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Applying Design Thinking to Reimagine Our First Year Experience – Evidence Gained from Prototype Projects in Three Irish Institutions

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Applying Design Thinking to Reimagine Our First Year Experience – Evidence Gained from Prototype Projects in Three Irish Institutions

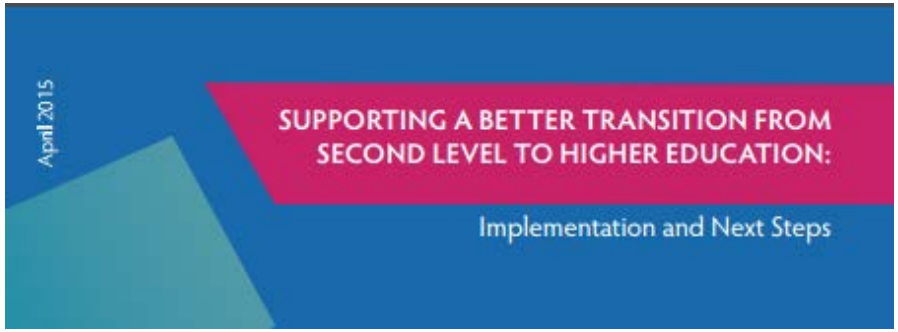
Dr Jen Harvey, Dr Rachel O'Connor
& Dr Claire McDonnell, Dublin Institute of Technology.

European First Year Experience Conference, June 28th 2017


Technological
University
Dublin.
Not or like a University,
but better...

Policy Drivers

2013 paper and conference



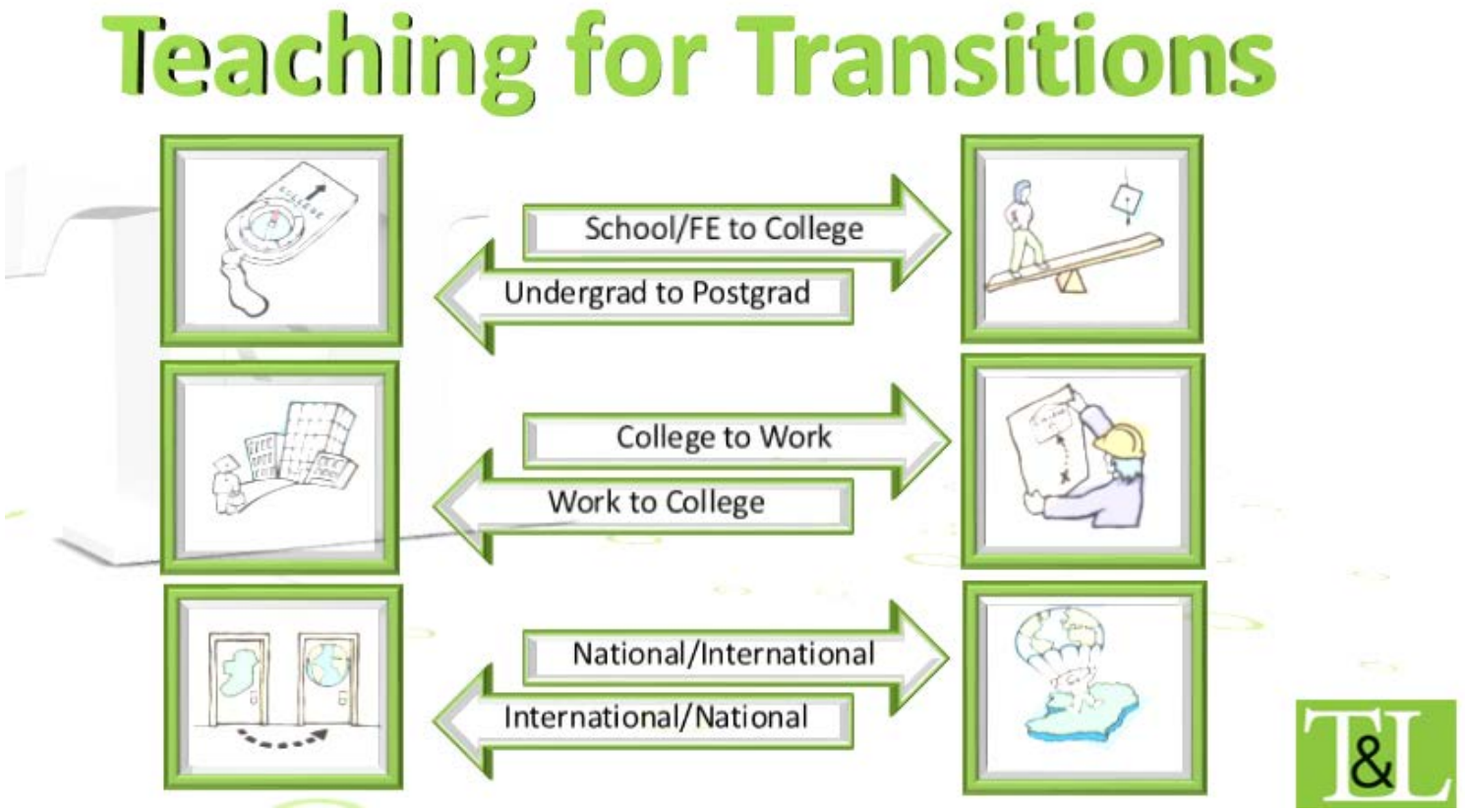
2015 Report

http://www.transition.ie/

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning

Putting teaching and learning at the centre of sectoral enhancement and innovation

Theme for 2014 and 2015:



Higher Education Authority Report on Retention - Jan 2016

http://www.hea.ie/sites/default/files/hea-progression-irish-higher-education_final.pdf

HEA | HIGHER EDUCATION AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS um ARD-OIDEACHAS

THE IRISH TIMES

Tue, Feb 16, 2016

NEWS | SPORT | BUSINESS | OPINION | LIFE & STYLE | CULTURE

Education › Student Hub

Concern over drop-out rates in computer science courses

Up to 80% of students in some courses are failing to progress to second year

A STUDY OF PROGRESSION IN IRISH HIGHER EDUCATION

2012/13 TO 2013/14

Local Initiatives - 2012

steer*

Student Transition; Expectations; Engagement; Retention

10 steps to engage your first year students

The questions you should be able to answer

one **Addressing student expectations**

Have prospective students been provided with sufficient, clear information regarding DIT programmes, student life and student supports? Have various modes of communication and information been utilised i.e. open days, campus visits, social networking?

two **Points of entry**

Have prospective students access to clear information on the process of applying to DIT? In the relevant information, have all entry routes (non-standard, CAO) and entry requirements (additional requirements such as interviews/portfolios, etc.) been addressed?

three **Pre-arrival**

On acceptance of a place, are students welcomed to the DIT community? How do they receive information on registrations, induction and first days as a DIT student?

four **Initial induction**

Is there a clear, consistent and co-ordinated induction plan? How are students assisted in making the initial academic, social and emotional transition to tertiary level education? How will students be introduced to academic and support staff, and each other?

http://dit.ie/media/campuslife/images/steer_10%20questions.pdf

http://www.dit.ie/media/careers/pdf/STEER%20Induction%20Checklist.pdf

Light Lunch Series for 1st Year Tutors – Began 2013

Drop in between 1.10 and 2pm. Opportunity for academic & Professional Support staff to meet – and have some lunch!

Design Thinking Workshops – May 2014 & 2015

steer*

Student Transition; Expectations; Engagement; Retention

Design thinking Process

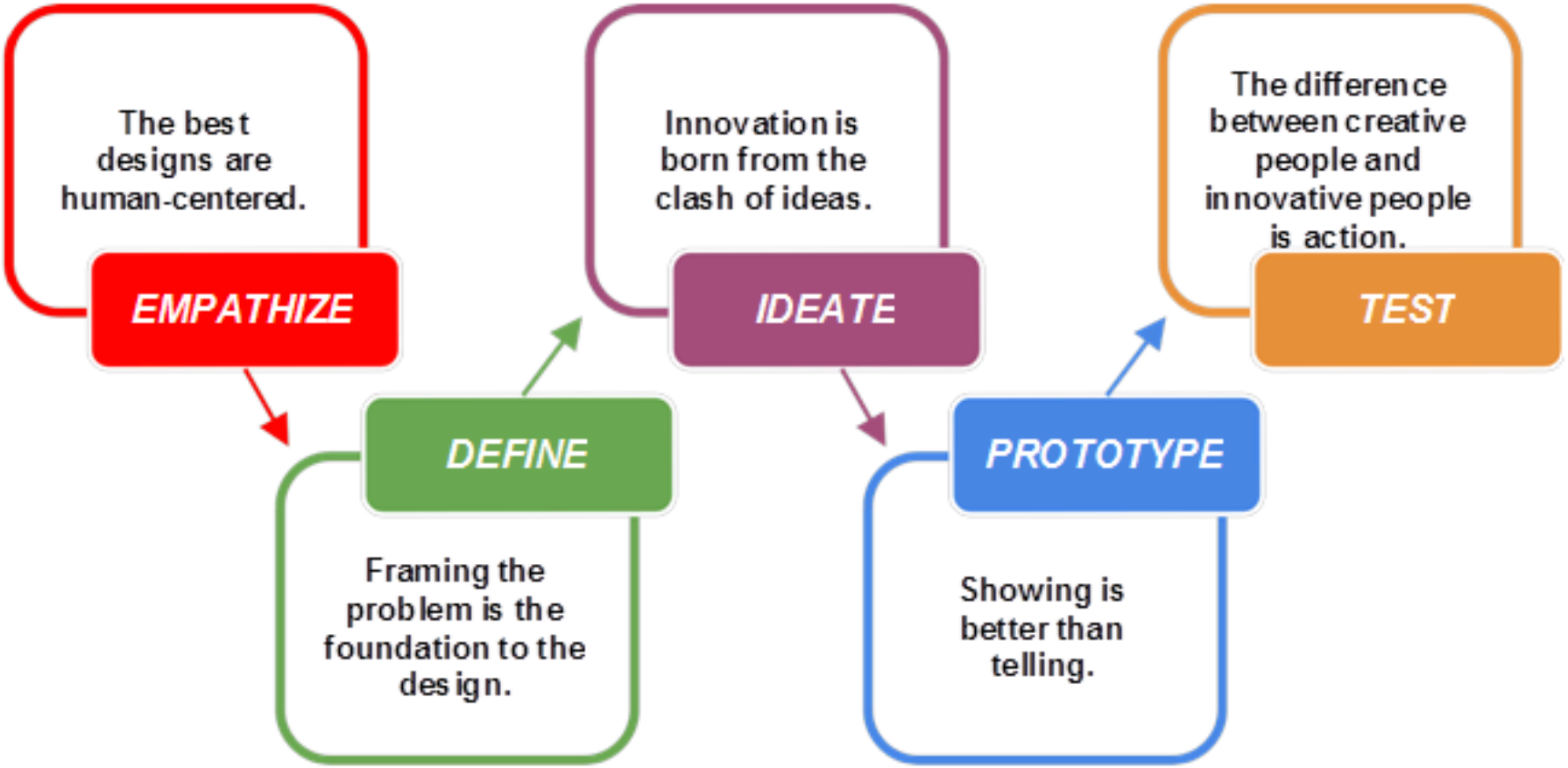


Figure 1. Design thinking's five principles

(Image source: http://er.educause.edu/articles/2015/1/using-design-thinking-in-higher-education)

Reimagining the First Year for the Technological University for Dublin

Two Design thinking workshops, facilitated by Ewan McIntosh, 8 core themes identified:

1. *Induction/ orientation*
2. *First 5,6 or 7 weeks*
3. *Assessment & feedback*
4. *Peer mentors*
5. *Students as autonomous self-directed learners*
6. *Graduate Attributes*
7. *Alternative Curriculum models.*
8. *Learning spaces: virtual and physical*

Prototype Stage – 2015-6

20 prototype projects were funded (€1000 each)

Criteria:

- projects aligned with one or more of the Reimagining the Curriculum themes
- support the Transition into HE/enhance the first year experience for our students
- deliver tangible outputs over a reasonable timeframe e.g. 30 days
- scalable and transferable across the three partner institutions.

Outcomes –Wide implementation

Transitioning to Higher Education Online Questionnaire	Piloted in 2016-7. Roll-out continuing in 2017-8	Areas -Adjustment to College; Engagement; Finance; Career, Academic; Health. Tailored feedback to students. Implemented as part of existing Transitions workshops in First 6 weeks; http://www.dit.ie/careers/academics/engagingfirstyears/
Supporting First year students with Autism	Piloted in 2015-6. **Further funding for 2016-7 from another source** to develop for all years.	Thursday Club session format developed by facilitators – 10 sessions per year. Peer support students and some lecturers also attend. Evaluations show sessions are effective. Training resources being developed.
Assessment Planner (software maps assessment & feedback elements of a course)	Piloted with 5 programmes	Positive feedback from students and academic staff. Is now being implemented across a range of programmes. Developed from to 'Map My Programme' software in the University of Greenwich
DIT Peer Mentoring Universal Design Pilot	All 3 institutions	Audit of existing practices across all 3 institutions prepared in 2015-6; pilots will now be implemented to evaluate the effectiveness of this template programme

Outcomes – some extension of scope

Kickstarting College Success Certificate – First 5 Weeks	Piloted in 2015-6 (17 participants); extended to all Science courses in 2016-7	Sessions need to be interactive and not longer than 30 minutes; make sure students get to meet new people in their groups. Facebook page promoted sessions and resources; https://www.facebook.com/DITKickstartingCollege/
Student Induction based on a Health and Wellbeing programme	300 students in pilot in 2015-6	Implemented with 3 groups of 80-100 students in September; included touch rugby, obstacle course, zorb football; needs to be a compulsory; **requires annual budget**
Digital Library Welcome Pack	Piloted with 3 courses in 2015-6 & extended in 2016-7	Series of 10 personalised mail-outs on library resources that coordinate with assessment calendar for the students' course. Evaluation shows online engagement.
Reading skills for first year student engagement and the development of research proficiency	Intended for all students	Some initial delays with ethical approval (staff and student surveys). Development of online critical reading programme is ongoing

Project reports are at - http://www.dit.ie/lttc/projects/tu4dublinprojects/tu4dfye/

Outcomes – potential to extend scope

Virtual Learning Community & Environment	Timber product technology course	Development of learning community and digital literacy demonstrated in 2015-6; learner feedback used to enhance online environment in 2016-7. Model could be implemented in other disciplines.
Using Lego Serious Play as a 1st year orientation, engagement & retention strategy	One science programme	Student evaluation recommended contextualisation to show application in work environment & mixing with other activities. Worksheets to be made available
Peer Assisted Learning: students as partners	Chemistry modules on all Science programmes	Communication to clarify difference between PAL & peer mentoring and their complementary nature important. Not continued in 2016-7 as resource intensive to initiate but could be self-sustaining within 2 years. Templates developed.
The Global Classroom – Introducing a cost-effective international dimension to the first year experience	Business programme	Students from institutions in 3 countries (Canada, Ireland & Nigeria) took part in 3 video conferences on business ethics & sustainable business practice. Evaluations positive but some logistical issues. Could be implemented in range of disciplines; http://www.theglobalclass.org/

Outcomes – potential to extend scope

Flipping the Classroom – Introducing & Integrating Professional Practice in Humanities	Social Care & Early Childhood Education	Commitment required form students to prepare in advance – learner contract may be a future approach. Method used could be applied to other programmes.
Enhancing the 1st year experience through group work, research & presentation workshops.	One programme – buildings management.	Template developed for incorporating group research work and presentations into year 1 modules.
Return to education from work after a period away for **taught postgraduate students**	Part time students in built environment & engineering.	Supports and workshops developed in 2015-6 and rolled out in 2016-7. Evaluation in progress. could be implemented in similar courses.
Peer Mentor Programme for Year 1 Management Students at ITT Dublin	One programme	Recommendation to front load sessions in first month and have less from then on
Learner Profiler	One institution in 2015-6 – data gathering.	It is proposed to develop an online portal but further research on effective teaching approaches is required first

Outcomes – effective within discipline

Creative Bootcamp for Game Design Students	Students on Game Design degree, piloted in 2015-6 and developed in 2016-7	Student retention and engagement improved; peer mentoring by 2nd years an important element; involvement of academic staff critical to success; student confidence developed as well as awareness of professional community.
Realisation & implementation of a testable prototype of a web-based stimulating learning system for construction engineering	Design of 3D online environment in 2015-6; prototype tested in 2016-7	Feedback on graphics developed were positive but help tools may be needed for the interpersonal networking element.

Project reports are at - http://www.dit.ie/lttc/projects/tu4dublinprojects/tu4dfye/

Image source - http://www.keepbusy.net/pic.php?id=3997

Irish Examiner

Lecturers' vote clears way for laws to create technological universities

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Thursday, June 15, 2017

Niall Murray, Education Correspondent

Lecturers at institutes of technology have voted for a deal with colleges and the Department of Educati that should clear the way for new laws allowing the creation of technological universities.

Education Minister Richard Bruton

source - http://www.irishexaminer.com/ireland/lecturers-vote-clears-way-for-laws-to-create-technological-universities-452484.html

New Development - DIT First Year Experience Framework working group: Feb – Dec 2016

- consolidate recommendations from relevant national, local and institutional data into a series of actions related to successful projects on transition into higher education and the first year experience
- work with key stakeholder groups in the creation of a First Year Student Success Framework that aims to enhance first year student success for all DIT students (survey of 40 staff & then 2 working group sessions to develop framework)

Theme for Annual QE Monitoring of Programmes in 2017-8 (http://www.dit.ie/lttc/newsevents/firstyearframework.html)

DIT FIRST YEAR FRAMEWORK FOR SUCCESS CHECKLIST (designed as a guide for programme teams and first year tutors)

Programme teams and first year tutors in DIT have a strong and well-established commitment to supporting first year students. This checklist is your opportunity to recognise and map out the range of activities in place on your programme(s) that enrich the first year experience. It can also be used as a tool to plan for development to consolidate and extend current activities. The focus is on maximising what is effective in your context, not identifying deficits or gaps. The checklist was prepared in consultation with first year tutors and other staff involved in teaching and supporting first years.

Priority Area	1. Early Orientation (before classes begin – traditionally, described as 'induction')	2. Extended Induction (as soon as classes begin)	3. Peer Engagement/ Mentoring	4. Assessment and Feedback	5. Graduate Attributes: Engaged, Enquiry based Enterprising, Effective, Expert in subject discipline	6. Learning Spaces
High Priority Actions (core to student success)	☐ All incoming students are informed of induction/ orientation dates as early as possible. ☐ All key staff who teach and are involved in supporting first year students meet and welcome students (albeit briefly) during early orientation process. ☐ All students receive a handbook with key information they need to succeed during their first year. ☐ Engagement activities between peers are integrated here or within the first two weeks of semester one. ☐ Students have adequate information on first year module choices and opportunities for progression	☐ Sessions outlining key steps and skills for success on each programme are provided (with reference to the student handbook) ☐ 'Supporting your learning' workshops with links to online resources are provided by staff from (e.g. AWC, library, MLSC careers, counselling, etc.) ☐ Key dates for success are confirmed with students (e.g. review week, withdrawal, assessments etc.). ☐ Core information related to first year programmes is made available online ☐ A strategy for the early identification of students who might not progress into year two is in place (e.g.formative assessment attendance monitoring).	☐ Engagement activities with peer mentors/ students from later years of the programme are integrated within the first semester. ☐ A Peer Mentoring scheme is implemented in at least one programme in each School. ☐ Each School has a Peer Mentoring Coordinator (this is not necessarily a first year tutor). ☐ Institutional support and training is available through a peer mentor coordination network.	☐ A clear assessment and feedback strategy is outlined in the programme handbook. ☐ All students receive an assessment schedule for their programme (during the first two weeks). ☐ All students have an assessment with formative feedback on their learning for each module within the first seven weeks of their programme.	☐ All students are made aware of what it means to be an employable graduate within their discipline. ☐ All students are provided with information about modules where they can develop and get feedback on graduate attributes and skills for success during their first year. ☐ Students have early engagement with external communities e.g. alumni, an Industry visit (or guest lecturer from industry/ graduate employer for large class sizes) or community-based learning.	☐ Baseline activities are supported through a Webcourses or equivalent online space for each module e.g. student communication, submission of assessments etc. ☐ All students have access to study space and links to resources to support their learning over their first year. ☐ Students are encouraged to utilise informal learning spaces by becoming involved within external/ co-curricular activities e.g. local communities, clubs, societies etc.

Areas for Future development:

-To staff and students in Dublin Institute of Technology, Institute of Technology Blanchardstown and Institute of Technology Tallaght

-To all of you