

**International Conference On Engaging Pedagogy (ICEP): Abstracts From The 2013 Annual Conference, December 6th, IT Sligo\***

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## 1. Keeping Them Clicking: Promoting Student Engagement In MOOC Design.

Bailey, Jemimah, Cassidy, Dara and Breakwell, Nicholas

*Hibernia College.*

The MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) is the latest buzzword in distance education, bringing together, for the first time, high quality 'Ivy League' providers, online education and a low-cost model. MOOCs align with the approaches to teaching and learning advocated by the Kronberg Declaration (UNESCO, 2007), whereby learners 'play an ever more active role in knowledge acquisition and sharing' with 'the role of teachers and instructors decreasing'. While the basic design of individual MOOCs may not have moved too far beyond traditional pedagogical approaches, being largely lecture-based in format, the concept itself is learner-centred, liberating students to access and engage with education. However, to date, it would appear that MOOCs are falling short of these lofty ambitions for a radical shift in the way that education is delivered. The evidence strongly suggests that any reasonable measure of learner engagement in MOOCs is underwhelming when compared to the massive number of enrolments that many have secured. With these issues in mind, the authors this summer (2013) ran an eight-week MOOC, which generated data for a randomised control trial that considers the impact of three factors on student engagement:

- 1) Workload
- 2) Task design
- 3) Level and nature of facilitation

As part of the design, five different user groups were randomly created to investigate the contribution of each of the three factors above to the level of student engagement and to determine which, if any, had the greatest significance. Engagement was measured by tracking user activity and the collection of student feedback. This paper reports on the initial results of this experiment in MOOC delivery.

**Keywords:** MOOC, student engagement, attrition rate, motivation, instructional design, facilitation, community.

## 2 Efforts in Outreach Programmes to Inform Secondary Students on Studying ICT at Third Level.

Becker, Brett, Glanville, Graham and MacDonagh, Padráig.

### *College of Computer Training.*

The Irish national secondary school curriculum has no dedicated Computer Science or Information and Communications Technology (ICT) provision (Stokes, 2010). In addition the academic study of ICT programmes is often misunderstood by prospective students with little real-world or practical insight into these fields (Tangney, et al., 2009). As such, there have been several efforts to introduce secondary school students to elements of third-level experience before actually attending third-level full-time, normally taking the format of summer camps or similar outreach programmes at third-level institutions (see Appendices I & II). However it could be argued that some of these programmes add to the misunderstanding. A primary reason for this is many of these programmes focus on explaining the ICT curricula and giving limited examples of such in the form of past student projects, demonstrations, and other eye-catching and interest-generating presentations or activities – often referred to as ‘show’ (Frieze, 2005). Though the message is sound, the impression of studying at third-level received by potential students may not be. The reality is that these programmes involve coursework and accredited assessment. Starting in summer 2012 and expanding in 2013, the College of Computer Training<sup>3</sup> has delivered a programme called ICT Taster Courses, in partnership with Microsoft Ireland and Fasttrack to IT (FIT) as part of the Youth2Work initiative (Fasttrack to IT, 2013). The programme consists of intensive, three-week courses, each focussing on a particular ICT core skill area. These programmes were provided free of charge to senior-cycle secondary school students. Unlike any programme previously offered in Ireland, students undertake actual coursework and importantly, accredited assessment. Successful completion of the programme can result in two awards – a nationally accredited FETAC level 5 component certificate and an industry accredited Microsoft Technical Associate (MTA) certification. In addition to presenting student expectations, experience and results, this paper presents institutional successes and lessons learned. We outline the results of surveys designed to determine the depth of understanding of ICT when students arrive and the degree to which this understanding is improved as programmes progress. We also investigate how this experience influences future choice on studying ICT at third-level. This is of obvious interest to students, parents, school teachers and counsellors, third-level ICT educators, professionals, and policymakers.

**Keywords:** ICT Education, Taster Courses, Summer Camps, Third-level College Outreach.

### 3. A Review Of The Key Factors In Second Language Acquisition.

Cohalan, Elaine

*Irish Management Institute and University College Cork.*

This research looks at the theory and practice behind acquiring a second language and determines what the key pedagogical factors are behind second language acquisition (SLA). These pedagogical factors are examined in terms of their relevance and priority in overall SLA as well as in the key skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in SLA. Primary research is completed using interviews with second language experts and a focus group with second language instructors. The findings highlight that a number of general learning and second language acquisition theories are relevant in practice today with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory the most prominent. The following eight pedagogical factors are found to be the most important in second language acquisition; 'active learning', 'autonomy', 'scaffolded learning', 'critical thinking', 'Learner collaboration', 'context', 'authentic communication' and 'practice'. The findings of this research provide a guide for SLA practitioners in higher education to bridge the gap between theory and practice in the development of curriculum and instruction plans. They also provide direction to industry by highlighting the key areas that require research and development.

**Keywords:** Second Language Acquisition (SLA), pedagogy, target language pedagogy.

#### 4. Employing Student Voices To Enhance Inclusive Learning.

Collins, Bernie and Kavanagh, Anne Marie

*St. Patrick's College, Dublin City University.*

Inclusive learning is promoted across a number of teacher education courses as part of the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degree. Circle time - a widely employed and popular learning method amongst primary and post-primary teachers – is conceptualised as one effective method for facilitating inclusive learning at third-level.<sup>1</sup> The current research sought to investigate student teachers' experiences of and attitudes towards this inclusive learning method at the beginning of their teacher education degree course. As teacher educators, we wanted to critically engage with and inform our own conduct and practice of circle time in order to enhance students' experiences of the method and to maximise their possible future use of circle time in their own teaching. The methodology employed was mixed methods, with the use of a self-administered questionnaire distributed to a large group of students and provision for focus group interviews with a small number of students. The research uncovered both positive and negative aspects of students' prior experiences of circle time. Circle time's capacity to facilitate student voice, the sharing of stories and experiences and peer discussion along with positive interpersonal relations were cited as key benefits. However, students did not feel that they were provided with opportunities to participate on an equal basis either with each other or with the facilitating teacher. Students reported that teachers generally determined theme selection and that more confident students frequently dominated group discussions thereby marginalising and silencing less confident students. These findings suggest a need to modify practices in order to promote inclusion, participation and equality of voice. Notwithstanding some negativity however, the majority of student teachers indicated that they would be willing to use the method of circle time at some stage in the future, suggesting that they see a value in it. The implications of these findings are examined in this paper from the perspectives of the authors as they introduce circle time to student teachers. The findings may resonate with other third level practitioners who seek to facilitate inclusive learning as part of their pedagogical approach.

**Keywords:** Inclusive learning; circle time; teacher educators; SPHE; mixed methods inquiry; students' prior experiences.

## 5. Promoting Student Engagement Within A Practical Class Through The Use Of A Learning Portfolio.

Delaney, Niall and Nolan, John.

*Dublin Institute of Technology.*

This paper looks at an exploratory case-study undertaken to try and investigate student engagement within a practical wood machining class. Due to the nature of the course and the cohort of students, the current lecturer pedagogic practice has to be behaviourist, but from this a culture of expectancy has developed among the students. It was felt that something had to be done to revitalise student interest in the work they were doing and also give them the chance to address the perceived shortfall in their learning. There was potential for a lot of failures, but also much worse, there was potential for students to engage in unsafe practices with inevitable accidents occurring. The current teaching practice was examined and analysed with a view to changing and improving it. Within the limited scope for change it was decided to try a viable alternative method of student engagement, whereby they would encompass their learning in a portfolio. The hope here was that through reflecting on work done and machines used, the learning experience would improve for the students due to the higher order thinking skills necessary to produce the broader and deeper knowledge required for the portfolio. This would then in turn foster a more focused learning environment and help to ensure that the students take greater control and responsibility of their own learning going into the future. The research has produced encouraging signs and it seems to have had the desired effect of allowing the students to gain a broader knowledge of the subject, to back-up practical classroom experiences and also to allow for a further demonstration of learning and knowledge achieved.

**Keywords** : Learning Portfolio, Student Engagement, Reflection.

6. **Increasing In-class Student Engagement Using Socrative (an Online Student Response System).**

Dervan, Paul.

*Institute of Technology, Blanchardstown.*

This paper draws on primary and secondary research to analyse the effectiveness of the Socrative cloud-based Student Response System (SRS) in improving student engagement and the learning experience, compared with the traditional lecture setting. For lecturers considering a move to a cloud-based SRS, this paper examines the potential pay-offs and pitfalls, identifies free online options available and assesses the efficacy of the Socrative SRS from the perspective of lecturers and students.

**Keywords** : Socrative, Lecture, Clicker, Student, Response, BYOD, Technology, Cloud, Learning.

7. **An Experiment Investigating The Effects Of Motivation On Cognitive Multimedia Learning Theory.**

Peter Gillis,

*Trinity College Dublin.*

Recently there has been an increased interest in exploring the relationship between Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) and Motivation. Both areas have large bodies of research already. Both have well established theories like Mayer's Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning (CTML) and Self Determination Theory of motivation. From the TEL perspective the call is driven by the fact that theories such as CTML are global and do not take motivation into account. This study sought to remedy this dearth and investigate the effect of motivation on Modality, one of the ten principles of CTML. Modality holds that better learning occurs when materials are presented as audio/visual rather than on-screen text/visual. Modality has not traditionally been tested in this fashion. 207 5th year students participated in an experiment to investigate the effect of Motivation on Modality. The results of the research did not show support for the hypothesis in relation to the positive forms of motivation. However, the negative form of motivation, amotivation, did show significant interaction, where highly amotivated participants performed significantly better with traditional text/video materials rather than the audio/visual format, the opposite of modality, known as reverse modality. The results provide three interesting insights, which might guide instruction and provide areas for future research. First, is amotivation a more sensitive measure of engagement level than motivation? Second as amotivation is a barrier, it may be susceptible to being removed using methods such as context and defining learning steps, thereby motivating learners. Finally the amotivated performed better with traditional, rather than multimedia materials (reverse modality). Could learning materials in the future be personalised to suit amotivation levels?

**Keywords:** Amotivation, Modality, Motivation, Multimedia Learning, Cognitive Load Theory.



## 8. Is Anyone There? Engaging Learners In Synchronous Online Classes.

Kyofuna, Sara.

*National College of Ireland.*

This paper investigates the challenges, opportunities and practices of synchronous online teaching in higher education. It reports on preliminary research insights arising from an on-going blended learning program that mainly involves synchronous online instruction. The approach taken involves interviews with lecturers at different stages of the online courses, and observations of the live online classes. To-date, a number of synchronous forms of communication media have been developed specifically for educational purposes and are increasingly integrated in higher education practice. Particularly, virtual classroom environments like Wimba classroom, BigBlue Button, WizIQ, Adobe Connect, WebEx, and Blackboard collaborate, among others. These allow real-time interaction among geographically dispersed learners thus add aspects of immediacy and engagement. But, we ask, what is it like, for practitioners and educators, to integrate synchronous media forms in teaching practice. The findings highlight challenges of learner engagement and interactivity, dealing with silence and isolation, learning and adopting new instructional strategies and having to re-evaluate the perceived role as lecturers and the instructional practices. Some of the lecturers also questioned the effectiveness of online synchronous instruction in learning and teaching. Findings also indicate that often, the practice is to transfer traditional habits of face-to-face instructions to the online classes. Nonetheless, opportunities for new forms of student engagement that can be used in the traditional face-to-face instruction were also highlighted.

**Keywords:** Online Learning and Teaching, Learner engagement.

**9. Wikis As An Efficient Means Of Student Collaboration I Completing Coursework.**

Lane, Brid

*Dublin Business School.*

Much of the power of wikis lies in their ability to stretch knowledge-sharing beyond the classroom. However, the instructor typically remains as an authority figure within the wiki space. In this research, the voice of the educator was silenced with responsibility for organising and running of wikis given to students as part of their assessment work. A wiki should offer time-poor students an efficient online means of collaborating on assessments. This research assesses the extent to which such efficiency can be achieved. Student groups in a part-time undergraduate cloud computing module used cloud-based wikis to collaborate on coursework. The wikis functioned as discussion boards and a means of evolving the required coursework report document. Each of the 10 groups of between two and three members each, organised themselves in terms of how they structured and managed their group wiki. Marks were allocated for regular adding and editing of content, displaying evidence of this content evolving appropriately over time. Each student completed a one-page report detailing their personal experience of using the wiki. While all students successfully completed the coursework, the efficiency with which this was achieved varied. Some students found the wiki to be an excellent means of structuring and progressing their report with the wiki facilitating discussion and managing on-going documentation. Others had operational issues that impeded this success. For example, one group member accidentally over-wrote another member's content without enabling the roll-back feature of the wiki. Few students considered the wiki to be a poor substitute for face-to-face discussion. In conclusion, wikis can be an efficient means for students to collaborate and complete their coursework. However, instructors need to scaffold and teach students how to use the wiki to avoid negative operational issues, suggesting that the active voice of the instructor is needed when preparing students for wiki-based assignment work.

**Keywords:** Wiki, collaboration, coursework.

10. **One Year On: Using A Learning Skills Programme To Support Learners At Risk Of Academic Underachievement.**

Mahon, Catherine and Crowley, Una.

*National University of Ireland, Maynooth.*

Making the transition to higher education requires learners to become increasingly responsible for regulating their own learning. However, not all learners will have developed, or indeed be aware of, the various strategies that can be utilised to aid learning and improve academic achievement. Over the past year, we have piloted a new learning skills programme designed to support learners who have underachieved academically since commencing higher education. One of the aims of this support programme was to help learners identify and practise effective strategies that could feasibly be incorporated into their own studies (e.g., elaboration and organisation techniques). Following on from the paper presented at last year's conference detailing the programme methodology, in the current paper we report on the data collected, including a comparison of the pre- and post-programme academic performance and learning strategy use of the 40 participating learners. In the aftermath of the programme, alongside observing increases in the frequency with which particular learning strategies were used, a number of socio-emotional benefits were also noted (e.g., gains in feelings of inclusion and confidence). Lastly, the prevalent themes to emerge from the programme evaluation are described, with reference to questionnaire data. Specifically, we focus on what aspects of the programme the learners found useful and the reasons underlying the perceived utility. Potential implications for similar learning skills support programmes are reflected upon from the perspective of learners completing the programme and teachers facilitating the programme.

**Keywords:** Learning support, academic achievement.

**11. Problem Based Learning And Civic Engagement: Can Connecting With Community Enhance The Student Learning Experience?**

McDonald, John.

Final year interior architecture students were asked to re-imagining existing buildings specifically those within a given Dublin neighbourhood: the North East Georgian Quarter. This part of the city centre benefits from an excellent location adjacent to O Connell Street and with many transportation links. It has suffered historically from various economic setbacks and a current deficit in strategic planning. This paper will illustrate how the final year student learning experience, including academic requirements and assessments was enhanced through focusing individual and group energies on specific community and social problems.

Ethics, sustainability, conservation, restoration, intervention, urbanism: By 2030, it is estimated that 80% of construction will involve repurposing existing buildings. While the remit of the interior architect and designer is within the given built environment, the graduate must understand how the implication of their proposals will be experienced by the users within the building but also by the public on the street and in the adjacent environments. This paper will focus on how a cohort of Irish and International, day and evening students engaged with these challenges through group and individual research. Students embraced all issues, aesthetic, environmental, social and historical, resulting in a rich and varied learning experience for all, one that poses questions and offers possible solutions to issues of regeneration and sustainable neighborhoods.

This paper will explain how project based learning that engages and generates enthusiasm in both student and academic staff, that stimulates interest in the community and the general public can reward the learner specifically but also serve to focus attention on wider social issues.

**12. Learners As Initiators Through Inquiry Based Science Education.**

McLoughlin, Eilish, Finlayson, Odilla and Brady, Sarah.

*Dublin City University.*

Inquiry-Based Science Education (IBSE) has been the focus of many national and international programmes and projects in recent years as Inquiry based teaching methods have been suggested as a way to encourage and motivate students in science. The pan-European FP7-funded project ESTABLISH collaboration has led to the development of the project's teaching and learning materials as well as educational supports for both in-service and pre-service teachers designed to promote the use of Inquiry based approach at second level. In particular ESTABLISH aims to create authentic learning environments for science education through industry engagement to share contexts and problems that can be tackled in the classroom. This paper will share the approach adopted across 11 countries to engage second level students as initiators and innovators through inquiry based learning. In addition, this approach has been adopted with third level students (pre service teachers) by facilitating these teachers to gain experience in inquiry, and gain confidence in developing their own teaching practices and incorporating industrial engagement into their classroom practices.

**Keywords:** Inquiry, science education, teacher education, ICK, PCK.

13 **A Study On Alternative Strategies For Sharing Lecture Notes Using A VLE To Promote In-class Participation.**

Mooney, Aidan and Bergin, Susan.

*National University of Ireland, Maynooth.*

The use of Virtual Learning Environments (VLEs) has become popular over the last ten years at third level institutions. At the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM) the Moodle VLE is used to disseminate lecture notes, share course related resources, perform assessment, and provide a means for online communication. This paper is interested in how to effectively use a VLE to disseminate lecture notes. At NUIM lectures notes are typically posted on Moodle before a lecture (for example, all notes posted at the start of the semester or several days before an upcoming lecture etc.) or after a lecture with lecturers having a personal preference for a particular method. In this paper a pilot study on the dissemination of lectures notes through Moodle to a large first year undergraduate class is described in this paper. In previous years student disengagement in this class has been an issue. As such two different approaches were trialed. In the first approach, a summary set of lecture notes to be covered at the next lecture were made available four days in advance. The summary was a one-page document containing at most six slides of the most important material in the lecture. The students were encouraged to read the notes in advance. It was hoped that this would lead to more active participation by the students as they had time to assimilate the material prior to the lecture. In the second approach the students were informed in advance that an in-class assessment would be carried out based on the summary. In both instances a full set of notes were made available on Moodle after the lecture. An overview of the findings of this pilot is presented, including data on student participation during both approaches. In addition, a critique of the potential effects on student results is provided and recommendations based on the findings are discussed.

**Keywords:** Student Engagement, Large Classes, Lectures, VLE.

**14 Student Work Placement: Friend Or Foe? A Study Of The Perceptions Of University Students On Industrial Work Placement.**

O'Briain, Sian, Bergin, Susan, Mooney, Aidan, Bourgoïn, Martina, Murray, Paula and Zhao, Qingyang.

*National University of Ireland, Maynooth.*

At the National University of Ireland Maynooth, Computer Science and Software Engineering students are required to undertake an industrial work placement module as part of their course. The work placement is typically six to eighteen months long and takes place in the penultimate year of the degree. This paper evaluates students' perception of the quality of the learning experience they received through work placement. The voice of many key players involved in the process is captured, including, the students themselves, members of the academic department and the Industrial Work Placement Office; and importantly this paper is authored by representatives of each of these groups. In particular, the paper evaluates the types of preparations students make prior to commencing a placement, the transferable skills acquired and improved during their placement, and student perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of their placement. A mixed data acquisition model is used for gathering data including questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. The gathered data is analysed and a critique on the findings is presented. The paper concludes with recommendations and considerations for any institution that is interested in offering an industrial work placement component.

**Keywords:** Work placement, student perceptions, soft skills, technical skills.

**15 Experience Of Elective Provision At UCD.**

Purcell, Patrick, Dunnion, John and Loughran, Hilda.

*University College Dublin.*

There have been numerous calls to broaden the education of third level students and thus prepare them to serve society with an awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural, political, economic and social dimensions of their work. There have been many innovations in recent years to make undergraduate education more student-centred, offering students greater flexibility and choice in 'how' and 'what' they study. In relation to 'how' students learn, novel pedagogical techniques that make students take an active, self-directed approach to their own learning are increasingly common in higher education. In relation to 'what' students learn, most university curricula have gradually evolved into core curriculum as a specified or fixed course of study coupled with some element of student choice in selecting elective or optional modules.

In 2005, University College Dublin (UCD) introduced the 'Horizons' initiative to provide a broader undergraduate education through the provision of non-programme electives for their students. One of the key features of the initiative was the introduction of an element of elective choice for students in the first three years of their studies. The experience of teaching across disciplines from the perspective of students at UCD has been previously examined and the proposed paper will examine the subject from the perspective of delivery by schools and individual academic staff. A survey/questionnaire/interview of a representative sample of Heads of School across the University was undertaken. The results will be presented under the following headings:

- Awareness' of the School re. elective provision;
- School philosophy on electives;
- School policy and practice on electives;
- Staff views on electives;
- School views on elective models.

**Keywords:** Elective modules, School philosophy, Staff perception, Third-level education.



**16 Using Reflective Journals To Promote And Enhance Self-directed Learning.**

Ryan, Aidan and Byrne, Jennifer.

*Dublin Institute of Technology.*

This paper seeks to highlight/outline the benefits that can be achieved by using reflective journals to assist teaching in a practical class. The reflective journals were introduced to try and make up for the perceived shortfall in the level of experience and understanding of students on a new degree programme "Timber Product Technology". The lecturers involved needed to find a way to get the student more involved in independent learning outside of their normal classroom environment. The module is "Jointing Techniques and Furniture 1" and is taught in a practical workshop environment whereby the students learn the basic skills in wood jointing and making furniture. The students learn using a combination of hand tool skills and the use of machines in fabricating wood into furniture. The lecturers have found the benefits of using a reflective journal with this cohort of students in this practical based module extremely beneficial. The students recorded mistakes that they made and how to avoid them next time around. They listed where tasks went well for them and why they thought so and they planned how they would tackle a similar task in the future. We believe that using the reflective journals has allowed the students to think about their actions, before doing them, while carrying out the actions and after doing them. They are using Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action (thinking while doing the task). They are reflecting upon the task and if it is going well or if they need to stop and re-evaluate what they are doing and make changes. They are also using Schön's (1983) reflection-on-action (thinking after-the-event) they evaluate what they have just done and consider how they can do it differently and plan what they will do in a similar task thus directing their own learning.

**Keywords:** Reflection, knowledge, understanding, independent learning, self-directed learning.

**17. Decoding The Disciplines For Postgraduate Law Students.**

Somers, Caroline.

*Griffith College, Cork.*

Particular ways of thinking characterise each discipline but too often they remain implicit in our teaching and this impedes student learning. 'Decoding the Disciplines', which emerged from the Indiana University Faculty Learning Community in 2004, is a deceptively simple framework that enables lecturers to understand why many students have difficulty in their discipline. In this paper I consider the ways I employed the framework while teaching three different modules to postgraduate law students, in order to break down the fuzzy concept of 'critical thinking' so essential to postgraduate work.

Too often, even at undergraduate level, the focus is on mastering disciplinary content through repetition of lecture notes and required reading, and students do not always progress beyond the 'expositional mode'. By using the 'decoding the disciplines' framework lecturers can uncover strategies that enable students to critically engage with texts and so achieve the enhanced understanding required of postgraduates.

This paper focuses particularly on my work with students studying the Legal Research and Methods module. There is a symmetry between the philosophy of 'decoding the disciplines' and the goals of the Legal Research and Methods module. This is a threshold module designed to bridge the divide between undergraduate and postgraduate study, to provide students with a deeper understanding of their discipline, and the skills they need to undertake their first significant piece of independent research.

The techniques associated with 'decoding the disciplines' have been developed because the cognitive repertoire required of students differs greatly not only between disciplines, but also between undergraduate and postgraduate study. This paper analyses the ways in which the seven-step framework provided by 'decoding the disciplines' guides lecturers as they develop strategies to enable students to master the process of learning required of them as postgraduate law students.

18. **Two Paths Diverged In A Wood...The Incorporation Of Active Learning Techniques In Legal Education And The Role Of The Law Lecturer.**

Sutton, Karen Joan.

The role of the lecturer in the current higher education environment is a transitory thing with many lecturers adopting a more learner focused approach in the classroom as modern learners demand more from their lecturers than being read or dictated an endless ream of notes. (Blumberg 2004). In addition Barlow (2012) believes that it is no longer sufficient for lecturers to merely convey information with a traditional chalk and talk approach. However, one of the questions or possibly more so dilemmas which arise for lecturers and particularly law lectures involves the incorporation of activities in what is traditionally the domain of lectures and further whether their lecture could ultimately become more of a workshop or tutorial than a traditional law lecture. By using active learning techniques reliance on the lecturer as the conveyer of all knowledge is reduced and the classroom environment is transformed from a passive to an active learning environment with questions being answered and discussed at a practical level. Activities such as role plays, jigsaws, crosswords, group research are incorporated and learners play an active part in directing their own learning. But albeit that there are a wide variety of ways in which lecturers can incorporate a more active learning approach, would this approach be suited to legal education? The purpose of this paper is threefold and chronicles the author's research in the area of active learning. Firstly the author reviewed the benefits of incorporating active learning techniques with reference to the Learner Attention Clock and Learning Pyramid. Secondly, the author considered the incorporation of breaks and the use of activities in lectures. Finally the author considered the formal lecture versus tutorial dilemma and the role of the law lecturer in the introduction of active learning.

**Keywords:** Active learning techniques; Law lecturer; Tutorials; Workshops; Activities; Restrictions; Formal lecture; Classroom, Passive Learning, Active Learning.

**19. What Early Childcare Students Find 'Troublesome' During Practice Placements.**

Taylor, Mark.

*Institute of Technology, Sligo.*

Social professional students, such as those training to become Early Childhood Education and Care Practitioners, Social Workers or Social Pedagogues, transform their understanding of the social professional role during practice placements. Students observe practitioners at work, eventually learning how to direct their own activities with service users. Yet the challenging part of this learning journey, which students are required to traverse to perform social professional functions, frequently gets minimised in tales of professional identity metamorphosis. Employing the education theory 'Threshold Concepts' (Meyer & Land, 2003), I was interested in exploring the 'troublesome' aspects of learning during practice placements for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) students. I interviewed six ECEC practice placement supervisors and six final-year ECEC students to understand these troubles. Following a narrative analysis of these interviews, I identified two principal learning challenges which arise for ECEC students during the early phase of practice placements. First, students must come to terms with an unfamiliar workplace culture. Second, students must learn to 'find their voice' to participate in preschool settings. These difficulties place cognitive, emotional and physical demands on ECEC students; these demands should not be underestimated. Arguably, college educators do their students an injustice by not acknowledging, understanding and exploring the difficult aspects of placement learning. For a start, students will remain ill-prepared for their placement experiences. More widely, admitting that childcare work can be difficult for students aligns with a commitment to promote and normalise a wider discourse which acknowledges that childcare work can be challenging at times for every childcare worker. Consequently, identifying what students find difficult during practice placements enables us to reflect more generally on the supports which need to be put in place for childcare workers, to prevent a repeat of dangerous childcare practices witnessed on RTÉ's Prime Time (television) programme (June 2013).

**Keywords:** Early Childhood Education & Care, Practice Placements, Threshold Practices, Communities of Practice.

20. **From Policy To Practice; How Praxis Works- Enacting The Intercultural Guidelines In The Classroom.**

Whitaker, Teresa.

*Hibernia College.*

Policy makers make policies based on national and international best practice evidence; however, policies may not get enacted on the ground due to the lack of knowledge of the policy by practitioners or it could reflect a lack of commitment or a lack of awareness of obligations. In this paper we examine how primary school teachers enacted the intercultural guidelines (NCCA, 2005) in the classroom. A cohort of teachers (n=25) undertaking a module on Intercultural education as part of a Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning (MATL) conducted small scale action research projects in which they sought to practice intercultural education in the classroom and school. Interculturalism argues that normality is diverse and diversity is normal; it takes an anti-bias curriculum (Derman-Sparks & ABC Task Force, 1989) approach by eschewing discrimination of any kind whether it is based on race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, family or marital status, age and Traveller status. Policies encourage teachers to be political activists and to challenge discrimination of all kinds. The European Council emphasises the importance of intercultural competence and dialogue, exchange and education in building a common European future based on values and principles, so that human rights and democracy are safeguarded (Huber 2012). The Council of Europe further argue that there is a great need for education so that intercultural competence can be developed, learned and maintained throughout life. They go so far as to say that intercultural competence is at the heart of education. The paper will examine diversity in Irish society based on the results of the Irish census (2011) and provide a brief resume of current laws, policies and strategies on intercultural education. It gives examples of how teachers can promote an anti-bias curriculum in the classroom in relation to ethnicity, religion and Travellers.

**Keywords:** Intercultural, primary school teachers, ethnicity, religion, Travellers, policies, strategies, diversity, discrimination, racism.