of whom reflect on the ideology behind plagiarism as it is conceived of in UK universities. We would seek to follow their lead in a practical way with our students and colleagues to gain new understanding of how learning takes place and our role as teachers of students from diverse educational traditions.

**PARALLEL A SESSION III PAPER I**

**Submitted By:** Professor Kathy Munro  
**Presenter:** Professor Kathy Munro  
**Institution:** University of the Witwatersrand  
**Title:** Non-traditional Organisational and Teaching Models for Non-traditional Learners  
**Abstract**  
Wits Plus the Centre for part-time Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand was established in 2000 in the City of Johannesburg to offer a learning opportunity to adult working people. At the time of the establishment of Wits Plus, the Centre for part-time Studies, the objectives extended across widening access, meeting an entrepreneurial challenge and growing university undergraduate numbers. Six years later the centre is still in business and has diversified its objectives and responses to assist non-traditional students. Four major programmes exist – degree studies, access for success, short courses, and professional tuition courses. This paper explores how successfully this newly established centre met its goals, faced challenges and overcame a range of obstacles. Why has diversification been appropriate and
what strategies have facilitated growth? Most sensitive has been the dynamics of creating space for non-traditional learners in a highly traditional academy at a time of uncertainty, when there have been several switches in direction and mission on the part of the University of the Witwatersrand. The national landscape in higher education in South Africa has been fluid and in the opinion of the author of this paper, has failed to deliver (for structural, financial and other reasons) on idealistic early promises made to the working class constituency to widen access to higher education through increasing participation rates of adult learners. At the same time fluidity has been a feature of national training objectives with the creation of Sectoral Education and Training Authorities. The effective privatization of “training” has impacted in interesting ways on higher “education” for working people. This paper places a micro case study of a specific centre, within the macro educational framework in order to explore the problems of successfully providing a on-campus university facility in an urban environment for working people. The paper also sets out to explore what teaching models and what supports have facilitated learning for adult learners.

**PARALLEL A SESSION III PAPER II**

*Submitted By:* Ms. Heather Laird  
*Presenter:* Ms. Heather Laird & Ms. Charlotte Russell  
*Institution:* The Open University in Ireland

**Title:** Meeting the Needs of the Non-Traditional Learner in Distance Education

**Abstract**

The Open University provides supported distance learning across Europe. The model of supported distance learning is centred on the needs of the learner and lends itself to students from diverse social, economic and academic backgrounds. The Widening Participation Strategy aims to facilitate entry to higher education for students who are under-represented and to support these students to achieve their objectives. In Ireland, we have a particular focus on disabled students, economically disadvantaged students and those from remote and rural areas. In Northern Ireland, the University has a high proportion of students in receipt of financial assistance and disabled students allowances whilst in the Republic of Ireland, the University has a significant number of disabled students and many students who live in remote locations. This session aims to present how the needs of the students are identified through pre-course contacts, discussions and assessments, where appropriate. The role of proactive student support and contact will be discussed alongside the need to review and monitor student progress at particular points within a course or programme of study to enable successful achievement of the individual learners goals. A number of the different models of support used to facilitate learning will be described including particular formats of course materials, telephone tuition, on-line support, correspondence tuition and face to face sessions. The flexibility of learning and support, together with programmes to develop the skills required by academic and support staff, enable The Open University to meet the challenge of diversity.

**PARALLEL A SESSION III PAPER III**

*Submitted By:* Mr. Kevin Kelly  
*Presenter:* Mr. Kevin Kelly  
*Institution:* Dublin Institute of Technology

**Title:** Experiences in the Dublin Institute of Technology: Moving to a Student-Centred Paradigm for Part-Time Mature Engineering Students

**Abstract**

There have been massive changes to the Irish economy in recent years. These changes have brought pressure to bear on Higher Education (HE) in Ireland to help develop a workforce that will allow Ireland, one of the most open economies in the globalised market, compete at the higher end of the value chain in this era of globalisation. This means that HE must provide increased opportunities for mature students to acquire accredited degrees part-time in a student-centred learning environment. This paper will examine how the Engineering Faculty of DIT with 5000 students, out of a total DIT student population of 22,000 students, is dealing with these changes. A move to constructivist learning approaches, for example, in some part-time
programmes has sometimes led to unexpected results. There has been much change to the way engineering programmes generally have been delivered in DIT in recent years. Change is now an ongoing part of the work of curriculum design and development. New student-centred programmes with innovative assessment aligned to student learning outcomes are now operating successfully in the Engineering Faculty. An analysis will be made of the external environment that is putting pressure on the faculty to change. A comparison will be made of two very different but successful part-time engineering programmes. The first is a part-time ordinary degree (Bachelor of Technology) in Electrical Services Engineering with over 150 students presently enrolled. This programme is populated almost exclusively by mature students (mainly electricians) who complete this degree in four-years part-time. Recognition is given to their experiential learning and their prior learning on the educational phases of their apprenticeship. In particular, recognition is given to the fact that they have better opportunities to apply their learning and develop higher order learning skills than younger whole-time students who must postpone application of their learning until they enter industry. The second programme is a part-time honours degree programme (Bachelor of Engineering) in Electrical Engineering which has about 50 students enrolled. This programme is accredited by the Institution of Engineers in Ireland as fulfilling the academic requirements for Chartered Engineer. This has traditionally been a much tighter academic programme which was accredited at a time when tuition time was the emphasis by the accrediting body as distinct from programme outcomes. An analysis will be made of these programmes within the literature of Malcolm Knowles who first used the term androgogy (as opposed to pedagogy) for the science of teaching adults against the writings of Anne Hanson who believes the writings of Knowles are somewhat utopian and often ignore the academic pressures associated with programmes. The androgogical theories in the literature will be contrasted against the demands in practice of mature students on an academic part-time programme. This paper will contrast the theories against actual experience and discuss the difficulties in changing from a teacher-centred (didactic) teaching paradigm to a student-centred learning paradigm for academic staff and students in a modern engineering faculty.

PARALLEL A SESSION IV PAPER I
Submitted By: Ms. Joanne Smailes & Dr. Pat Gannon-Leary
Presenter: Ms. Joanne Smailes
Institution: Northumbria University

Title: Diversity, What’s the Problem?: Considering Barriers to Learning.

Abstract
Consider any course or programme. Is its make-up the same as it was 10 or 15 years ago? Would the majority of the class sail through their studies? Would they all be familiar and comfortable with the approaches to teaching, learning and assessment experienced? I suspect that the answers to these questions would be “No”, “Maybe” and “No”, as they were at Northumbria University. Skilbeck and Connell’s (2000b p.6) summary of barriers to student access and progression includes, amongst staff in higher education, prejudice towards - and lack of understanding of - the needs of particular disadvantaged groups and unwillingness or inability to provide support for such groups and George and Gillon (2001) have indicated, the realistic implication of widening of participation in HE is significant institutional, curriculum and staff development, derived from a student-centred focus. Northumbria University through its pedagogy for diverse student needs (PDSN) group wished to develop a better understanding of the learning needs of diverse student groups through projects to identify and disseminate good practice. To investigate further the University undertook a large-scale survey based on a number of literature sources and respondents were asked to respond to eighty statements surrounding student learning. This paper highlights the areas where differences were found different groups of student dimensions (e.g. international compared with UK students; disabled vs. non-disabled; 1st generation compared with 2nd generation). These findings in combination with relevant literature informed the basis for staff development guides to create an inclusive learning environment minimising barriers to learning.
PARALLEL A SESSION IV PAPER II
Submitted By: Dr. Cecilia Chan
Presenter: Dr. Cecilia Chan
Institution: Dublin Institute of Technology

Title: Opening the Educational Doors to Modern China – Expectations met?

Abstract
“The influx of Chinese across this island nation illustrates two trends of globalisation: the outward spread of China’s people as well as its goods, and the transformation of Ireland to a nation of immigrants”. These words from the Business Week magazine well describe the current state in the two emerging countries. Ireland, having developed from being a predominately agricultural economy in the 1950s, is now a thoroughly modern nation with well developed manufacturing and international services sectors and has the highest economic growth rate in the E.U. And China, from the founding of the People's Republic in 1949, is now slowly breaking away from its conventional political beliefs to adopt a more open-door policy to draw closer to the advanced Western world. The educated workforce produced in Ireland by the education system has been a key factor in attracting international investment to the country and in the growth of the modern technological industries which have helped make Ireland one of the fastest growing economies globally. Higher Education in Ireland is judged by international standards and the employment market for graduates is a global one. Ireland being an English speaking and neutral country is fast becoming an increasingly popular destination for students from all over the world. Ireland's booming economy, still growing despite a recent slowdown, has been the biggest lure. The Celtic Tiger has attracted many Chinese students to further their study in the hopes of future employment opportunities. In many institutions this has radically changed student demographics with some modules and programmes now almost entirely populated by Chinese students. With this large growing ‘client’ group about whom relatively little is known culturally, what have the higher education institutions done to support them? This paper will investigate the differences between Chinese and Irish Engineering and Science Students on their cultural, social, economical, political and psychological values within the Educational Perspectives in Ireland. The paper will not only concentrate on the communication difficulties but methods to improve intercultural communication and ultimately, raise people’s awareness of areas of difference so as to assist academics and non-academic staff in support services. It should be noted that this study is not a study of Chinese culture but how the culture plays an influential part in the educational lives of these international students in Ireland and what educators should learn to support them.

PARALLEL A SESSION IV PAPER III
Submitted By: Dr. Jenny Moon
Presenter: Dr. Jenny Moon
Institution: Bournemouth University

Title: A ‘Story-Development’ Workshop: a Workshop Method for Reflective Exploration of the Learning of Non-Traditional Students (or other aspects of student learning).

Abstract
In the conference presentation, the workshop will be described and details of its methodology given. The workshop is an example of a method of developing stories or case studies as material for research, pedagogical or personal learning purposes. It is also presented as a means of eliciting reflective thinking on an area of concern in higher education – in this case, issues in the learning process of non-traditional students. For either of these reasons, it could be of interest to any teacher in higher education or professional development and anyone interested in reflective practice. The workshop was developed as part of research into the quality of learning in students who come from non-traditional backgrounds (a project funded by the subject centre for education - ESCalate). It is based on the writer’s work on learning (in particular reflective and experiential learning - Moon, 1999, 1999a, 2004) and of developing and running workshops and short courses (Moon, 2001). In the work with non-traditional students, the requirement was to get beyond the stereotypes of students and their learning and to see the experience from the student perspective. The ‘Story Development’ workshop arose from a consideration of how one might work with staff who could not afford time for a workshop if it were solely for research purposes. The workshop is
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designed to provide an opportunity for reflection and learning about student learning as well as providing the information required. It has been conducted a number of times elsewhere and is based on group-work. To start with, each group develops a scenario of a plausible but imaginary non-traditional student who is having some typical difficulties with study. The group generates the student’s name, background and programme and his/her general reaction to higher education. There is then an alternating sequence of inputs on - or exercises related to student learning (e.g. on approaches to learning / areas of study difficulty, motivation etc.) and group reflection on this material and how the group applies it to the imaginary student. At each stage, further recordings of details are made. In this way, the scenario of the student and her difficulties is built up. Towards the end of the workshop there is an important stage when the groups discuss what support or help is needed in order that the student will cope better. The process of the workshop is guided by a substantial handout. The full workshop requires 2 - 5 hours. In the context of this conference, the design of the workshop as well as its content is significant and therefore there will be time for discussion following the workshop. The model could be used for the exploration of other issues in teaching, learning, education and professional development and practice.
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7.1.2 PARALLEL B

PARALLEL B SESSION I PAPER I
Submitted By: Ms. Colina Mason & Associate Professor Prem Ramburuth
Presenter: Ms. Colina Mason
Institution: University of New south Wales

Title: Valuing Diversity within a Faculty Environment: Fostering the Opportunities and Meeting the Challenges

Abstract
As student populations in Higher Education institutions become increasingly diverse, greater effort is being made to understand the nature of that diversity, the impact on teaching and learning, and the implications for management, including staff and student support. This paper reports on a project currently being conducted within a large and diverse Faculty in a Higher Education institution in Australia. The Faculty has a student population of over 8,000 (30% international) and over 220 full-time academic staff, also from very diverse backgrounds. The study examines, in greater depth, the demographic nature of the diversity, staff and student perceptions, teaching and learning expectations, and challenges encountered in managing the diversity. Through the implementation of staff and student surveys, face to face interviews, and focus groups, more precise information is being sought in relation to how diversity impacts on teaching and learning interactions at the classroom and Faculty levels. The study also seeks to gather and highlight practices that value diversity, and demonstrate benefits that may be gained from staff and student diversity. Finally, based on the findings and outcomes, it intends to collate concrete examples of current diversity management practices, design mechanisms for sharing the strategies as teaching resources, and create a platform for ongoing dialogue in the Faculty. The paper will report on preliminary findings that identify differing perceptions of student and staff roles and responsibilities, expectations, and major challenges. It will also present strategies and suggestions for teaching and learning improvement as identified in the context of the study, and provide recommendations for implementing change at organisational, classroom and individual levels. Furthermore, it will seek in-put and further recommendations from the audience, and target future directions for the research and its outcomes.

PARALLEL B SESSION I PAPER II
Submitted By: Ms. Elaine Keane
Presenter: Ms. Elaine Keane
Institution: National University of Ireland, Galway

Title: Experiencing the Challenge: The Views & Experiences of Students & Staff in the Context of Increasing Student Diversity

Abstract
It is widely agreed that most higher education institutions internationally have moved, or are in the process of moving, from being “elite” to “mass” systems (Schuetze and Slowey, 2002) although in many cases, an increase in participation has not necessarily led to a widening of participation. In response to this and a changing demography (McGuire, Collins and Garavan, 2003), Irish higher education institutions are increasingly focusing on the recruitment of so-called “non-traditional” students (such as students from lower socio-economic groups, students with disabilities, and mature students, as well as international and part-time students). The implications of this changing undergraduate student population in higher education have been under-explored in the Irish context, particularly in relation to the views and experiences of staff and students in the context of learning and teaching. Internationally, there is evidence to suggest that academics believe that the “calibre” of students at undergraduate level has declined (McInnis, 1999; Casey, 1999) and that their perceptions of increased workloads are related to the provision of academic support to under-prepared students (McInnis, 1999). Research also suggests that academics feel that non-traditional students should be integrated and assimilated into existing academic structures and culture, as opposed to institutional or tutor adaptation occurring (Macdonald and Stratta, 2001; Merrill, 2001; Postle et al., 1996). The experiences of non-traditional students in higher education are very diverse, with specific and sometimes different barriers experienced by different student groups (c.f. Lynch and O’Riordan, 1998; Bowl,
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2001; Shevlin et al., 2004; Kember and Leung, 2004; Fleming and Murphy, 1997; Littlemore, 2001). What then of the Irish context? This presentation will provide an overview of a two-year institutional research project focusing on learning and teaching in the context of increasing student diversity. Individual interviews, focus group interviews and a detailed questionnaire have been employed to explore the views and experiences of staff and students in one Irish university. In this session, preliminary findings will be reported and feedback sought from audience members.

PARALLEL B SESSION I PAPER III
Submitted By: Dr. Sharon Hamilton & Dr. Robert Orr
Presenter: Dr. Sharon Hamilton & Ms. Kimberley Lane
Institution: Indiana University

Title: Addressing Challenges of Diversity with a Teaching Academy Devoted to Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Abstract
The challenges of diversity, while poignantly context-dependent, are universally present in higher education. The challenges involve addressing the needs of socio-economically disadvantaged students, mature students, students with disabilities, part-time students, and minority ethnic groups. Long-standing abuse of and prejudice against our African-American population, however, has focused these challenges primarily on minority ethnic groups. This session will describe a major support effort for academic staff provided by our institution-wide Faculty Colloquium on Excellence in Teaching (FACET) at Indiana University. One major activity of FACET is our annual Leadership Institute, designed to develop leadership among academic staff in relation to compelling issues involving teaching, learning, and assessment. From 2001 – 2005, our Leadership Institute focused on the challenges of diversity. Teams of academic staff identified the challenges of diversity on their respective campuses (2001); developed a plan of action to address these challenges (2002); implemented these plans (2003); and reported on preliminary results of their plans (2004). In this session, we will describe this process, and provide the plans developed in relation to the challenges of diversity on each of the eight campuses.

PARALLEL B SESSION II PAPER I
Submitted By: Ms. Tone Horntvedt
Presenter: Ms. Tone Horntvedt
Institution: Oslo University College

Title: A class room viewed in the light of multiculturalism or diversity thinking might lead to different consequences

Abstract
Many students, particularly the non-traditional students, go through their bachelor programs without becoming integrated, without making friends and without feeling a sense of belonging to the learning community. To a certain extent the environment appears exclusive rather than inclusive. Some non-traditional students feel socially incompetent and express a contradiction between their self-ascribed identity and the identity ascribed by others. The research question in this paper is how both multiculturalism and diversity thinking can lead to constructing bridges or barriers between different worlds. This in turn may contribute to successful or unsuccessful participation in an equal relationship and/or may develop the feeling of mutual respect or disrespect between traditional and non-traditional students. Experience and research indicate that when diversity is emphasised in communication with students and in learning strategies, “differences” have a tendency to be ignored or neglected. On the other hand, active use of a multicultural approach may generate personal experiences which sometimes lead both students and teachers into ethical dilemmas.
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PARALLEL B SESSION II PAPER II
Submitted By: Dr. Dorothy McClean
Presenter: Dr. Dorothy McClean
Institution: University of Teesside

Title: Managing Cultural, Religious and Ethnic Diversity in the Classroom

Abstract
The sheer range of student needs that we face in our classrooms and lecture theatres within higher education today means that those of us who are responsible for teaching about diversity (in my own case in terms of health care needs), must also be mindful of teaching to diversity. Students studying in our institutions vary widely in terms of ethnicity, religious orientation, political beliefs, sexual orientation, ages and learning styles to mention but a few factors. Today, more than ever, the need for inclusive teaching practices is no longer, I believe, desirable but essential. As a nurse anthropologist, the classroom for me represents a ‘cultural’ group and the cultural environment of teaching and learning is vital to student experience and inclusivity. Fundamental changes are required in the culture of those classrooms where beneficent ethnocentrism, or mere tolerance of diversity is evident. Rather, what is required in the diverse classroom is a positive respect for and celebration of diversity. The promotion of mutual respect and egalitarian relationships between and amongst teachers and students lie at the heart of inclusive teaching practices. This presentation will focus upon the learning and support needs of both students and academic staff in terms of diversity and inclusive teaching practices. Teaching without provoking fear and paralysis in our highly sensitive and litigious times can be a very difficult and challenging process, the presentation will consider managing ‘hot moments’ alongside the depersonalisation of controversial issues as strategies for inclusion and successfully managing the diverse needs of all students and those responsible for their education.

PARALLEL B SESSION II PAPER III
Submitted By: Ms. Sue Smith, Ms. Anna Jessen, Dr. Ian Hodges, Dr. Sanjay Jobanputra, Ms. Carol Pearson & Ms. Corriene Reed
Presenter: Ms. Sue Smith, Ms. Anna Jessen, Dr. Ian Hodges, Dr. Sanjay Jobanputra, Ms. Carol Pearson & Ms. Corriene Reed
Institution: University of Westminster

Title: Mapping Exclusion in Undergraduate Psychology: Towards a Common Architecture of the Minority Student Experience

Abstract
Objectives: This paper addresses the issue of diversity in Higher Education within the context of the experiences of lesbian/bisexual/gay and ethnic minority psychology students. The paper is informed by previous research undertaken by the authors where the experiences of these groups had been explored separately. Thus, the paper re-examines the findings of these studies aiming to identify commonalities in the ways that students from minority groups are positioned and framed within their teaching and learning experiences of psychology - with a key focus on mapping the common architecture of minority students’ experiences. Design: The study utilised a qualitative approach informed by grounded theory principles. Methods: A meta-analysis of the results across all the studies was undertaken. Results: Overall findings indicated that personal expectations of psychology revolved around understandings of identity, career development and personal achievement. In terms of participants’ experiences, the consensus was that the general departmental and institutional atmosphere failed to affirm the value of minority identities and was therefore not conducive to positive self expression. There was also a shared disillusionment with the content of psychology which was not seen as properly reflecting the diversity of contemporary British society and culture(s). Conclusions: It was noted that regardless of the diversity of students’ experiences in terms of belonging to an ethnic minority or self-identifying as a lesbian/bisexual/gay, there was a common architecture that emerged across all of their experiences in the types of issues participants raised. All groups expressed levels of dissatisfaction with their experiences of studying psychology whilst still expressing some loyalty to psychology as a discipline/career choice. We pose the question how can psychology (through its teaching and learning practices, at both the individual and institutional levels) properly and meaningfully encompass the diversity of its student population?
**PARALLEL B SESSION III PAPER I**

**Submitted By:** Dr. Etain Kiely  
**Presenter:** Dr. Etain Kiely  
**Institution:** Institute of Technology, Sligo

**Title:** A Framework for Facilitating Student Learning along a ‘Support and Challenge Continuum’ through Mentoring Initiatives

**Abstract**
Mentoring initiatives can promote a collaborative mode of learning as mentors support student development by discussing ideas, modelling, explaining, promoting reflection with leading questions, providing encouragement, and keeping the attention centred on the learning context. This encourages the student to challenge their existing constructs, reflect, examine, and refine their ideas. Development in this area however requires appropriately matched mentor and mentee pairings in order for the mentor to facilitate the mentee’s growth. The mentor should be aware of the need to aim and target the ‘support and challenge continuum’ to match the appropriate level of the mentee to provide directive or collaborative supervision depending on their cognitive level. This paper proposes how to make science education more relevant and meaningful for learners in ways that respect and support student diversity. It promotes the importance of training mentors in both technical and cognitive skills to enable them to code students’ behaviour and challenge students’ constructs during feedback mentoring sessions. A detailed framework for developing mentoring activities along a developmental continuum is presented. The continuum takes account of stages of student development and considers the appropriate level of support, the role of the mentor, the types of mentoring activities and the associated styles of mentoring. The paper also offers suggestions for applying this framework across disciplines to support traditional and non-traditional learners.

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**PARALLEL B SESSION III PAPER II**

**Submitted By:** Ms. Mary Pillai  
**Presenter:** Ms. Mary Pillai, Ms. Sue Bloy & Ms. Louise Buckingham  
**Institution:** De Monfort University

**Title:** Using a Developmental Approach to Enhance Students’ Learning a Model of Learning Support for both Traditional and Non-Traditional Learners

**Abstract**
A traditional deficit approach to supporting learning, that is reactive, remedial and specialist, is costly, and limited in its impact. (Cottrell, 2001; Wolfendale, 1996; Peelo and Wareham, 2002; Tinto, 1997). The result of depending on such an approach is that many students who would benefit from support for their learning, but who don’t actually fail, may not find help until late in their studies or, never find it at all. Typically, if these students survive on their course, they do so by resorting to safe surface approaches to learning and consequently never reach their highest potential. A developmental model of learning support however: (i) acknowledges that it is not helpful to categorise students as ‘vulnerable’ or ‘at risk’ or ‘failing’ but that most students (maybe all students) need support for their learning at some point during their studies, (ii) encourages students to be pro-active, to make decisions about their own study strategies prior to embarking on assignment work rather than simply making reactive responses to grades and assignment feedback, (iii) recognises that many students are unsure about the appropriateness of help-seeking, and (iv) involves collaboration between faculty staff (both academic and support) and central teams to provide contextualised support. In view of the rich diversity of students currently in higher education, it is important to ensure that the potential of all students is acknowledged and developed. This presentation will outline a learning development approach to supporting learning, which operates successfully across different subject areas and levels and modes of study. Key elements of this model are (i) a self-assessment exercise undertaken at induction by over 15,000 students over the last 7 years, (ii) diverse gateways to support including embedded bespoke support for study (contextualised course-based provision) and centrally provided generic study skills, (iii) practical learning materials that are accessible to all students and are used at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Each of the key elements has an intrinsic value but there is added value in overtly acknowledging their inter-relationships and positioning them in the curriculum in a timely and relevant manner.
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PARALLEL B SESSION III PAPER III
Submitted By: Dr. Barbara Flood & Dr. Marann Byrne
Presenter: Dr. Barbara Flood & Dr. Marann Byrne
Institution: Dublin City University

Title: Developing an Understanding of the Influence of Background Variables on Academic Success of First-Year Accounting Students

Abstract
There are more students in higher education in Ireland than ever before (Department of Education & Science, 2005). Added to the increasing engagement of traditional school-leavers, there is also considerable emphasis placed by higher education institutions on encouraging non-traditional students, namely, international students, mature students, students with disabilities and students who have encountered economic disadvantage. All of these changes and initiatives have resulted in a wider student body with a greater diversity of prior academic and personal experiences than in the past. Understanding factors associated with academic success and failure is particularly important in this context, as the intention of policy initiatives is not simply to encourage students to commence higher education study but to complete it satisfactorily. It is clear that the more information educators have regarding factors which are associated with academic success or failure, the better they can support students through their higher education studies and the better they can advise potential students on suitable programmes of study.
Against this backdrop, the objective of this paper is to explore the factors associated with academic success in the first-year of an accounting programme at an Irish university. Little such research has been conducted with Irish undergraduate accounting students in recent years, thus this paper will firstly examine the impact of variables which have been found in prior studies to be associated with success, e.g., prior academic achievement, prior knowledge of accounting and gender. Additionally, this study aims to add to prior literature by exploring the relevance of additional background variables not considered in previous studies in the accounting context. More specifically, it will examine the relationships between students’ motives, expectations and preparedness for higher education and academic success in the first year of their accounting degree. Data regarding the background variables were gathered using a questionnaire distributed to students at the commencement of their accounting degree programme at an Irish university. Students’ examination marks were used as measures of academic performance. Using regression analysis, this study identifies that a range of factors explain variation in the academic performance of the students. Factors which emerged as significant include: prior academic achievement; prior knowledge of accounting, students’ confidence in their skills and abilities, perceptions regarding the role of university in career development, positive prior experiences of learning accounting and a desire to experience intellectual growth. The paper concludes by evaluating the implications of these findings for policy makers, educators and for future research.

PARALLEL B SESSION IV PAPER I
Submitted By: Ms. Pauline Rooney
Presenter: Ms. Pauline Rooney
Institution: Dublin Institute of Technology

Title: Using Learning Technologies to Support Dyslexic Students at Third Level

Abstract
Over recent decades the Higher Education sector has undergone rapid expansion, with huge increases in student enrolments (Skilbeck, 2001; Trow, 1974). This expansion has led to a more diverse student population, with greater numbers of mature, disadvantaged and disabled students entering the sector. In particular, students with learning disabilities have increased steadily year by year, those with learning disabilities currently constituting the fastest growing group on campus (University of Maryland University College, 2005). The increasing number of dyslexic students at third level has stimulated a greater awareness of their support needs. As a result, many institutions have implemented support mechanisms through, for example, learning support tutors, assistive technologies and counselling services. One potential area of support which, to date, has remained relatively unexplored however, is learning technologies. This is surprising, considering the extensive research that is currently on-going into how such technologies can be used to enhance the teaching and learning process (Garrison and Anderson,
This session will present the findings to date of a critical action research study in the DIT which is investigating how, and if, learning technologies can be used to aid the learning process specifically for dyslexic students. Presenting research carried out with a focus group of eight dyslexic students from various programmes, this presentation will address the following questions: (i) How are learning technologies currently being used to support dyslexic students at third level? (ii) What types of barriers to their learning process are dyslexic students at third level currently experiencing? (iii) Can learning technologies be used to overcome these barriers? If so, how? (iv) What types of media and e-learning pedagogical strategies are most appropriate for dyslexic students? By addressing these questions, this presentation aims to provide a useful insight into how learning technologies can be used to enhance current learning and teaching support mechanisms for dyslexic students in Higher Education.

PARALLEL B SESSION IV PAPER II
Submitted By: Dr. Jen Harvey
Presenter: Dr. Jen Harvey, Ms. Denise Buckley, Mr. Niall Dixon, Ms. Catherina Behans, Mr. Peter Byrne & Dr. Tommy Cooke
Institution: Dublin Institute of Technology
Title: Hopes, Fears, Expectations: Staff and Student Perspectives on an Introductory Train the Trainers Course Designed to Support the Development of Core Computing Skills within Dublin Inner-City Community Groups

Abstract
As part of a Digital Communities project initiated by Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and Hewlett Packard, a number of flats have been refurbished as computer training labs within 14 different Dublin inner-city areas. The training and associated support provided to members of these communities is an essential part of the project and the Internet and Core Computing Certification (IC3) courses are now routinely in all the refurbished flat complexes. The project actively tackles what has been described as the digital divide by providing appropriate training for communities, within their communities thereby improving an individual's employment potential. As the demand for these courses increases, so the need for trainers to provide this training increases. This paper will outline a short course developed by the DIT for members of these inner city communities who have successfully completed IC3 certification and who might be interested in becoming involved as trainers within their community. Approximately 40 adult learners will have completed this programme by June 2006 and several successful graduates of the course are now paid as trainers within inner-city flat complexes from across Dublin. The paper will also outline how this 10 week evening course was developed and then tailored specifically to meet the needs of this non-traditional adult learner group, mostly from backgrounds where there was little tradition of third level education. The title for the session is drawn from an icebreaker postcard activity coordinated during the first night of the course. As predicted, common themes emerged from this exercise and these will be compared to those identified from student feedback as part of a later reflective assessment activity and as part of the end of course evaluation. For many of the staff involved in developing and teaching this course, it was a first experience of working with inner-city community groups and so they brought their own hopes, fears and expectations. This paper will also explore the shared experience of both staff and students working together to address the training needs of these community groups. For all involved in the initiative, this has been a positive and rewarding experience: the course has never been officially advertised but there are already waiting lists for a fourth and fifth cohort!
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PARALLEL B SESSION IV PAPER III
Submitted By: Ms. Catherine Foster & Dr. Helen Higson
Presenter: Ms. Catherine Foster & Dr. Helen Higson
Institution: Aston University

Title: Involving the Family

Abstract
As the Higher Education environment changes, Universities are seeing an increase in the involvement of parents. This may be partly due to tuition fees and the introduction of top-up fees (from 2006) but also to the increased number of students choosing to remain in the family home for the duration of their studies. Parental involvement begins before Higher Education and can be seen throughout a child’s educational career. Pre-entry to University, parents and family are often the key influence and source of advice for many students, especially students from non-traditional backgrounds. In light of this increase in involvement, institutions need to provide information about, and access to, University, to ensure that families (as key support networks) are prepared and able to support their children throughout their University experience to enable students to succeed and achieve their full potential on their arrival at University. For those working within the Widening Participation field it is particularly important to ensure students from under-represented groups, and their families, are appropriately prepared for their transition into Higher Education. For those parents with little or no personal experience of Higher Education (parents from groups under-represented in HE have little if any personal experience of HE), this can be a confusing time and they can feel ill-equipped to support fully their child throughout the process. In recognition of this vital role parents play for their children, the Involving the Family project focuses on the parents or key family members of potential students and aims to raise awareness and understanding of Higher Education for parents/family and other close advisers of students from under-represented and excluded groups. This paper describes the research undertaken during 2004 to investigate the views, perceptions and key issues/concerns minority ethnic parents held with regards their children and participation in HE study. Research was undertaken using surveys and interviews/focus groups conducted with parents from within the West Midlands region. Key findings from this research which will be discussed in this paper include key concerns held about their child attending University, differences between minority ethnic groups and their perceptions of University (such as finance, moving away etc). The session will then look at the key activity of the project and its future plans.
7.1.3  PARALLEL C

PARALLEL C SESSION I PAPER I
Submitted By:  Ms. Victoria Boyd & Dr. Elizabeth Mooney
Presenter:  Ms. Victoria Boyd & Dr. Elizabeth Mooney
Institution:  Glasgow Caledonian University

Title:  Supporting Disabled Students – Improving the FE-HE Transition

Abstract
The FE-HE articulation process is widely acknowledged to be characterised by a complexity of issues. Students making the transition are faced with ambiguities, such as lack of awareness of services, key staff contacts or the logistics of studying in a larger and more disparate environment. Students with a disability or additional learning need may find these difficulties amplified. Change in environment, variations in support and new teaching delivery methods carry huge potential to undermine the learner’s experience. Taking account of and managing student fears and expectations is key to gaining a better understanding of the requirements and preferences of disabled students reaching University from FE. This paper will examine: (i) the influence of student expectations, aspirations and needs on the provision of support for students with disabilities; (ii) discrepancies in guidance models and face-to-face contact time with staff in FE and HE; (iii) adaptation of coping strategies by disabled students for a new learning, teaching and assessment environment; and (iv) staff experience in supporting students making the transition.

PARALLEL C SESSION I PAPER II
Submitted By:  Ms. Amy O’Shea
Presenter:  Ms. Amy O’Shea, Ms. Emma Clarke & Ms. Wendy Murray
Institution:  Trinity College Dublin

Title:  “What has that project done to you?” and what has it done for us? Reflections on a User-led Philosophy for Developing Innovative Supports with Deaf Students

Abstract
Recent research shows that Deaf and hard of hearing students are significantly under-represented in third level education (AHEAD, 2005). The HEA-funded Deaf Needs Assessment (DNA) project based in Trinity College, Dublin aims to increase the numbers and retention of deaf students in third level education in Ireland. This paper follows the definitions in Ladd (2003) Understanding Deaf Culture (Clevedon, London): 'hard of hearing' refers to those for whom deafness is primarily an audiological experience; 'Deaf' refers to members of the Irish Deaf community who use ISL; the lowercase ‘deaf’ refers to all people with hearing loss, including those deafened later in life.Key to its success is a philosophy which respects the right of each deaf student to identify their communication and third level support structures, involving them as informed experts. Grounded in the work of the project, this presentation will consider opportunities for a user-led approach in other activities of teaching and learning. Students will present their own experiences to reflect the challenges and achievements of the project in its achievements so far. The complexities of catering to this diverse student group will be considered through the use of case studies, and future directions and challenges in enhancing the retention and successful participation of this student group will be discussed.

Note: Amy O’Shea and Emma Clarke will present in English, Wendy Murray will present in Irish Sign Language (interpreter present).
PARALLEL C SESSION II PAPER I

Submitted By: Ms. Wendy Paulusz
Presenter: Ms. Wendy Paulusz
Institution: Monash University

Title: Inclusive Practices in Action: Breaking down Barriers for an Integrated and Collaborative Approach to Fostering Greater Learner Engagement of Non-Traditional Learners at University

Abstract
This paper reports on an Inclusive Practices Project (which commenced in May 2005) at Monash University, Australia. The project supports non-traditional learners, in particular students with a learning disability and/or mental health issue, which impacts on learning. It conforms to the Monash University Inclusive Practices Disability Action Plan 2004 – 2008 and is being carried out by the Language and Learning Services Unit which is part of the Centre for the Advancement of Learning and Teaching. There are 3 components to the Project: First, to overcome institutional barriers by developing a collaborative support system through close liaison between the Language and Learning Services Unit and the Disability Liaison Unit along with faculty and counselling staff, co-ordinated by a project manager operating out of both units. Students with any problems or issues therefore gain direct and immediate access to a network of support. Second, to address the support needs of academic and support staff by instigating a change in their conceptualisation of how non-traditional learners might learn. This change in thinking and attitude is seen as a precursor to a change in teaching methodologies which will benefit both traditional and non-traditional learners. This is done through a series of workshops as well as on-line and face-to-face support in a particular faculty/department. Outcomes so far have shown that staff welcome such support and training as they often feel uncertain about how to identify and proceed with this cohort of students. Third, to work individually and collaboratively with students to explore their own learning styles and develop more effective study strategies. This approach enables students to gain greater independence and better understanding of their metacognitive skills and self-efficacy beliefs. Outcomes to date have shown that this approach has fostered greater learner engagement resulting in improved retention and satisfaction rates. The method underlying these 3 components to facilitate behavioural and attitudinal change for both staff and students has been motivational interviewing integrated with concepts from solution-oriented counselling and ontological coaching.

PARALLEL C SESSION II PAPER II

Submitted By: Professor Karen Ross
Presenter: Ms. Jane Wynn & Mr. Peter Woodbridge
Institution: Coventry University

Title: Same But Different: Working with Student Diversity in HE – a film resource pack for staff

Abstract
The last twenty years have seen a significant change in the composition of the student body in higher education and the contours of higher education have changed as a result of widening participation initiatives as well as Acts such as the RRAA, SENDA and other legislation focusing on sexuality, religion and (soon) age. However, whilst much energy has been put into the recruitment of non-traditional students, rather less effort is made to develop strategies to support them during their academic careers. Although all HEIs now regularly review their Race Equality Schemes and their equality and diversity guidance, there is rather less attention given to how staff actually manage sensitive issues in the classroom and their relations with students, hence this project proposal. Whilst the introduction of each new piece of equality legislation provokes a rash of staff training on compliance, it is how we act and behave towards our students and manage their learning, not simply our knowledge of the law, which can affect the success or otherwise of their learning and our institutions. It is our ability to sensitively discover any needs which our disabled students might have, which will determine their sense of being valued. It is our courage to challenge racist remarks which will encourage students to talk about any anti-Islamic sentiments they encounter. It is in recognising our own feelings towards a gay student’s disclosure of his sexuality that will enable us and him to move his learning forward in a
productive and meaningful way. There is a clear gap in the provision of training materials which focus on working with student diversity within an explicitly HE context. Whilst there are studies which look at ways in which to work more effectively with students (e.g. the Formative Evaluations Project undertaken by several Learning and Teaching Subject Networks; and the Leeds University project, Building the Anti-Racist HEI toolkit), none of these approaches use the medium of film as the primary ‘teaching’ method. Same But Different takes a film-based approach to identifying some of the concerns which students have and some of the problems they face during their HE career, where these experiences can affect their learning but are not related to their academic abilities. Through a series of short scenes, the resource pack aims to show how students’ teaching and learning can be affected by the attitudes and behaviour of staff towards them and how, equally, their academic experiences can be enhanced by improved sensitivity and understanding on the part of staff. The resource pack comprises a film (DVD format, sub-titled and non-sub-titled) and a text-based workbook (also on the DVD) which provides a brief discussion of what each scene intends, together with examples for staff development activities focused on five related equality and diversity issues: the older learner; cultural awareness; sexuality; gender; and disability. Some scenes incorporate more than one ‘issue’. Each topic has between 2 and 6 related scenes.

**PARALLEL C SESSION III PAPER I**

**Submitted By:** Ms. Maureen Royce  
**Presenter:** Ms. Maureen Royce  
**Institution:** Liverpool John Moores University

**Title:** Moving towards a Mainstream Diversity Culture – a Study of Support Systems Designed to Encourage Academic Staff to Take Personal Responsibility for Equality Issues in Teaching and Learning

**Abstract**

The paper will consider the development of strategies to support academic staff in taking personal responsibility for integrating diversity and access into mainstream learning and teaching activities in a post-1992 UK University. The paper analyses case studies following the development and delivery of strategy between 2000 and 2005 and are places at the level of the institution, faculty and individual. The paper describes changes in the delivery and dissemination of diversity strategy, evaluating the move from centralised to devolved responsibility within faculty academic teams. Critical incident methodology is used to lend the richness of individual experience to the institutional analysis. The paper recognises the role of the individual academic in delivering strategies designed to support increasing student diversity and evaluates the contribution of local coordinators acting as diversity champions. The effectiveness of the coordinators in carrying out multiple roles – monitor, motivator and advisor is considered. Academics have a role in showing by example how equality practices and policies within the institution impact on their own teaching and behaviour. The aim of mainstreaming diversity is to ensure its integration within all aspects of the institution, rather than remain as a flagship policy as was a common pattern in higher education. Efforts to mainstream immediately raise the question of individual behaviour in a teaching context and the paper considers the extent to which institutional strategy is able to support the individual academic in developing diversity practices. Earlier research into diversity and equality initiatives in UK Universities reveals a fairly haphazard approach to strategy and considerable variation between strategies (Jewson and Mason, 1992; Neal, 1998). Dibben, James and Cunningham (2001) point to the marginalisation of equality practice in the sector while De Lowerntal (2003) and Cornelius (2003) highlight the environmental constraints and requirements in mainstreaming diversity initiatives. This paper examines the development of process within these constraints and moves towards an understanding of the barriers to achieving an integrated structure to support student diversity. Action research methodology (Easterby-Smith et al. 1991) underpins the case study research evaluated in the paper. Action research has been defined (Gill and Johnson, 1991) as a mechanism suitable for evaluating innovation and reform within organisations and since the strategic aim was to bring about change in the organisation, action learning provided a coherent vehicle for examining the purpose, collaborative effectiveness and implications of the strategy.
Universities in Australia as elsewhere are depending more and more on full-fee-paying international students, mostly from East Asia, for their economic survival. The influx into their classrooms of large numbers of non-native-speaker students from significantly different cultural backgrounds puts great pressures on teaching staff who have no special training and little institutional support to equip them to meet these additional demands. They may express a sense of frustration, a concern about slipping standards in teaching and assessment, and a degree of resentment towards the national and institutional policies that lead to these outcomes. At the same time, given the effort they put into maintaining the quality of their teaching, they can be very sensitive to any implication of deficit they may see in efforts to assist them that come from outside their own department or faculty. The language and learning support unit at a major Australian university is in the process of producing a website to provide support for academic staff teaching students from mainland China, now the major source of international students in Australia. At the heart of the project is a series of student interviews conducted in English and Chinese, exploring their experience in adapting to study in a foreign language and educational culture, and supplemented by interviews with faculty staff. The website will provide (a) a distillation of the student interviews focusing on differences of educational culture and problems of adjustment; (b) information on Australia's principal language gate-keeper, the IELTS test, with a consideration of its use as a tool for student admissions; and (c) a reflection of the pedagogical concerns articulated in the staff interviews, together with a range of resources to assist staff in responding to them. The present paper will report on the formative evaluation of this website through trialling sessions conducted with faculty staff. Which parts of the site do they find of interest and potentially useful? To what extent are they prepared to promote its use by other staff members? And in general, how appropriate is a resource of this sort to the needs of its intended readership?
SECTION 7.2

Posters

(In alphabetical order by surname of first presenter)
The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning

Submitted By: Dr. Phil Askham
Presenter: Dr. Phil Askham
Institution: Sheffield Hallam University

Title: Excitement, Dread and Trust in Adult Learning and Teaching
Abstract
This poster explores a longitudinal study examining the experiences of 22 part-time, adult, work-based learners, mostly experiencing HE for the first time. This was part of a longer action research cycle that used a wide range of instruments, including interviews and diaries, to collect data to explore, in some depth, the nature of the learning and teaching experience. Data analysis was undertaken using a matrix framework focusing on the positive and negative dimensions of experience from both individual and institutional perspectives. The study identified tensions between individual anticipation and anxiety and institutionally between the positive conceptualizations of the supportive learning community contrasted with manifestations of higher education as a potentially alien environment that hampers learning. This enabled the researchers to look in different ways at the nature of trust and dialogue between students and tutors and to explore the development of a support infrastructure addressing specific student needs. At the same time the research underlines the power and importance of action research as a means of improving practice but also how moving from tacit to explicit reflection on learning and teaching can directly benefit the student experience by improving engagement and making us all aware of our own learning processes.

Submitted By: Ms. Per Inge Båtnes
Presenter: Ms. Per Inge Båtnes, Ms. Kari Mari Jonsmoen & Ms. Marit Greek
Institution: Oslo University College

Title: Dialogue and Parrhesia
Abstract
What if dialogue as an educational practice merely emphasizes the ability to master “legitimate” discourse practices? What if established modes of dialogue thus promote the ideal of identical consciousness or an apparent confluence of minds, rather than the ideal of rendering diversity meaningful in separate but interwoven lives? Our experiences suggest that multicultural communication in education often turns problems of relationships into problems of proper tuning or noise reduction. That is disastrous for language minorities and other non-traditional students. Perhaps we should try to revise our concept of dialogue to make it more compatible with actual differences in perceptions and motivations among students. Respect of those differences is a prerequisite when teachers want to promote parrhesia – in this case the minority students ability and spirit to speak the truth in the face of the majority. Some illustrating examples related to educational practices and interviews at Oslo University College will be presented.

Submitted By: Ms. Elizabeth Brunton & Dr. Anne Jordan
Presenter: Ms. Elizabeth Brunton
Institution: Institute of Technology, Tralee

Title: Learning Strategies, Metacognition & College Success
Abstract
The aim of this study was to identify the learning strategies used by a group of students in a third level college at the start of their studies, to investigate if students changed their approach to learning when cognisant of their learning styles and multiple intelligences profiles and what impact these changes had on their success at the end of their first year in college. The sample was a heterogeneous sample of convenience of seventy students. When the preferred learning strategies of the students were coded according to the dominant learning styles, 37% did not have learning strategies that matched their dominant learning style. Yet, this was the lowest ranked multiple intelligence score for the group and none of the group had it as their dominant strength. There was a significant difference between (i) the self-reported level of awareness in October and in March, and (ii) between those that predicted they were ‘on target’ to succeed and those that changed their learning strategies (p = 0.001). Both of these factors indicate an awareness of the learning
process, a willingness to adapt when faced with new circumstances and a high level of self-knowledge. Those with self-reported high levels of awareness received higher Grade point average (GPA). Gender (p = 0.000) and leaving certificate points (p = 0.000) were found to have significant relationships to final GPA. Students who rated study high on their list of priorities received the higher GPA (p = 0.002). However, there was no significant relationship between the priority given to family, work, socializing or sporting competitions and final GPA using quantitative analysis but the qualitative findings indicated that those factors were major barriers for those who did not succeed. Facilitating a rise in students’ awareness of how they learn, through an investigation of their learning styles and multiple intelligences strengths, and supporting them in investigating their learning strategies and the ‘critical incidents’ in their prior learning that impact on those strategies, aid in students becoming metacognisant. Students who are metacognisant self-regulate their learning. Students who focus on their studies, are adaptable and flexible in a new situation, and are metacognisant, have a higher chance of success in the college environment.

Submitted By: Mr. John Bullock & Ms. Amanda Cass
Presenter: Mr. John Bullock & Ms. Amanda Cass
Institution: Calderdale College
Title: Using Research to Enhance the Transition of Learners with Disabilities Between Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE)

Abstract
This research has been undertaken in response to the continuing need to support students with disabilities making the transition from Calderdale College - Halifax, England to the University of Huddersfield - Huddersfield, England. The research forms part of the UK Government initiative “The Future of Higher Education” which is supported by the Aimhigher – West Yorkshire strategy. Students with disabilities in a FE setting with aspirations of progressing to HE and students who have made the transition comprise the sample of students taking part in the research. Both groups study within the Art and Design curriculum area. A combination of research methods involving questionnaires, case study groups and interviews were employed to investigate perceptions and actual barriers of students with disabilities regarding transition support and on-course support. The research aims to produce tentative guidelines and practical media to aid transition for students between the two sectors and to inform future research in tracking transition from FE/HE into employment. Underpinning the study is an exploration of existing support mechanisms within FE and HE in relation to the growth in the number of learners with disabilities making the transition between the sectors. It is proposed that simplistic understandings of mixed practice across the sectors might now be enhanced by practices reflecting the individual needs of learners with disabilities derived from learner and professional reflections. This will more accurately highlight the ambiguity, contradictory and current understanding of actual learner and professional experience. The study is investigating the impact of research to influence transition practice.

Submitted By: Ms. Patricia Clift
Presenter: Ms. Patricia Clift & Ms. Stephanie Lee
Institution: University of Manchester
Title: EBL Master Classes for Targeted Outreach

Abstract
In this poster we will outline the development and implementation of an innovative, student-led initiative combining teaching and learning innovation with widening participation. The EBL Master Class series, ‘Exploring issues around climate change through a process of enquiry’, is a new development forming part of The Manchester Access Programme – an innovative, post-16 targeted outreach programme. The development and implementation of the Master Class programme engages Environmental Sciences students as partners in the design, facilitation and evaluation of the content and process of learning through the process of enquiry whilst utilising their academic knowledge as task specialists. We will show the resources and structure of the sessions, and outline the approaches that the FE students took to the task. We will also show the feedback and evaluation from the project and outline our future plans.
### The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning

**Submitted By:** Ms. Andrea Cooperberg, Ms. Janette Barrington & Ms. Olivia Rovinescu  
**Presenter:** Ms. Andrea Cooperberg  
**Institution:** Concordia University

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<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Strategies for Inclusive Teaching</th>
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<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td>During fall 2004 Concordia University received 3550 international students from 140 countries around the world. Consequently, the university classroom at Concordia is made up of students with diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Therefore, this project began with the objective of creating strategies for inclusive teaching that would enhance multicultural infusion in courses and programs. We interviewed sixteen faculty and three staff members and conducted one focus group with eight undergraduate and graduate Chinese students to explore their experiences at both teaching and studying. The analysis of the interviews and the focus group showed that strategies considered necessary to help international students include: creating an atmosphere that fosters participation, overcoming the cultural shock, helping international students understand the lecture, assisting students in their written assignments, improving students’ oral presentations, preventing plagiarism, implementing good assessment strategies, incorporating strategies that facilitate critical thinking and generating a good relationship with students. Consequently, we designed a handbook, which illustrates challenges that professors cope with in a diverse classroom.</td>
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**Submitted By:** Ms. Cornelia Connolly, Professor Eamonn Murphy & Professor Sarah Moore  
**Presenter:** Ms. Cornelia Connolly  
**Institution:** University of Limerick

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<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>A Study of the Prevalence of Computer Anxiety Amongst Undergraduate Computing Students</th>
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<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td>Computers are a significant presence in society and are likely to remain so in the future. This is not to say, however, that reactions to computers are uniformly positive, as the introduction of computers to industry and education has brought with it a range of responses from eager adoption, to outright resistance to the use of computers. The latter of these responses may be triggered by negative psychological reaction such as lack of self-confidence in the use of computers, anxiety or even fear. At the same time, there has been consistent research into improved methods of teaching computing, new and innovative module/curricula design. However students' results and interests do not reflect this effort and retention rates in computing courses are quite low. This paper describes the work of the authors in exploring that perhaps the students are not 'in control' of the computer/technology and that this intimidation is inhibiting them to progress and learn. Do first year undergraduate students fear the technology and display computer anxiety tendencies? Do they feel so intimidated by the computer or the programming language, that they feel they cannot learn how to master them?</td>
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**Submitted By:** Professor Patrick Costello  
**Presenter:** Professor Patrick Costello  
**Institution:** University of Wales, NEWI

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<th><strong>Title:</strong></th>
<th>Writing Reflectively and Effectively: Developing the Skills of Critical Thinking, Reasoning and Argument in Higher Education</th>
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<td><strong>Abstract</strong></td>
<td>Learning to argue is one of the central objectives in education. Whether it is conducting a formal debate, participating in a group discussion, writing an essay, a critique or a persuasive appeal, the ability of the student to employ argument and to anticipate and evaluate the arguments of others will generally be an important measure of achievement. My purpose in this presentation is to examine a number of key issues involved in teaching, learning and assessing critical thinking, reasoning and argument skills in higher education. In examining arguments for teaching and learning such skills, I focus on two issues. The first concerns views articulated recently in the UK, which suggest that universities have to provide remedial courses, even for students with excellent A-level results, in study skills, including writing essays and developing arguments. The second</td>
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issue concerns the concept of ‘indoctrination’. I argue that, to some extent, indoctrination is an essential and unavoidable part of the educational process. Having made a distinction between justifiable and unjustifiable indoctrination and offered the view that indoctrination is, in some sense, an ‘illness’ which pervades educational institutions, I suggest that teaching students the skills of thinking, reasoning and argument provides an ‘antidote’ to it. Finally, in the context of a two-year research project which I co-directed at Hull University and University of Wales, NEWI, I examine approaches to assessing students’ progress in argument.

Submitted By: Ms. Catherine Cronin & Dr. Sharon Flynn
Presenter: Ms. Catherine Cronin & Dr. Sharon Flynn
Institution: National University of Ireland, Galway

Title: A Grading Rubric for Online Discussions

Abstract

The MSc in Software and Information Systems (MScSIS), offered in partnership by NUI, Galway and Regis University, Denver (USA), is a flexible, part-time, distance-learning route for students to gain professional skills, experience and a postgraduate qualification in IT. Students are geographically dispersed and represent a diverse range of skills and experience. Online discussion is an integral part of the learning process in the programme. While the benefits of participating in online discussions are many, motivating students to contribute can be a challenge. In 2005, MScSIS facilitators at NUI, Galway collaborated to develop a grading rubric for online discussions. The objectives of the rubric are: to provide a tool for assessment and feedback; to ensure both validity and consistency of marking across the programme; to encourage participation which will foster learning, feedback and motivation; and to clarify for students the elements of “good practice” in online communication. Student performance is assessed by focusing on three dimensions: content of posts, consistency of participation throughout the week, and responsiveness to other posts. The rubric is simple to use, and has proved to be successful as both a communication and assessment tool. We suggest that it could prove useful for other online courses and programmes.

Submitted By: Mr. James Garo Derounian
Presenter: Mr. James Garo Derounian
Institution: University of Gloucestershire

Title: Action Stations! Lively Learning for Diverse Students

Abstract

This paper presents innovative approaches to teaching & learning to deliver sustainable development. It focuses on two exemplars. Both mutually reinforce sustainable development and active learning through practise underpinned by theoretical constructs like Cowan’s (2002) ‘Socio-constructivist’ model. They also reflect Warburton’s (1998: 28) contention that participation in practical projects is “recognised as a learning experience which can reinforce positive messages about ... sustainable development”. 1. Reflection on a generic, level 1, undergraduate skills module. This operationalises work by American researchers DeLind and Link (2004): “Before losing themselves in the virtual or plunging...into the international, students need to carefully & critically examine what exists...outside their front (and back) doors.” The ‘Effective Writing’ module has enabled students to pen an article for newspaper or journal publication. In so doing students gain an understanding of their ‘home’ for the duration of the degree. It provides an interdisciplinary response to the stimulus of the immediate locality and facilitates connections between students, staff, and residents of a fast-regenerating part of Cheltenham town (SW England). It exemplifies the adage “Think global, act local”. 2. Reviewing a programme of our graduates recycling their expertise in to current student teaching & learning – via guest lectures, workshops. Short video footage of contributions may be included.
The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning

Submitted By: Dr. Siobhan Devlin
Presenter: Dr. Siobhan Devlin
Institution: University of Sunderland

Title: Supporting International Students' Integration into the Learning and Wider Communities

Abstract
Feedback from international students studying at the University of Sunderland, UK, repeatedly highlights their desire to be considered and accepted by their UK peers and by the local population: “I haven't made any friends with my classmates”. “In [certain class] the teachers in there seems haven’t notice some of the students are from non-English speaking country”. “Please tell me more education and life rules of UK, thanks. It’ll [be] good for me to understand UK”. “Some sort of knowledge should be provided to the local people to maintain good relations with the outsiders”. Lack of engagement in the classroom can occur due to reasons of educational background, culture, or fear that language skills will seem inadequate. In attempting to begin to address these issues – the reticence to actively participate and the apparent prejudices of the local population – several initiatives have been implemented including an outreach project in which international students visit local schools to befriend and share cultural knowledge with pupils. That scheme has twice been shortlisted for a national HEFCE-sponsored award and has proven very popular with students and pupils alike. The focus of this poster, however, is the Sunderland Language and News Group (SLANG): a weekly social meeting along the lines of a book group but using local, national and international news stories as a means of improving confidence and linguistic skills and encouraging culturally informed debate. The group is open to all students, their families and more recently, under the auspices of a University Community Fellowship, the local community. Feedback to date from students who attend the group includes: “As an overseas student you don’t dare speak up in class in case your English might not be right. You need confidence – SLANG does this”. “The discussion often reveals different culture background, and help students understand more about things outside their own countries”. “The Saturday session help me to know more about the British culture. I can understand the newspaper deeply. For example, I can realise the royal family in England, something about Dr. Who, etc... It is a good place for the international student to grasp the live in England”. The poster presents the background to the SLANG initiative, details its running and evaluates the latest developments in widening the membership to the outside community.

Submitted By: Professor Hazel Dewart, Dr. Paula Hixenbaugh, Ms. Della Drees & Ms. Lisa Thorn
Presenter: Professor Hazel Dewart
Institution: University of Westminster

Title: Non-Traditional Students: Supporting One Another

Abstract
The more diverse the student group, the greater the need for appropriately tailored support. One way of providing additional support is to encourage students to support one another. However, metropolitan universities with a high proportion of students who commute from home and which do not have a traditional campus base struggle to provide a community experience for their students. This paper describes a new way of providing support for first-year students by drawing on the experience of students who have recently been through the first year. Third year students train as mentors and communicate with first year students electronically. This e-mentoring scheme has been in operation over the last few years in the Department of Psychology at University of Westminster in central London. Evidence concerning its impact on students' social and academic integration and sense of community will be presented.
The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning

Submitted By: Ms. Linda Dowling
Presenter: Ms. Linda Dowling
Institution: University College Dublin

Title: Mature Students and Distance Learning – A Student-Centred Approach to Measuring Success

Abstract
One of the challenges facing third level institutions in Ireland today is the widening of participation of mature students who are not in a position to return to full-time education due to work, family and financial commitments. To attract, and indeed retain, these non-traditional students, education providers are having to consider more flexible and innovative approaches to the provision of programmes which provide a blend of home study and limited classroom attendance on campus. By their nature, programmes of blended learning are innovative and flexible in design so as to meet the special needs of non-traditional students. How innovative, and how flexible, varies between programmes, and is determined by the type of student participating on the programmes, and the particular blend of classroom attendance and distance learning built into the programme. These core dimensions of the programme – type of student and blend of learning – should be the starting point in assessing the achievements and success of any distance learning programme for mature students. In measuring the success of distance learning programmes for mature students, four central measures of success can be identified: What is the level of connectedness achieved between student and institution? How satisfactory are the study materials, and study guidance provided? How satisfactory is the support students receive in developing their study and learning competencies, and in maintaining progress in their studies? How well do the academic assessment and administrative procedures and practices “fit” with the needs of the non-traditional student studying at a distance from the University? The Centre for Distance Learning at the UCD School of Business offers Diploma and Degree programmes for mature students. Among the key features of these programmes include: (i) a programme of blended learning where home study is combined with occasional weekend attendance on campus; (ii) the inclusion of study and learning skills development modules as part of the formal syllabus; (iii) personal tutors offering a ‘one-stop-shop’ for the provision of both academic and administrative support; (iv) distance learning supported by weekly study plans and specially designed study guides; (v) tutors with experience and understanding of the needs of mature students studying at a distance; (vi) regular correspondence with students via telephone, mail and email; (vii) the provision of online support and (viii) regular feedback to students on their study progress and performance.

Submitted By: Ms. Dore Fischer
Presenter: Ms. Dore Fischer
Institution: Dublin Institute of Technology

Title: Intercultural Interviews as a Method of Learning and Cultural Discovery

Abstract
Some of the many challenges in teaching Intercultural Studies include the engagement of the learners with the subject in an active and relevant way, and the difficulty of how the learning progress can be monitored and assessed. While academic classroom instructions can often lead to the passive acquisition of theoretical knowledge, the fieldwork of intercultural interviews can go way beyond that and provide an active and meaningful engagement with intercultural issues (Pandit and Alderman 2004; Gabrenya 1998). The poster begins with a brief outline of the major objectives for a module in Intercultural Studies and how these objectives are to be achieved. For this study, the method of intercultural interviews was used. The poster describes the method and focuses in particular on the planning, conducting and evaluation of the intercultural interviews carried out by a group of 3rd and 4th year under-graduate students at the Dublin Institute of Technology. The results section of the poster analyses the exercise of interviewing as an experiential and self-reflective supplement to classroom teaching. The outcomes of the study show that the interviews provided the students with a greater understanding of another culture, a greater awareness of the experience of being a foreigner in Ireland, and a critical examination of their own society and culture. Also included is an analysis of how the students themselves evaluate the intercultural interview as a method of learning. As the student feedback shows, many of them perceived the exercise as a valuable academic and personal experience. In
conclusion, the poster attempts to relate the outcomes of the project to the overall objectives for intercultural learning and to evaluate the intercultural interview as a method of learning, cultural discovery, and assessing students' progress. Finally, the poster suggests some possible improvements to the method.

Submitted By: Ms. Vanessa Fitzgerald
Presenter: Ms. Vanessa Fitzgerald & Ms. Judith Waterfield
Institution: The University of Plymouth

Title: **Be Prepared – Facilitating Inclusive Education for Diverse Learners Through Innovative Approaches to Transition and Assessment**

**Abstract**

The requirement for a cultural shift for real inclusion demands a dynamic approach to preparing students for transition, and preparing the institution to provide barrier-free opportunities for student access. The poster will illustrate work in progress in a large institution in South West England. It will show how students are prepared through a range of successful methods (such as mentoring, tutoring, and shadowing offered to non-traditional learners prior to entry and in the first orientation stage of HE experience) and how arrangements in assessment to an inclusive assessment model to accommodate the learning styles and experiences of the range of learners participating in HE.

Submitted By: The Education Research Cluster Group, The Centre for Nursing & Midwifery Studies
Presenter: S. Hahessy, S. Counihan, E. Byrne, E. Burke, A. Tully, T. Ui Chiardha, M. Brennan, M. McNicholas, T. Meaney, L. Mee & M. Kelly
Institution: National University of Ireland, Galway

Title: **Knowing the Student Issues of Diversity that Effect Learning**

**Abstract**

The aim of this poster is to capture the broad nature of diversity. Understanding the multiplicity of factors that contribute to the learning situation can assist in provision of appropriate learning and teaching strategies. This poster focuses on three key interrelated perspectives providing a framework for reflection. Some strategies for contribution to a more effective learning experience are offered.

1. **Population Variables:** It is suggested that from the outset each student is a member of three status groups: race, class and gender which influence perceptions of learning, (Sims & Balwin, 1995). Age of learner is also of major significance. These status groups can affect professional values, perceptions of equality and can have a complex effect on education, (Dowswell, 1998). Some suggestions: Self-Efficacy Theory: Self Efficacy (belief about one's own ability) expectations act on mediators of behaviour. Equality/Access/Resources. Self Esteem Issues: Link to social class. A student's background variables contribute significantly to his/her perception of the college experience. Importance of being intuitive to problems, build relationships, provide appropriate support.

2. **Levels of Understanding and Cognitive Styles:** The influence of personal characteristics, learning styles, intelligence, acknowledgment of experiential background, context of subject matter, and perceptions of learning need to be acknowledged to understand the diverse effects of these on learning (Quinn, 2000). Some suggestions: Optimising Student Participation: Instructional variety and student participation can be increased, by asking students to respond to questions within a particular theoretical framework, ideology, or their own personal experience. Promote collegiality, build friendships and protects against isolation in learning. Varying Instruction: Vary use of inductive and deductive teaching methods. The Tools of the Trade: Skills assessments such as computer literacy, searching skills, writing skills should be assessed early in programme. 3. **Motivation to Learn:** Research has demonstrated that motivation to participate in education is underpinned by varied factors, (Dowswell et al, 1998). These can range from personal intrinsic motivators to specific professional pressures. Motivation to participate can effect motivation to learn. Some Suggestions: Awareness of Learning Styles: Atomistic - attracted to hierarchical structure of knowledge (natural sciences). Global - knowledge is more subject to personal interpretation (social sciences). Most higher degrees require that knowledge attainment is a combination of both. It is important to help students become aware of
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their individual learning style. It is imperative to inform students what is expected. Encourage use of learning inventories and development of learning contracts (Entwistle, 1998).

Submitted By: Ms. Orla Hanratty
Presenter: Ms. Orla Hanratty & Ms. Amy O'Shea
Institution: Trinity College Dublin

Title: Pedagogic Innovation to Implement Inclusive Studies for Students with Intellectual Disabilities.

Abstract
The National Institute for the Study of Learning Difficulties (NISLD) at Trinity College Dublin is an inclusive Institute centering on research, policy and lifelong learning for individuals with learning difficulties. This poster presentation outlines the design and implementation of a pilot project undertaken by the NISLD and supported by the Centre for Academic Development and Student Learning (CAPSL) in Trinity College Dublin. An overall aim is to inform the professional development of Trinity staff and students through consideration of effective teaching and learning methodology. This pilot project specifically aims to provide learning opportunities for people with intellectual disability within mainstream classes at Trinity College while being supported by mentors and lecturing staff. Mentors and lecturing staff are supported by sessions on Inclusive Teaching Strategies. This project informs the facilitation of the Inclusive Studies module which is part of the Certificate in Contemporary Living, as well as the development of transferable models of lifelong and continuing education for third level institutes and service agencies. Outcomes of a pilot project where five students from the NISLD have experienced inclusion in mainstream classes will be reported upon.

Submitted By: Ms. Joseph Hede
Presenter: Ms. Joseph Hede
Institution: Unitec New Zealand

Title: An Active Problem Solving Teaching Model: The Unitec New Zealand Experience

Abstract
In an initial study, The Learning Styles For Those In The Building And Construction Sector, it was found that school type learning failed to meet the needs of the entry level apprentices. An analysis of the collected data shows that students don’t like to sit still and take notes. To address this issue, improved teaching practices in the classroom needed to be explored and developed. Because of the short time frame, an Action Research (AR) methodology was selected. Researchers from the initial study formed an action research team. They met at least once a week over a period of six weeks. Starting from the assumption that students do not want to sit still and take notes, the teacher with the assistance of the AR team, adopted the new teaching model to present to the class. By introducing active problem-solving teaching and learning, the classroom changed from a place of teacher centred learning, to one of student centred learning. The positive outcome of this new teaching model resulted in a marked improvement in grades. The students in the 2005 class achieved higher grades than students from the previous year.
The First Year Student Experience: Surveying Key Factors in Student Progression

Abstract
How do students perceive their first year experience in HE? This poster reports on a large-scale, University-wide survey of first year undergraduate students at the University of Westminster, London. Carried out over the last two academic years (2004/05 and 2005/06), the survey has provided information about the diversity of our student group and aspects of their lives outside the university: including family circumstances and support networks. It includes questions from the U.K. National Student Survey and a number of standardized psychometric scales investigating student satisfaction, health and mental health, coping, social and academic integration. Data have been analysed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The analysis provides information on the variables leading to student progression and on the experiences of particular subgroups, e.g. different ethnic groups, first person in the family to go to university, mature students, students with childcare responsibilities. This presentation will focus on: What determines whether a student considered leaving the course?, What determines a student’s sense of integration? What determines a student’s sense of satisfaction with the course studied? Implications for student learning and support needs will be discussed.

Psychology at the Crossroads: Gay and Bi Men’s Accounts of Learning and Teaching in UK Psychology Departments

Abstract
Objectives: This study explores the experiences of gay men who have studied/are studying psychology at university/HE level across England, Scotland and Wales. This project builds on our previous research and has been funded by the HEA. Design: The study utilizes a qualitative framework informed by grounded theory principles. Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of current and ex-students (from different institutions across England, Scotland and Wales) who had taken/are taking psychology as (at least) the major element of their undergraduate degree programme. Twenty five participants were recruited through informal contacts, ages range from 21-45. Data was coded according to accepted grounded theory procedures. Results: Preliminary analysis revealed four key themes, 1) student expectations were not significantly conditioned by sexual identity (this supports earlier research findings), although for many students application for a university place was a key element in their coming-out process, 2) participants reported feelings of exclusion and the curriculum was sometimes described as homophobic and heterocentric, 3) participants reported a strategic approach to relationships with staff and students, for example there was a high degree of selectivity when coming out to staff and peers within the department, 4) various difficulties were identified in relation to the social milieu which resulted in a clear separation between university and domestic environments. Conclusions: For these participants institutionalized homophobia has a detrimental impact upon the learning and teaching experience. The data suggests that while overt individual homophobia and discrimination were unusual, students suffered because of a ubiquitous heteronormative institutional milieu which by its very nature is difficult to concretely identify and challenge. This milieu serves to marginalise and routinely silence gay identity and sexuality in Psychology. Such an institutional context can only serve to reinforce the oppression of sexual minorities even when universities claim to implement equal opportunities policies and other strategies of inclusion. These conclusions form the basis of a discussion of best practice with respect to more inclusive teaching and learning practices.
### Abstract
**Objective:** Previous research has documented a range of difficulties experienced by ethnic minority students in the course of studying psychology at the undergraduate level. This study sought to explore the findings further, by focusing on the curriculum, the learning and teaching environment, and the personal and social environment. **Design:** The study utilised a qualitative approach informed by grounded theory principles. Semi-structured, tape-recorded interviews were carried out. **Participants:** 20 students from African-Caribbean and Asian ethnic backgrounds were interviewed. These participants were either current students or recent graduates of psychology from a variety of institutions of higher education in the UK. **Results:** Preliminary analysis showed that while the aspirations and expectations of ethnic minority students were no different compared to what has been documented elsewhere in relation to white majority students, the personal and social environment and aspects of the curriculum did have an impact on ethnic minority students. On the one hand, ethnic minority students felt excited with the study of psychology; at the same time, they expressed feelings of alienation, a lack of exposure to suitable role models, and a need to broaden the multicultural representation of psychology. **Conclusions:** These results suggest while recent initiatives in diversity and widening participation are a step in the right direction, many issues remain to be addressed for imparting a truly inclusive experience of psychology.

### Diverse Experience: A Foundation for Adult Learning

This presentation describes an e-learning third level course programme delivered all over Ireland during 1996-2006 to rurally remote adults wishing to achieve a higher education qualification and to contribute to the development of their rural areas. This e-learning degree course is collectively designed, managed and delivered by the four NUI universities of Maynooth, Dublin, Cork, and Galway. This paper presents a brief case study of the Bachelor in Science in Rural Development Degree (BSc) noting its method and process. The paper then explores the educational value of reflecting on experience for student learning. Students on this course, all have experience of working in rural community level in, predominantly, unpaid capacities and in a range of situations. In progressing through the e-learning modules students are encouraged to reflect on these experiences and to set this reflection in the context of a theoretical, policy, and best practice model. This paper will draw on the range of experiences presented and the learning achieved in this course. The paper reflects on how using community-based project experience contributes to adult learning, often challenging diversity of views on development.

### Cultural Diversity and Learning Support at Trinity College Dublin

The purpose of this poster is to: (i) Stimulate interest in the range of learning supports available in the context of university and post-secondary educational institutions as multi-lingual and cross-cultural settings, and (ii) Broaden the consideration of learning support and academic development at “third level” to include a range of services available to all students. As universities becomes more inclusive and as enrolments of international and graduate students increase, a larger proportion of the student body will be from culturally diverse and non-English speaking backgrounds. For most of its history there has been no more than 1,500 students at TCD. There are now 15,000. The college once drew its students from a privileged and culturally
homogeneous background although since the 1880s it has been active in both religious and gender emancipation. The challenge now is to reflect the cultural diversity of a growing economy in a multi-cultural world. Rapid changes in size, and in demographic, cultural and lingual (including different forms of English) diversity, have presented many challenges. This presentation addresses the identification and provision of learning support for all students.

| Submitted By: | Ms. Claire McAvinia |
| Presenter: | Ms. Claire McAvinia |
| Institution: | National University of Ireland Maynooth |

**Title:** Does the virtual learning environment support diversity?

**Abstract**
The implementation of a web-based virtual learning environment (VLE) such as Moodle ([http://www.moodle.org/](http://www.moodle.org/)), WebCT ([http://www.webct.com/](http://www.webct.com/)) or Blackboard ([http://www.blackboard.com](http://www.blackboard.com)) is frequently cited as one way in which a university can better support non-traditional learners. This assertion stems from the ‘always-on’ nature of the VLE, and the fact that it can offer access to learning materials, online activities, and assessment tools at any time, in any place, to any user with a computer and internet connection. However, experience in universities is now showing the full complexity of this process. In addition to technical challenges, there are the issues of availability of computers to students, their competence and confidence with information technology, and the wider question of how, in reality, these systems are used. This poster will present some of these issues in terms of our experience at NUI Maynooth, where we have adopted the Moodle VLE during the academic year 2005-2006. The poster will draw on evaluation data gathered during our first year using the system, and our findings in relation to the whole community of staff and students at Maynooth.

| Submitted By: | Ms. Jenny Morris |
| Presenter: | Ms. Jenny Morris |
| Institution: | University of Southampton |

**Title:** The Influence on Learning in Higher Education of Characteristics of Students from Non-Traditional Backgrounds

**Abstract**
Perceived challenges associated with diversity are often ascribed by academic staff to the characteristics of students from non-traditional backgrounds (Martin, 1999). However, such students perform as well, or better, than traditional students (Richardson, 1994). Ramsden (1998) and Martin (1999) suggest that negative attitudes to non-traditional students are a consequence of strong resistance to change among academic staff rather than the inability of such students to succeed in higher education. While traditional students may have stronger academic backgrounds, the maturity, life experience and high levels of motivation of non-traditional students appear to be as important for academic achievement (Richardson, 1994; Warwick, 1999a,b). Evidence that the characteristics of non-traditional students enable them to achieve high quality learning outcomes may help to encourage adoption of inclusive attitudes and behaviours. Within a larger longitudinal, qualitative study into the learning of undergraduate physiotherapy students from non-traditional backgrounds, motivation was explored, both generally and in relation to particular learning and assessment activities, as was the influence of prior and ongoing employment experience. These students differed from traditional physiotherapy students in terms of mature age, weaker academic achievement on entry than is normally required, and prior and ongoing experience as physiotherapy assistants. Seventeen students from the 2000 cohort participated in the study. Individual semi-structured interviews took place on five occasions during their four years of study. A phenomenographic approach was used to analyse the verbatim transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews. Although some challenges to motivation were identified, the vast majority of responses were positive. They were largely intrinsic nature, a characteristic associated positively with desirable deep approaches to learning (Marton and Saljo, 1997). Similarly, the students identified intentions towards specific activities which demonstrated a strong desire to gain useful learning in preference to doing the minimum necessary to complete tasks. Likewise, prior life experiences were perceived as important for learning and were actively used wherever possible. The findings from this study
provide evidence that the characteristics of non-traditional students are positive both in terms of their learning and the contribution they can make to higher education. This suggests that the challenge of diversity may be that support is needed, not so much for students from non-traditional backgrounds, but for university staff to recognise and embrace the valuable range of positive attributes which non-traditional students bring, and utilise these to optimise the learning potential and experiences for students from all backgrounds.

Submitted By: Ms. Eabhnat Ní Fhloinn
Presenter: Ms. Eabhnat Ní Fhloinn
Institution: Dublin Institute of Technology

Title: Effective Methods of Providing Mathematical Support

Abstract
DIT Students' Maths Learning Centre is a new initiative that aims to provide mathematical support in a relaxed, non-judgemental environment to any DIT student whose programme contains a mathematical element. DIT is a multi-level institute, with over 21,000 students registered on more than 400 programmes at apprenticeship, certificate, diploma, degree and postgraduate level. The range of mathematics studied within these programmes is vast and many students find that they need additional support in this area. Because DIT is split into numerous campuses, it has proved particularly advantageous to develop a two-fold approach to mathematical support, incorporating one-to-one tuition, through the form of drop-in sessions, alongside an extensive e-learning support system, so as to provide the optimum learning environment. The e-learning resources are made available to every DIT student through the use of WebCT, a password-protected intranet. A separate WebCT page has been created for each faculty, meaning that the mathematical resources provided can be tailored to best suit the specific needs of students from each discipline. Students from all years, disciplines and backgrounds use the SMLC service. Traditional learners attend the centre for a multitude of reasons: some need weekly support in order to cope in lectures; others simply require clarification of a single topic. Over a fifth of the students who have used the drop-in service thus far are mature students. Because many of these have not studied maths in some time, they often need specific help revising basic topics at the start of the year. Dyslexic students face particular challenges in maths, as they can frequently have difficulty accurately transcribing mathematical symbols in lectures – and as little as one incorrect letter in a mathematical equation can render it unintelligible. For international or advanced entry students, problems can arise when they have not previously covered all the necessary background topics to follow class material; the centre can provide them with the extra tuition they need until they have caught up with the topics being covered in lectures. Part-time students, for whom time is of the essence, can avail of our e-learning resources from home or over the weekend, when they are more likely to find time to study. DIT Students' Maths Learning Centre aims to support students in becoming independent learners, improve their attitudes towards mathematics and increase their confidence in their mathematical abilities.

Submitted By: Ms. Phil Noone, Ms. Ann O'Kelly and Ms. Catherine Meagher
Presenter: Ms. Phil Noone, Ms. Ann O'Kelly and Ms. Catherine Meagher
Institution: National University of Ireland Galway

Title: Using Problem Based Learning to Support Experienced Nurses' Learning

Abstract
The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizes individual differences. It is about understanding each other and extending beyond simple tolerance to reach the rich diversity contained within each individual. Students who participate in The Higher Diploma of Nursing Studies (Gerontology) at the Centre for Nursing and Midwifery Studies, NUI Galway are diverse, mature, non traditional students, many of whom are coming to third level education for the first time with a wealth of clinical knowledge and life experiences. This poster presentation will detail the utilisation of problem based learning as a philosophy and teaching strategy which facilitated active learning engagement for this group. The challenges and rewards of this methodology will be explored, using tutor and student experiences, drawing on qualitative research data.
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Submitted By: Mr. Ciarán O'Leary
Presenter: Mr. Ciarán O'Leary
Institution: Dublin Institute of Technology

Title: Active Learning through Student Led Instruction

Abstract
Given the increase in participation in third level education in recent years and the consequent diversity in students' backgrounds, learning styles and ranges of ability, there has been a growing focus on active forms of learning supported by performance based assessment as opposed to the passive forms of instruction and assessment traditionally employed by education providers. The guiding principle behind active learning is that the student is forced to assume greater responsibility in organising the material that must be learned, resulting in diverse groups of students employing diverse approaches to learning while sharing a common learning environment. The Learning Pyramid from the USA's National Training Laboratory graphically demonstrates the average retention rates by students involved in passive and active learning. According to the research leading to the development of the pyramid, the most effective tool for facilitating student knowledge retention is getting students to actively teach others. A novel implementation of this active strategy was employed as part of a module in the BSc Computer Science at the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). Ten students from the second year of the programme volunteered to participate in a project which served as an alternative to a coursework component for the Web Development module. The goal of the project was to get the ten students to teach transition year pupils from a local secondary school a subset of the content of the Web Development module. The project ran over six weekly sessions each lasting ninety minutes. Ultimately, the transition year pupils were required to produce a functioning web site for their school, developed following completion of the instruction of the DIT students. Importantly, assessment of the DIT students was based primarily on the quality of the web site produced by the transition year pupils. This form of student led instruction proved to be extremely effective. The performance of the DIT students in that component of their assessment, as well as their subsequent final summative assessment for the module exceeded the performance of their peers to a substantially greater degree than in other, similar modules in the programme. It was apparent that in order to provide instruction for the secondary school pupils, the DIT students were forced to relearn the material that had previously been presented to them by employing alternative, deeper strategies - a quality at the core of the active approach to learning.

Submitted By: Mr. Ciarán O'Leary
Presenter: Mr. Ciarán O'Leary
Institution: Dublin Institute of Technology

Title: An Assessment of the Role of Service Learning in Supporting Learning in Diverse Student Groups

Abstract
The high availability of places in third level IT programmes in Ireland has led to an increased recruitment of international students in the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) and elsewhere. In addition, the School of Computing in DIT is a partner in a project with the Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT) in China which has resulted in a substantial number of Chinese students joining the school. The diversity in the student population within the School of Computing has had many benefits for both the school and its students. It has also, however, presented staff with a challenge to engage both the Irish and international students in learning activities that can draw on the experiences of students from different backgrounds and can assist in establishing learning groups formed through friendship and shared experience. Involvement in such informal peer groups greatly assists successful learning and is also an important consideration for employers with a stated interest in the graduate's ability to operate effectively in teams. For a period of three years, students from the second year of DIT's BSc Computer Science were involved in a service learning project in conjunction with the Community Links office. Service learning is a specific type of learning that takes place outside the classroom where students use their developing skills to address the requirements of voluntary and community-based, non-profit organisations. The goal of our project was to develop web-sites for schools in Dublin's inner city, by employing the nascent skill-sets of our undergraduate software engineers. Of the 109 students involved in the project, 30 were international (mainly Chinese) students. Using service learning
to involve all students in the local community and in a shared real world project proved particularly useful for their learning experience. Service learning projects differ substantially from simulated projects in that real world clients must be dealt with. As a consequence, real problems such as communication, teamwork and professional issues need to be actively addressed by participants. The forms of interaction between all our students that emerged during our projects set a foundation for the development of a real understanding of the requirements for team based problem solving and problem resolution involving diverse participants. This, we feel, fed usefully into the student’s learning experiences during the remainder of their formal education, in particular their work placement in year three.

Submitted By: Ms. Jenny Peacock
Presenter: Ms. Jenny Peacock & Mr. Gay Johnson
Institution: University of Central England, Birmingham

Title: Designing a Programme for Refugee Health Professionals

Abstract
Refugee health professionals encounter a range of barriers to registration for practice in the UK. Nurses and midwives in particular find themselves trapped by needing to find an adaptation programme in order to be able to practise but unable to find such a programme anywhere in the UK, a situation exacerbated by the current job cuts in the National Health Service. So health professionals with excellent qualifications and a wealth of experience are unable to use their skills and the health service is missing out on a group of committed practitioners. Refugees and migrants also have life skills and knowledge which would be of enormous benefit to health service practice in a multi-cultural area. At the University of Central England recognition of the importance of this issue has led to the development of a pre-adaptation programme which aims to address some of the difficulties experienced by refugees trying to find routes into employment. Over the course of the past eighteen months the programme has gradually taken shape and partnerships have been built with the Strategic Health Authority and refugee agencies. The frustrations and delays experienced by refugees and those working with them are legion: the development of the programme has been slow as a consequence. There are models of good practice which demonstrate that a tailor made programme is essential. This includes a high input of English language work, including professional language to equip students with the necessary familiarity with health service jargon. Other components of the programme are An Introduction to the Health Service and An Introduction to Higher Education, both aimed at preparing the students for employability and further training. The aim of the programme is to ensure a progression which will enable students to achieve their goals. As one of the prospective students said: “It is time to press the case for refugee nurses. They can make a valuable contribution to the NHS, the community and the economy”. This presentation looks at the hurdles which have been encountered and overcome in addressing this need.

Submitted By: Ms. Carol Pearson & Ms. Sue Smith
Presenter: Ms. Carol Pearson & Ms. Sue Smith
Institution: University of Westminster

Title: Diversity in Higher Education: Lesbian & Bisexual Psychology Undergraduate’s Experiences of Studying Psychology

Abstract
Objectives: The study was informed by previous research undertaken by the authors which had explored three major areas relating to lesbian experiences of studying psychology: firstly in term of their personal expectations of psychology before commencing their degree course, secondly their subjective experiences of being a lesbian psychology undergraduate and thirdly, how the content of psychology as an academic discipline related to lesbian experiences. The present study re-examined these issues in the context of both lesbian and bisexual female experience. Design: The study utilised a qualitative approach informed by grounded theory principles. Methods: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of current or ex-students from 10 different institutions who had taken psychology as the major element of their undergraduate degree programme. A total of 30 participants took part in the study. Data was coded according to accepted grounded theory procedures. Results: It was clear that virtually all the interviewees...
appeared to be politically aware, particularly when speaking from a woman’s perspective as well as from the position of being lesbian/bisexual. Overall findings indicated that personal expectations of psychology revolved around the understanding of the self and others, career development and personal achievement. In terms of participants’ subjective experiences of being a psychology undergraduate however, the consensus was that the general atmosphere was not conducive to being lesbian; and finally there was a shared disillusionment with the content of psychology. **Conclusions:** It was noted that regardless of the diversity of the women’s experiences in terms of university, age and various stages of self-identification as a lesbian or bisexual, there was great similarity in the types of issues they raised. The women clearly expressed levels of dissatisfaction with their experiences of studying psychology whilst still expressing some loyalty to psychology as a discipline. We pose the question how can psychology encompass the sexual diversity of its student population into its social, teaching and learning practices.

**Submitted By:** Ms. Patricia Quinn  
**Presenter:** Ms. Patricia Quinn & Ms. Annette Baxter  
**Institution:** Sheffield Hallam University

**Title:** Widening Participation into Employment across the Student Lifecycle

**Abstract**

In acknowledgement of its increasingly diverse student intake, over the last year Sheffield Hallam University Careers and Employment Service has reviewed the range of services it offers to students, the strategic positioning of career management and employability activities within the University and the current recruitment needs and selection practices of graduate employers. As a result, from September 2005 it has fully embedded a model of enhanced student support into the delivery of its services to students and been a key player in the strategic embedding of an employability framework within the University’s curriculum delivery. The student support model has been successfully developed over the last 3 years through Sheffield Hallam’s participation in the Impact project, an Aim Higher funded initiative supported by Yorkshire Universities and the Yorkshire and the Humber Regional Development agency, Yorkshire Futures. Managed and delivered by Higher Education Careers Services across the region, it was originally developed with a graduate cohort but has now been extended to focus on undergraduates. It offers enhanced careers guidance, with an emphasis on the establishment of a strong client/adviser relationship, an employer mentoring scheme and access to a programme of activities for students deemed more likely to experience difficulties in entering the labour market. This includes those with a disability, from minority ethnic groups, with no family tradition of higher education, or those wishing to enter non traditional employment sectors. The Impact service to individual students complements work undertaken through the University’s Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL) in employability to provide enhanced curriculum based support for all Sheffield Hallam students through the embedding of the University’s seven point employability framework across all programme areas, as an integral part of each Faculty’s Learning Teaching and Assessment and Quality Enhancement strategies. Core curriculum delivery ensures student entitlement to activities integrated within existing modules. The Careers and Employment service is also engaged in research on the difficulties experienced by students from a widening participation background in gaining entry to some graduate recruitment schemes and on course placement opportunities through selection activities based on attainment in pre-university qualifications. They continue to work proactively with graduate employers and bodies to encourage recruitment practices that acknowledge and embrace a diverse graduate population and through a project entitled ‘Uniworks’ close the feedback loop on graduate labour market experiences to prospective students.
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Submitted By: Dr. Mary Sorcenelli
Presenter: Dr. Mary Sorcenelli & Mr. Jung Yun
Institution: University of Massachusetts Amherst

Title: Mutual Mentoring for New and Diverse Academic Staff

Abstract
Conceptual Framework: In the 1990s, parallel to larger changes taking place in higher education, the emphasis of teaching development work shifted from enabling “good teaching” to enabling successful student learning. No longer was the teacher seen as the “sage on the stage,” pouring knowledge into empty vessels, but a “guide on the side,” facilitating student interaction, expression, and engagement (Sorcinelli, Austin, Eddy & Beach, 2006). While conceptualizing a new academic staff development initiative for new and diverse faculty at our university, we asked ourselves why the paradigm shift that took place in American classrooms had not been mirrored in other important areas of university life – specifically, the mentoring of academic staff. According to the literature of faculty development, mentoring is one of the most important components of a successful academic career. However, the model of mentoring most common in the literature and in practice is largely hierarchal, with a senior faculty mentor taking a junior faculty protégée “under his/her wing.” The outcomes of these relationships are difficult to measure. Further, unsuccessful mentoring relationships are rarely reported or remedied, in large part because traditional mentoring is a top-down, “deficiency-driven” process in which senior colleagues are expected to share knowledge, and new or diverse academic staff are expected to receive it. We believe that all members of the campus community have knowledge to share and receive, and a paradigm shift similar to that which took place in our classrooms is necessary to turn traditional mentoring into a more open, inclusive and respectful process that better reflects the democratic values of university life itself. This process can enhance the academic and institutional experiences of not only new and diverse academic staff, but also of their graduate and undergraduate students. Goals of the Poster Session: The goals of our session will be to explore an innovative “Mutual Mentoring” model and the ways in which it promotes the successful development of new and diverse academic staff, particularly in their roles as teachers. First, we will discuss the strengths and drawbacks of current mentoring programs in teaching and learning centers and/or the broader institution. We will then describe the conceptual framework for Mutual Mentoring and outline how we are institutionalizing the model on our campus to assist faculty with the broad spectrum of competing responsibilities that they must meet, especially in relation to teaching and scholarship. Finally, we will describe the programs and services we have developed to support the needs of academic staff in the context of an increasingly diverse student body. After attending this poster session, participants will be able to: (i) Identify benefits and drawbacks of current mentoring programs for new and diverse academic staff; (ii) Explore a conceptual framework for and the process of developing a Mutual Mentoring initiative; (iii) Develop strategies for their own campuses that can enhance the academic and institutional experiences of new and diverse academic staff, as well as graduate and undergraduate students.
SECTION 8.0

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# The Challenge of Diversity: Teaching, Support & Student Learning

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