Technological University Dublin
ARROW@TU Dublin

Conference papers

Learning,Teaching & Technology Centre

2021

Care, Community and Curriculum: a Case Study of an Academic Professional Development Programme

Roisin Donnelly

Muireann OKeeffe

Claire McAvinia

See next page for additional authors

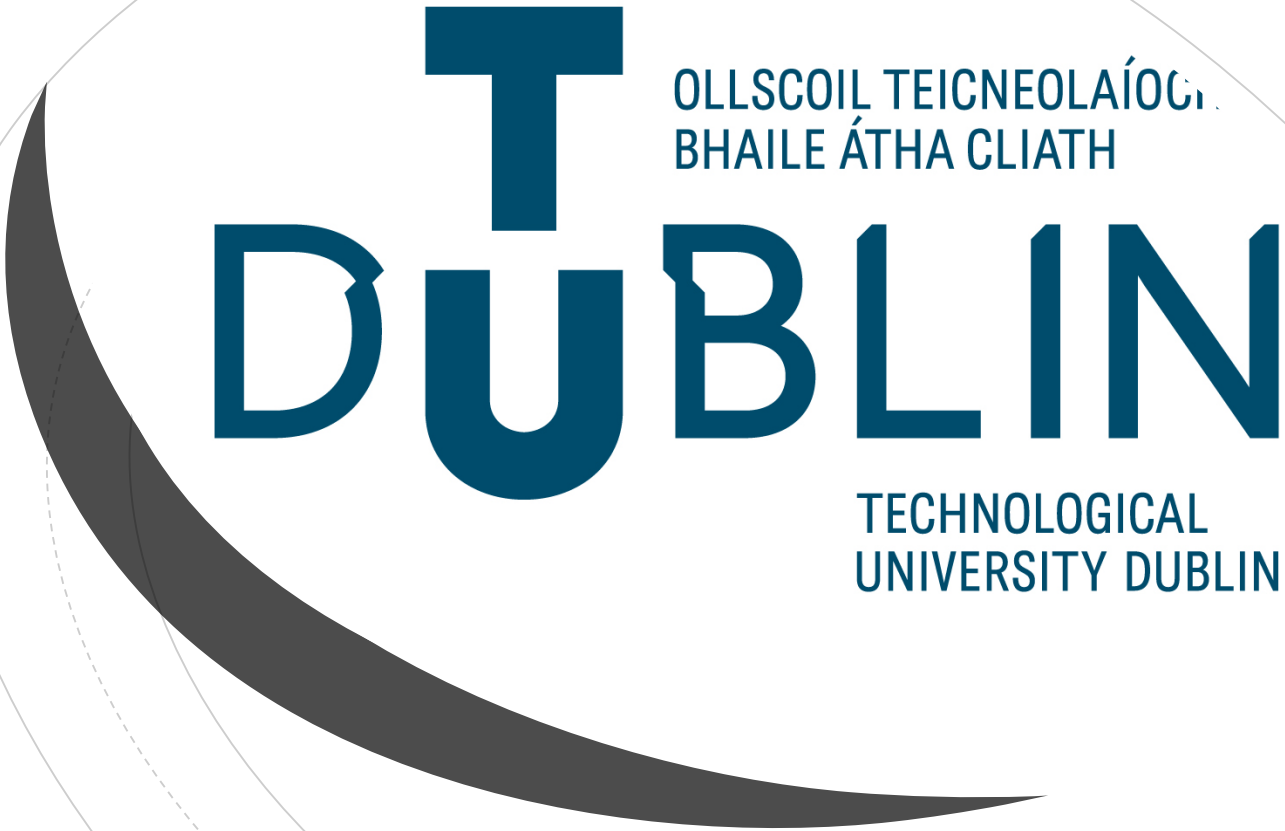
Follow this and additional works at: https://arrow.tudublin.ie/ltccon

Part of the Education Commons

This Conference Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Learning,Teaching & Technology Centre at ARROW@TU Dublin. It has been accepted for inclusion in Conference papers by an authorized administrator of ARROW@TU Dublin. For more information, please contact arrow.admin@tudublin.ie, aisling.coyne@tudublin.ie.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License

Authors
Roisin Donnelly, Muireann OKeeffe, Claire McAvinia, Seamus Harrington, and Marese Kelly



Care, community and curriculum: a case study of an academic professional development programme

Dr Muireann O'Keeffe, Dr Claire McAvinia, Dr Roisin Donnelly, Seamus Harrington, Dr Marese Kelly

Abstract

In March 2020, teaching and learning (T&L) in higher education pivoted online and in 2021 the disruption to traditional forms of teaching, learning and assessment continues. Like many other academic development programmes, our PG Cert programme pivoted online effectively and efficiently. Programme evaluation data (June 2020) reported that modelling of online teaching and learning within our programme helped lecturers teach online, facilitate peer interaction among their students and assisted informed change in assessment practices to suit the online context. At the heart of our programme's ethos lies a commitment to community building among students. However, the art of gathering is more than bringing students into a virtual room. Design and careful planning is necessary to elevate a learning experience from modes of presence to participation and to foster a sense of belonging for students within that learning environment. Also given the Pandemic context, a period where the effects of isolation from other people and society were felt acutely, the programme team felt it vital that time was designated for check-ins with participants of the learning environment. Bali (2020) advocates a Pedagogy of care, an approach that demonstrates a genuine concern for students' wellbeing and life experiences.

This exploratory case study examines how the pivot to online teaching on our Postgraduate (PG) Certificate in University Learning and Teaching has impacted on teaching practices of academic staff across the disciplines undertaking the programme. We wish to investigate if and how community building and care was subsequently implemented in the learning environments of academic staff who undertook the PG Cert. Secondly, to inspect what T&L practices, with a focus on the pedagogy of care, that might remain in place in a post pandemic university. Thirdly, to investigate if fully online learning is suitable and viable for the PG Certificate which values community, professional relationships and shared practice. Lastly, this disruptive change to online teaching necessitates the investigation of the future teaching development needs for lecturers teaching in online and blended spaces. Also, in our context, as an emerging technological university, through our experiences and research we propose some recommendations for the university to consider at a strategic level in support of the development of teaching and learning practice in a post digital higher education environment.

Methodology

The design of this case study is underpinned by Brookfield's (1995) model and analyses the study aims through Brookfield's four lenses. Firstly, through our reflections in our multifaceted roles as academic developers, teachers, and programme co-ordinators. Secondly, we sought perspectives of participants of our programme, through a focus group, to understand how online T&L practices worked for them and what practices they consider implementing in the future. Thirdly, we contemplated the informed opinions of our global network of colleagues in communities such as #GastaGoesGlobal and SEDA and by comparison to national level conversation and considerations on the future of higher education in a post-pandemic and post digital world (Curtin, 2021). Data arising from these three lenses were reviewed thematically (Braun & Clarke, 2006) highlighting common themes arising from the data. Next, we plan to review appropriate literature to consider how other experience, advice and models might inform future practice and direction at our technological university.

Data analysis

Initial data analysis indicates that during the Pandemic, a time of emergency teaching (Nordmann et al., 2020), that a value of pedagogy of care (Bali, 2020), was central to the PG Cert learning environment. As programme designers we placed care before curriculum, fostering and sustaining a community of learners was a cornerstone of the online learning experience. In addition, student centred pedagogical strategies modelled on the PG Cert gave participants confidence to design similar activities with their students and also gave them the opportunity to experiment new pedagogical approaches with peers as part of the PG Cert programme. Participants reported developing strong technical capacity in use of eLearning tools for teaching but also indicated that more was needed on how to best scaffold community and active learning online. From a programme perspective, a programme team approach, which enabled collaborative planning and support for online teaching has been important. Data also revealed that the PG Cert can be continued as a blended or fully online programme requiring further evaluation. This exploration is timely at the end of the second academic teaching year effected by the Pandemic where our study emphasises the need for community-building online with care and equity. Going forward, we can plan for the future needs of our teaching staff in a technological university that has a strong focus in its strategic vision on people, planet and partnership and to make future strategic plans in a post digital and post pandemic university. Notably, our case study of the PG Certificate in University Learning and Teaching, will be of interest to academic development staff in other universities and offer insight into how academic development programmes might be shaped and imagined in a post-pandemic world.

Future research: As a programme team, it will be helpful for us in our upcoming annual review to look at the strategies implemented on the PG Certificate from the Pedagogy of Care's perspectives on the course philosophy and design level, the class situation level, how we can show care in habitual ways, and how care is demonstrated with participants at the individual level.

PG Cert In University Learning and Teaching

- 21+ Years Dublin Institute of Technology
- Technological University Dublin 2019
- Academic development opportunities for all staff who teach DIT/TU Dublin

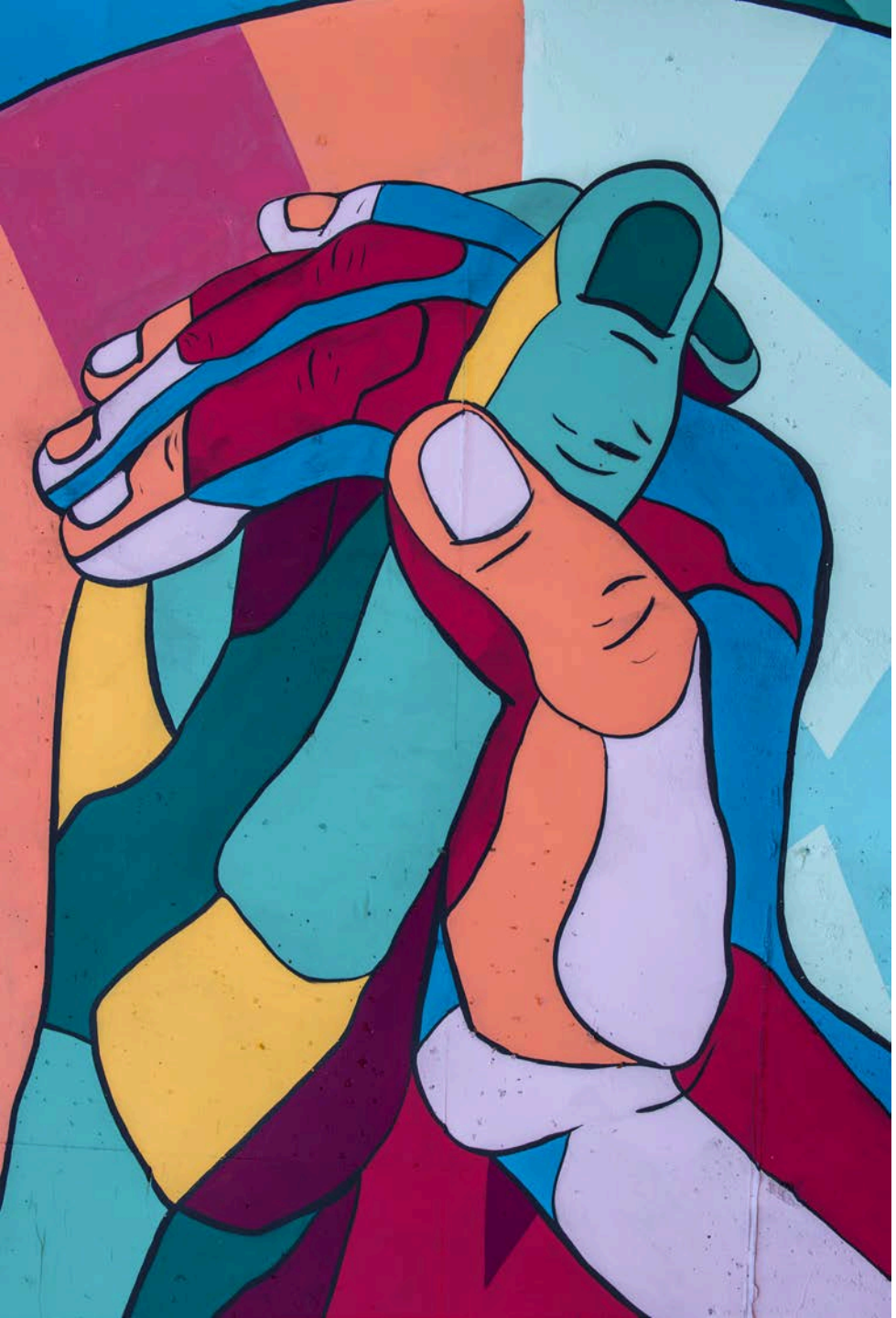
OLLSCOIL TEICNEOLAÍOCHTA BHAILE ÁTHA CLIATH
DUBLIN
TECHNOLOGICAL UNIVERSITY DUBLIN

Programme ethos

- Commitment to community building.
- Centre the student at the heart of our learning
- Design and careful planning necessary
  - to elevate a learning experience from modes of presence to participation
  - to foster a sense of belonging for students within the learning environment.

PG Cert
Pandemic Pivot

- Asynchronous and synchronous
- Need for vibrant virtual community
- The art of gathering is more than bringing students into a (virtual) room.



Pandemic Pivot - A duty of care?

The Pandemic context:

- The effects of isolation from other people and society
- Vital that time was designated for check-ins with participants of the learning environment.
- Bali (2020) advocates a Pedagogy of Care, an approach that demonstrates a genuine concern for students' wellbeing and life experiences.

Pedagogy of Care: Covid-19 Edition

Levels of Care

- care on the course philosophy and design level
- care at the class situation level.
- show care at the personal level

“Keep in mind there are forms of care that are instrumentalist, calculated or neoliberal – where a teacher “shows” care to ensure student success or to motivate them. This is important, too. But I think genuine love and care for students is the thing most of us already carry inside of us and need to express now more than ever”

From Bali 2020 https://blog.mahabali.me/educational-technology-2/pedagogy-of-care-covid-19-edition/

What did Pedagogy of Care look like within our programme?

Care at course philosophy and design level	Care at class situation level.	Care at personal level
• Community building across the programme • Group activities • Peer review activities • Presentations to peers • Microteaching • Observation of teaching • Well-being session (staff development). Support within the University	• Ice breakers • Low stakes engagement before High stakes engagement (Byrne 2020) • Hold and Share • Breakout rooms • Audience response tools (i.e. Mentimeter, Slido, Padlet…)	• Designing the student in • Power of Pause • Time for student to share practice & knowledge • Opportunities for peer dialogue and feedback

Future of the PG Cert?

As we continue to teach online, questions about the future of T&L in a post-pandemic higher education environment.

Exploratory case study : how the pivot to online teaching on our PG Cert impacted on teaching practices of academic staff.

Also, we explore what practices might remain in place in a post-pandemic university.

Next, we ask our participants to share what practices worked for them and might remain in place in the future to build and sustain learning communities.

Dr Marese Kelly & Seamus Harrington

What was a big challenge in your teaching in the last year?

What was a highlight of the PG Cert programme?

Can you give us an example of a teaching approach that you brought back to your own students?

How did that approach go for you?

What might you continue to do in the future with your students?

Questions & Answers

Time for Q & A from the online participants

What experiences described here resonated with your experience here?

References

- Bali, M. (2020) Pedagogy of Care: Covid-19 Edition. https://blog.mahabali.me/educational-technology-2/pedagogy-of-care-covid-19-edition/
- Byrne, J (2020) Enhancing Interaction in Live Online Classes: what works for students? https://vimeo.com/504416007
- Brookfield, S. (1995). Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher. San-Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Curtin, R (2021) Reimagining Higher Education: The Post-Covid Classroom https://er.educause.edu/articles/2021/4/reimagining-higher-education-the-post-covid-classroom
- Nordmann, E., Horlin, C., Hutchison, j., Murray, J., Robson, L., Seery, M., & MacKay, J. R. D., Dr. (2020, April 27). 10 simple rules for supporting a temporary online pivot in higher education. https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/qdh25

Images

Photo by	Photo by Dmitry Ratushny on Unsplash
Photo by	Photo by J. Kelly Brito on Unsplash
Photo by	Photo by Thought Catalog on Unsplash
Photo by	Photo by Tim Mossholder on Unsplash
Photo by	Photo by You X Ventures on Unsplash
Photo by	Photo by Priscilla Du Preez on Unsplash
Photo by	Photo by Tim Mossholder on Unsplash
Photo by	Photo by Daniel Seßler on Unsplash