



# COMPENDIUM

— OF APPROACHES TO —

# INTERNATIONALISATION OF THE HOME CURRICULUM

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Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development, TUS

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## Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

I am very pleased to welcome the publication of this Compendium of Approaches to Internationalisation of the Home Curriculum, the third in a series of compendia compiled by colleagues in the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID).

Internationalisation at Home (IaH) continues to be a strategic goal in higher education globally. It requires the commitment of many stakeholders in our university community, from senior managers, academic faculty, administrative colleagues, technical support staff and the student body. The principles of IaH align both with the development of our own graduate attributes and more widely, with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The development of this compendium was funded by National Forum under Strategic Alliance Teaching Learning Enhancement 2022 funding, which included sustainability as a key theme.

Our membership of RUN-EU, a transnational alliance of higher education institutions working together to create a regional development-oriented European University that embodies the values of sustainability, multiculturalism and inclusiveness in all its work, is testament to the commitment of TUS to internationalisation.

In addition, we are proud to have been the first technological university in Ireland to receive designation as a University of Sanctuary in recognition of our efforts to make higher education more welcoming and inclusive of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This compendium is a further example of our determination to provide quality, inclusive education to our students. It comprises examples of a variety of initiatives and approaches adopted by members of the TUS community to ensure enhanced, internationalised learning experiences for our students, through both the formal and informal curriculum, from programme and module development to projects and collaborations with our RUN-EU partners and individual and extra-curricular endeavours.

Once again, our colleagues have generously demonstrated a willingness to share their practices with their peers and I wish to express my thanks for this.

I congratulate all the contributors who have subscribed to this publication.



Professor Vincent Cunnane  
TUS President



## Foreword

Dear Colleagues,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome this Compendium of Approaches to Internationalisation of the Home Curriculum. Internationalisation of our university is a key element of everything we do in TUS and underpins all the key strategic priorities of our TUS Strategic Plan 2023-2026.

Quite often there is a common misconception that a university's challenges in the area of international education all rest in the global regions they serve. More often than not, the real barometer of how internationalised a modern university should judge itself to be is found in its action on its national campuses.

This compendium will address areas of key importance, incorporating the deliberate inclusion of internationalisation in programme and module design, inclusive approaches to content and pedagogy, as well as examples of international collaboration and RUN-EU initiatives. It includes submissions from throughout TUS and will act a guide as we navigate the path to help us all develop the internationalisation of our university.

I would like to congratulate and thank all those involved in the development and production of this compendium, including the editors Eimear Kelly and Catherine O'Donoghue, and all TUS stakeholders who have contributed to it. I am confident that this will be an excellent resource that will help pave the way for further understanding for the whole university as we continue our path to becoming a globalised TUS.

**Donnacha McNamara**  
Vice President International TUS



## Acknowledgements

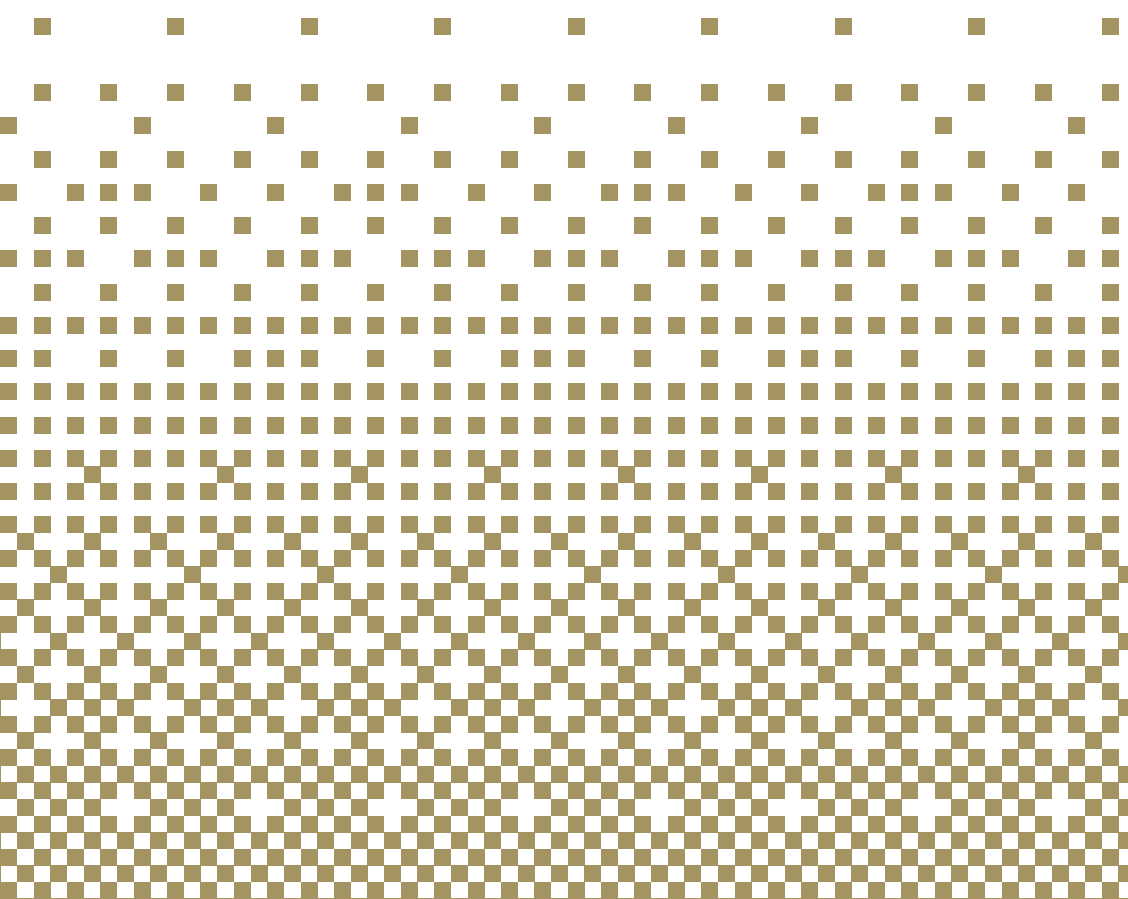
We wish to express our thanks to: Professor Vincent Cunnane, TUS President; Dr Nuala Harding, Head of the Centre of Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID); Frances O'Connell, Vice-President, Student Education and Experience; and Donnacha McNamara, Vice-President, International, for their support for this initiative.

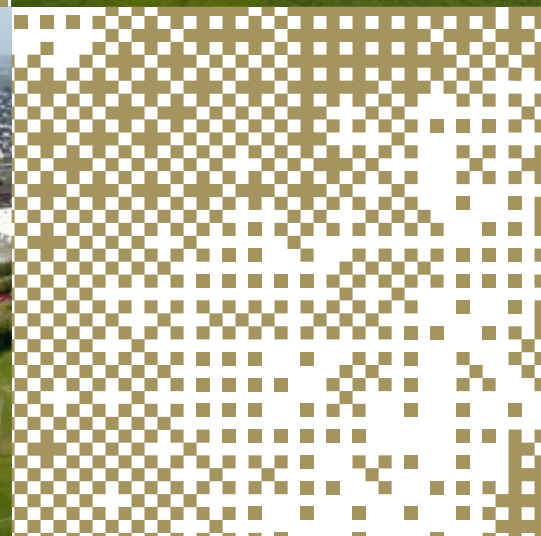
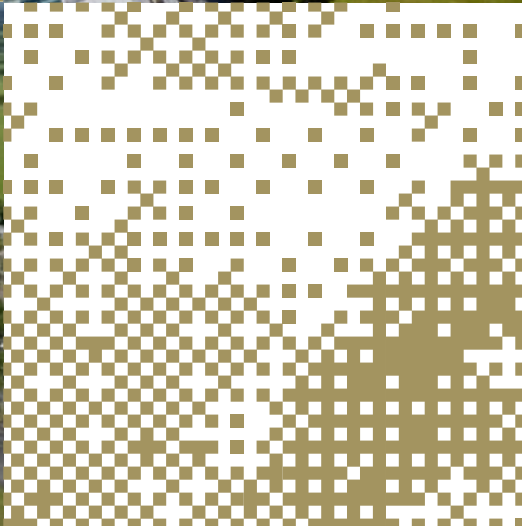
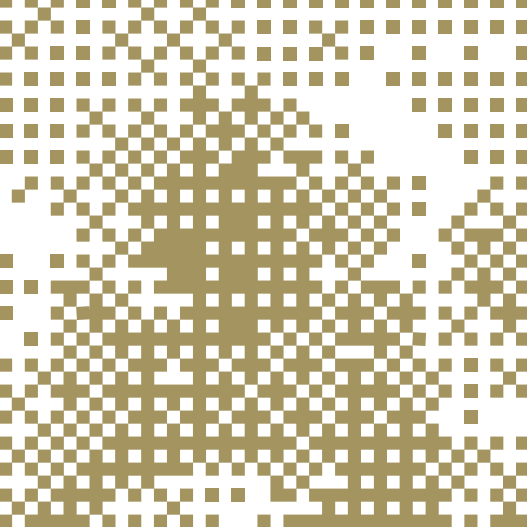
We also wish to acknowledge the National Forum for Enhancement of Teaching and Learning who supported this publication through their Strategic Alignment of Teaching, & Learning Enhancement (SATLE) funding.

Many thanks also to our Graphic Designer, Jules Hackett.

Finally, we would particularly like to thank all those members of the TUS Community who generously contributed to this compendium.

**Eimear Kelly and Catherine O'Donoghue**





## Introduction

For decades, universities and higher education institutions in Ireland and abroad have pursued a strategy of internationalisation. Whereas in the past, internationalisation in higher education may have been driven by economic motivations with an emphasis on mobility and co-operation, it has been defined more recently by de Wit et al. (2015) as ‘the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society’.

Increasingly, the focus is on Internationalisation at Home, which seeks to offer all students global perspectives during their programme of study, regardless of whether they can avail of mobility opportunities to spend time abroad. It allows us to learn from and with others, exploring new ideas and opportunities while also responding to the sustainability imperative. Within the formal curriculum, it may comprise specialist programmes, foreign language modules and internationalised learning outcomes and course content, but as explained by Beelen and Jones (2015, p.63), internationalisation of the home curriculum ‘is also delivered through the informal curriculum, the non-assessed elements of the student experience, which are nevertheless provided by or associated with the institution’.

This compendium, featuring contributions from colleagues across TUS, aims to capture examples of internationalisation of the home curriculum, some of which are not explicitly documented elsewhere. It includes cases of internationalised modules; teaching and assessment practices that promote inclusive learning by making purposeful use of cultural diversity in the classroom; mutually beneficial collaborative learning and teaching projects, both in-person and virtual, involving RUN-EU and other international partners; co-curricular intercultural competence and awareness-raising initiatives; and activities that create opportunities for engagement with and by our international students.

The sample of approaches collected here represents a snapshot of just some of the efforts made by TUS to internationalise our home curriculum. They demonstrate how, by embracing the ever-increasing cultural diversity within our university and developing curiosity about and awareness of international and intercultural perspectives, we encourage global citizenship, foster empathy, elevate the learning experiences of our students and enhance campus life for everyone in our university community.

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## Section

# 1

### INTERNATIONALISING THE CURRICULUM THROUGH DELIBERATE PROGRAMME DESIGN OR SPECIFIC MODULE DEVELOPMENT

**Aoife Prendergast**

Curriculum Design: Adapting Modules to incorporate a Global Lens ..... 9

**Dr Noelle O' Connor**

Developing the Destination Geography Module for the B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management Programme ..... 10

**Geraldine McGrath & Dr James Griffin**

A Staged Approach to the Design and Introduction of a BBus (Hons) in International Business Studies ..... 12

**Anna Rose Codd**

Incorporating Learnings from European Study Visits and International Conferences in the Design of an Outdoor Pedagogy Module ..... 14

**Dr Noelle O' Connor**

Developing the International Destination Management Module for the B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management Programme ..... 16

**Dr Sinead Purtil**

Planning, Managing and Benefitting from International Placements ..... 18

**Dr Noelle O' Connor**

Developing the Global Tourism Issues Module for the B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management Programme ..... 20

**Dr Bridget Kirwan, Ashling Sheehan Boyle and Clifford Guest**

Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Education and Care ..... 22

**Eimear Kelly and Catherine O'Donoghue**

Piloting a Framework for Internationalisation of the Home Curriculum in TUS Midlands ..... 24

## Section

# 2

### INTERNATIONALISING MODULE CONTENT AND TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

**Dr David Brancaleone**

How Internationalisation comes into the Picture ..... 28

**Fiona Walshe**

Exploring the Complexity of Culture through the Stories of Others ..... 30

**Imelda Cooke**

Embracing Diversity in the Classroom: Designing a Cross-Cultural Assignment for Students on the Access Programme [Special Purpose Award at Level 6] ..... 32

**Jennifer Moran Stritch**

Looking at Death, Loss and Grief from an International Perspective ..... 34

**Dr Karen Leonard**

Appreciating Differences using Relationally Reflexive Learning Groups ..... 36

**Patrick Mark Duffy**

Inclusive Activities incorporating Languages and Cultural Sounds ..... 38

**Paul Keating and John Hannafin**

Water Rights in Malawi: Collaborating with Trócaire on an International Challenge-Based Learning Project with Game Art & Design, and Creative Media Students in TUS Clonmel..... 39



## Section

## 3

## RUN-EU PROJECTS AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

**Dr Geraldine McDermott**Teaching and Learning about Intercultural Communication through a Short Advanced Programme (RUN-EU) ..... 44**Louise Murray and Sinead O'Connell**  
Regional University Network - European University (RUN-EU) Short Advanced Programme (SAP) on Sustainable and Inclusive Marketing Strategies ..... 46**Dr Siobhan Moane**RUN-EU Research Initiatives ..... 48

RUN-EU PLUS Researcher

Skills Training ..... 49

RUN-EU International Research

Exchange ..... 52

RUN-EU Research Challenge Short

Advanced Programmes (SAPs) ..... 53RUN-EU Joint PhD Supervision ..... 55**Dr Caroline Coyle**Across Border Learning: TUS and McEwan University: An Irish-Canadian Experience ..... 56**Dr Derek McNerny and Sharon Lucey**Designing an International Evaluation and Assessment Activity ..... 58**Dr Geraldine Maughan**Social Psychology Global Classroom Initiative ..... 60

## Section

## 4

## INTERCULTURAL AWARENESS TRAINING AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR INITIATIVES

**Dr Mairead Seery and Dr Karol Fitzgerald**Connecting with Students through Minecraft ..... 63**Mary Simpson**Fostering an Environment in which Students learn about Cultural Values from Each Other ..... 65**Eimear Kelly and Catherine O'Donoghue**Intercultural Awareness Workshops for Academic and Administrative Colleagues ..... 66**Dami Akinsola, Massimiliano Zanotto,****Mary Simpson and Eimear Kelly**The Student Perspective: In Conversation with Massimiliano Zanotto and Dami Akinsola, International Officers in TUS Students' Union ..... 68**Eimear Kelly and Catherine O'Donoghue**Intercultural Awareness Workshops for Students ..... 71

## Section

## 5

## CREATIVITY ACROSS BORDERS

**Dr Caroline Coyle with students from TUS Midlands and McEwan University, Canada**To Pour for your Empty Heart, To be able to Pour for Another ..... 75

# Internationalising the Curriculum through Deliberate Programme Design or Specific Module Development



*'Internationalisation of the curriculum is the incorporation of international, and /or global dimensions into the content of the curriculum as well as the learning outcomes, assessment tasks, teaching methods and support services of a program of study' (Leask, 2015, p.209)'*

This section presents examples of the purposeful integration of global perspectives into the formal curriculum, occasionally influenced or inspired by insights and experiences gained in other jurisdictions. They represent a conscious commitment to the internationalisation of content, learning outcomes, and teaching and assessment strategies at the design stage of the programme or module, sometimes underscored by the inclusion of 'International' in the title. Such programmes may require students to complete a placement abroad. This might appear to be not fully consistent with the concept of internationalisation of the home curriculum, which seeks to ensure that all students are exposed to global perspectives, regardless of whether or not they can avail of mobility opportunities. However, encouraging students to learn from and share their experiences and insights upon their return to campus fully aligns with the principles of Internationalisation at Home.

# 1. Curriculum Design: Adapting Modules to incorporate a Global Lens

Aoife Prendergast

*Department of Flexible Learning, TUS Midwest*

## Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

BA Early Childhood Education & Care (Department of Flexible Learning) – Year 2, part-time students.

### Brief Rationale

In recent years, early childhood education has undergone transformative changes in both policy and professional practice. One of the changes has resulted in the emergence of the internationalisation of early childhood education curriculum. This paper explores the emergence of this in the contemporary curriculum, specifically in professional practice modules of the BA Early Childhood Education & Care programme in the Department of Flexible Learning.

Internationalisation can be broadly defined as the process of integrating international, global and multicultural dimensions into the aims, functions and delivery of education (Knight, 2004). This process commences with the concept that we must understand our own practice and culture, and then move beyond local, regional, and country context to other places and times. This is particularly authentic to contemporary early childhood education practice.

At this point, intercultural interactions are built on common motivations and purpose, and building and sustaining relationships across contexts relies on a common understanding. Fundamentally, the core values of early childhood education practice - respect, care and building trust - are foundational to internationalisation and interculturality. Early childhood programmes in higher education, and staff that work within these contexts, engage in diverse ways and foreground specific aspects in response to local, national and global policy initiatives.

### Strategy / Approach

An individual approach was adopted to engage in a process of curriculum design. A decision to adapt the existing curriculum professional practice modules (The Reflective Educator, Professional Practice Placement (1) and (2)) enabled the incorporation of a global lens on professional early childhood practice. The aim of this process was to gain a holistic and critical appreciation of the cultural, local and national factors that have shaped differences in early childhood education practice and approaches in selected countries, and to present this content to learners using problem-based learning case studies.

## Observations / Reflection

A key challenge was to encourage learners to reflect on a deeper level, beyond their own local and national context and embrace and reflect on learnings from other global communities. Enabling learners to explore practice from different cultural, geographical and national perspectives required extensive reading and research and also the production of 'summaries of international practice' to present to their peers. The recognition that learning can take place in different formats, in different cultural contexts and the sharing of this was a valuable learning experience for all learners. A presentation of different cultural understandings, values and beliefs, coupled with the worldview of children as collective holistic and relational beings, was the primary learning from this problem-based learning approach.

The implications of appraising early childhood practice across countries positioned within a dominant Eurocentric early childhood curriculum and pedagogy framework was also examined by learners, along with the diverse expectations of early childhood education in the context of their own professional practice. Learners connected to share ideas, insights, and inspiration.

## Recommendations

- At the outset of the curriculum design process, it is important to review and 'internationalise' module learning outcomes.
- Present these module learning outcomes to learners, be clear and explicit on the aim, expectations, and content of the module.
- Engage learners in problem-based learning case studies – provide comprehensive support, guidance and instructions in the form of an assessment brief and opportunities for questions, peer exchange sharing and feedback throughout the process.
- Include content, perspectives and learning materials (readings, data, models, specific professional practice examples, etc.) from around the world.
- Design teaching, learning and assessment activities that harness the learners' existing cultural diversity to expand students' knowledge and support the development of an international approach and agenda.

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## 2. Developing the Destination Geography Module for the B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management Programme

Dr Noelle O' Connor

Senior University Lecturer (N-TUTORR), Researcher and Educational Developer. CPID, TUS Midwest

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

The B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management programme includes the Destination Geography module, which is worth 10 ECTS. The module is designed to assess and analyse the significant factors that impact the international travel and tourism industry. It is offered during the first year of the programme, and the class typically comprises 20 students. The module includes 4 hours per week during Semester 2, which includes two hours of an online lecture and a two-hour tutorial session as per the Module Descriptor.

### Brief Rationale

Students study Destination Geography to gain a comprehensive understanding of the geography of tourism on a global scale. This includes learning about the major characteristics of regional tourism destinations, identifying and locating countries and cities, understanding the physical features and climatic conditions of different regions, and exploring the significance of tourist attractions for the overall tourism experience. Through studying Destination Geography students can develop a deeper appreciation for the diverse cultures and environments that make up the global tourism industry, as well as gain insights into the economic and social impacts of tourism on various regions around the world.

The Destination Geography module aims to equip students with an understanding of various theories, trends and issues related to tourism geography at an international level. It offers a comprehensive exploration of tourism destinations worldwide, covering major regional characteristics such as the identification and location of countries, key cities, physical features, climate conditions, tourist attractions and their significance for the overall tourist experience.

### Strategy / Approach

The Destination Geography module employs a variety of tools, including maps, case studies, and travel itineraries, to introduce students to established and emerging destinations through both theoretical and practical applications. This module is designed to accommodate a diverse range of learning styles and the needs of part-time and distance students through a blend of technology-enhanced, online, and traditional learning methods.

Technology-enhanced learning (TEL) is integrated into the module's content, assessments, lectures, tutorials, and other aspects to provide adaptable modes of delivery that enhance student engagement and create a learner-centred experience. The incorporation of TEL into the coursework allows students to improve their digital literacy skills, upskill, and embrace an international flexible, lifelong model of learning.

### Observations / Reflections

Studying such an international module is important for several reasons:

- **Industry knowledge:** Understanding international Destination Geography can inform decision-making in travel planning, marketing, and management.
- **Cultural awareness:** Learning about global destinations can foster cultural sensitivity, an asset in many professions, particularly travel and tourism.
- **Career opportunities:** Destination Geography provides skills for tourism management, destination marketing, travel writing, and tour guiding.
- **Personal growth:** Exploring international geography is a rewarding experience that broadens horizons and encourages global awareness.

The module emphasises a practical, international approach by introducing students to Irish outbound tourist destinations, providing practical knowledge of global destinations, identifying characteristics of major tourist-generating countries, understanding the factors that influence tourist flows from origin to destination, and locating and identifying the countries, main cities, tourist attractions, and physical features of the world continents. The continents covered in detail include Europe, North America, South America, Africa, and Australia.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

I use Poster Presentations as part of the assignment strategy for this module as they offer several benefits to novice presenters, particularly first-year students who may find creating poster content less daunting than writing a report (Berg and Hicks, 2017). In this module, poster presentations were chosen as the appropriate assessment tool to meet the overall objective of introducing students to a variety of established and emerging international destinations through theoretical and practical applications.

The reason for using poster presentations is that the author is following best practices in assessment design, which involves creating a visual representation of the teaching and learning process. Furthermore, this assessment strategy aligns with the principles of clear assessment criteria, consistent marking standards, ease of administration, positive impact on learning and teaching, and relevance to the travel and tourism industry.

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### 3. A Staged Approach to the Design and Introduction of a BBus (Hons) in International Business Studies

Geraldine McGrath and Dr James Griffin

*Department of Marketing, Enterprise and Digital Communications,  
TUS Midwest*

#### Summary

This article describes the processes involved in the design of a new undergraduate honours Bachelor of Business (BBus) in International Business Studies, a programme with a specific international focus in the Department of Marketing, Enterprise & Digital Communications. The programme received its first CAO intake in September 2023.

The Programme Design Team constructed this course around the following key principles:

1. A fully semesterised ab-initio Level 8 Bachelor of Business degree;
2. A dedicated stream of language and culture modules as a core, mandatory element of the programme (35 credits in total across four years of study);
3. A dedicated stream of specialist international and global content modules (55 credits in total across four years of study);
4. Two mandatory “Study/Work Abroad” semesters in years 2 and 3 respectively.

#### Rationale for adding International Business Studies to our Programme Portfolio

Internationalisation of the curriculum is particularly relevant to courses in the business discipline area. The combined environmental contexts of Brexit, the increasing globalisation of business and society, the mass digitisation of the workforce and the consequent dismantling of traditional borders have combined to create significant interest and demand (as evidenced by CAO figures) for business courses with an international aspect.

Furthermore, both as a RUN-EU Partner Institution and as a Technological University committed to the Erasmus student mobility programme, the potential for growing the two-way movement of students across international borders has never been greater. It is important, therefore, to have an honours business degree that would create maximum opportunities and flexibilities for business students across these networks to engage in such exchanges.

#### Approaches taken in Structural and Pedagogical Design

The conceptualisation and design of this programme involved a two-staged approach:

Firstly, we employed the programmatic review cycle to initiate the design and content of the new programme. This was achieved through the introduction of a new stream of elective modules into our existing programmes, covering many of the specialist international subject areas required for the new degree.

Following this, having allowed the new modules to embed for an academic year, the new programme was developed, refined, and then proposed a year later. The structure of the International Business Studies degree was founded on existing core modules which are shared across many BBus programmes in TUS, and also included the new modules introduced as electives the year before. Through this careful use of pre-validated modules, the design and validation process for this new degree could be completed within one academic year, allowing the department to be more market responsive. This is an important feature of this process as International Business programmes across the country have seen a dramatic rise in demand over recent years. To seize this momentum, it was important to bring a “fit for purpose” offering to the Midwest marketplace as soon as possible.

#### Key Observation: Combining the Delivery of Language and Culture Concepts

A significant feature of the BBus in International Business Studies is the mandatory language acquisition component. Over the four years students will take 35 language credits, reinforced by two study/work placements abroad. These elements act as key differentiators between other programmes within the TUS portfolio and other universities. The inclusion of a mandatory language was firstly to address the important shortage in the Irish jobs market for multilingual talent, as outlined in a number of key strategies and skills reports by government departments over the past few years. In today’s competitive graduate market, being able to converse in a foreign language, coupled with international experience at undergraduate level, represent key attributes for graduates when they seek employment.

The cultural appreciation, awareness and openness that evolves through language learning is also a key differentiating factor for graduates of such a programme. To have a truly international experience students need to perceive the world through the lens of another culture in practical and immersive contexts.

For many reasons, the uptake of languages in higher education has witnessed a serious decline over the past years with the perceived difficulty in gaining proficiency in a language, the tedious nature of long essay writing and the endless grammar rules among the varied explanations cited. This has resulted in a loss of language students who disengage from languages studies in pursuit of other disciplines. To ensure that languages in the TUS classroom remain engaging, relevant and applicable to work and life scenarios, language modules, from both instruction and assessment perspectives, focus on oral production and, by association, aural comprehension with the objective of producing graduates that can converse freely in their chosen language. Writing and reading skills are integrated as formative activities throughout each semester but language lecturers promote more intensive participative learning and an immersive language experience in order to provide students with the tools to communicate more fluently and spontaneously.

#### **Final Points: Some Practical Advice**

The authors would like to conclude by highlighting two further points that may be of use to colleagues across TUS when they consider internationalising their curricula.

1. The Department of Marketing, Enterprise, and Digital Communications have now validated a complete set of specialised international and culture modules which structure a student's learning from level 6 to level 8 in this field. The modules are fully validated for use across TUS and could therefore be included in whole or in part as an elective stream on almost any course, thereby providing core internationalisation skills and knowledge without necessarily requiring a full validation event.
2. The Programme Design Team have found that student and lecturer-level engagement with RUN-EU partners has been most effective in building intercultural and socialisation skills in the classroom. Methods such as SAP engagement, shared online assessment elements and lecturer/student-exchange, which expose students to their international counterparts, are most effective in building internationalisation skills. They also tend to pave the way for further, more formal internationalisation of the curriculum over time.



## 4. Incorporating Learnings from European Study Visits and International Conferences in the Design of an Outdoor Pedagogy Module

Anna Rose Codd

*Department of Social Studies, TUS Midlands*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

The value of the outdoors for children's learning and development is gaining increasing attention. A growing body of literature and research highlights the importance of children's contact with nature and being in outdoor environments (Kernan, Casey and Dowdall, 2023; Jose, Patrick, Moseley, 2017; Ernst, 2014; Dowdell, Gray and Malone, 2011). In Ireland, the Early Years (Pre-School) Regulations, 2016 introduced a requirement for early childhood settings to have access to or have outdoor space on their premises. This requirement has been supported by capital funding allocated for natural outdoor provision in 2018 (Frontier Economics, 2020) and also post-Covid. More recently, guidelines for outdoor provision (Tusla, 2023) aim to support Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) providers to enhance their provision of outdoors.



European study visits to Trondheim, Norway and Reggio Emilia, Italy and presentations on outdoor pedagogy at EECERA conferences in Budapest and Thessaloniki, Greece, along with opportunities for professional conversations with presenters, were pivotal in highlighting the affordances of outdoor environments for children's learning and development. In addition, my current PhD research, focusing on outdoor pedagogy, informed the development of an Outdoor Pedagogy on the ECEC degree programmes in TUS Midlands. Funding has also been provided to develop an outdoor classroom in TUS to support students studying for their degree in ECEC.

### Brief Rationale

This module aims to provide a foundation for student knowledge and understanding of diverse pedagogic approaches in the provision of quality ECEC. Incorporating a module specific to outdoor pedagogy in these programmes thus aims to support ECEC students to appreciate the value of outdoor pedagogy as a means

of enhancing children's learning. With the addition of an outdoor classroom, students will explore the benefits and challenges of outdoor learning experiences for children of all ages and learn how to create outdoor learning opportunities, which support children's holistic development.

Students complete extensive professional practice placement during the degree programmes offered in TUS. In 4th year, students will have opportunities to undertake placements abroad and it is envisaged that collegial links will be established with European/international partners, with potential for exchange programmes. Support for this initiative may be facilitated through TUS's International Office via Erasmus / Run-EU and institutional agreements.

### Strategy / Approach

- Over the course of the 4-year programme, there is potential for colleagues to develop cross-modular assessments, particularly using the outdoor classroom. Currently, cross modular assessments occur in the 1st year of the programme, DAPA and Relational Pedagogy and Outdoor Pedagogy and Introduction to Inclusive Policy & Practice. Student and lecturer opportunities to exchange integrated learning opportunities with partner universities will further enhance the potential for outdoor pedagogy.
- Lecturer collaboration is at the heart of the process, ensuring students gain optimal learning opportunities across the programme. Learning approaches and assessment are integral elements of this process.
- There is potential to extend student and lecturer experiences across a range of modules, in conjunction with collaborative European/ international partnerships.

### Observations / Reflections

The addition of an outdoor classroom on TUS Athlone campus was a new development for the academic year 2023/2024. Potential challenges may be student reluctance to go/be outdoors if the weather is cold. However, preparation for this module will include guidance for students on readiness to engage in the outdoor classroom, through developing a student-lecturer agreement as to the potential times and conditions of use. Furthermore, lessons from European / international partnerships on outdoor affordances for babies and young children will potentially enhance our students' and future early childhood educators' interest and motivation to embrace the outdoor environments as pedagogic spaces.



The benefits for students of this initiative are: hands-on engagement for students in real experiences of outdoor environments; extended student learning as to the value of outdoor learning for babies and young children; student awareness of beneficial risk afforded in outdoor environments; smaller class sizes in tutorial groups; potential collaboration across modules in other departments – for example, there is an outdoor classroom for students on the Culinary Arts degree in TUS Midlands, incorporating topics such as sustainability, growing vegetables etc.

Potential benefits for lecturers: Student intrinsic motivation to integrate theory and practice; preparation of students for practical application of learning during professional practice placement; incorporating diverse learning and teaching strategies.



**Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach**

- The inclusion of cross-modular assessment and delivery.
- This provides an excellent opportunity for colleagues to collaborate on diverse modules, where new perspectives add to lecturer and student learning.

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## 5. Developing the International Destination Management Module for the B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management Programme

Dr Noelle O' Connor

*Senior University Lecturer (N-TUTORR), Researcher and Educational Developer. CPID, TUS Midwest*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

The B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management programme includes the International Destination Management module, which is worth 10 ECTS. The module was created to evaluate and critically analyse the significant issues affecting the global travel and tourism industry. Typically, this is a third-year module with an average of 20 students in the group. The course involves six hours of lectures and two one-hour tutorials per week during Semester 1.



### Brief Rationale

The core module, International Destination Management, delves into the principles of sustainable development and their implementation to ensure that different types of tourism and destinations are sustainable from an international perspective. This entails a comprehensive assessment of international best practices by the tourism industry, host communities, governments, non-government organizations, and tourists to address environmental, economic, and cultural aspects of sustainability. The module employs international case studies and classroom-based exercises with a practical focus. It develops students' understanding of destination management by introducing different tourism planning approaches, exploring the interplay of various stakeholders in the tourism planning process, and emphasising the importance of effective tourism planning in destination development. The module also discusses the challenges of tourism planning, decision-making, and sustainability, particularly in restructuring established international tourist regions and resorts.

### Strategy / Approach

The aim of this module is to offer a comprehensive overview of the evolution of international travel and tourism. It recognises the importance of sustainable management for all tourism types and aims to provide a critical analysis of the application of sustainable development principles to the tourism industry. Finally, the objective of this module is to equip our students with the necessary skills to address the global challenges faced by the tourism industry as they will play a crucial role in promoting sustainable development and preserving cultural heritage.

### Observations / Reflections

To emphasise the international aspect of this module, it should be noted that it requires students to demonstrate an understanding of the various stakeholders involved in managing destinations, evaluate different approaches to destination management, apply and critique appropriate theories and concepts related to tourism policy and planning, examine the developmental aspects of international travel and tourism, investigate the nature and scope of sustainable tourism, analyse the roles of key players in sustainable tourism, and assess current and future trends in international sustainable planning and development of tourism.

Additionally, the module requires students to evaluate the specific impacts and management issues associated with travel and tourism in various destinations, both in developed and developing countries, recognise the importance of visitor experience and destination branding, critically evaluate the positive and negative economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts of the tourism sector on the resource base, critique tourism provision with reference to the role of Public Private Partnerships and community involvement and participation, and apply the concept of sustainability to tourism activity at local, national, and international levels. The goal is to help our students acquire the skillset to address the global challenges of sustainable tourism and promote cultural heritage.

The practical application of management techniques to enhance the sustainability of diverse forms of tourism is emphasised in this module. Sound understanding of the concept of sustainable development and its relevance to tourism is essential to design and implement effective management strategies and policies for sustainable tourism.

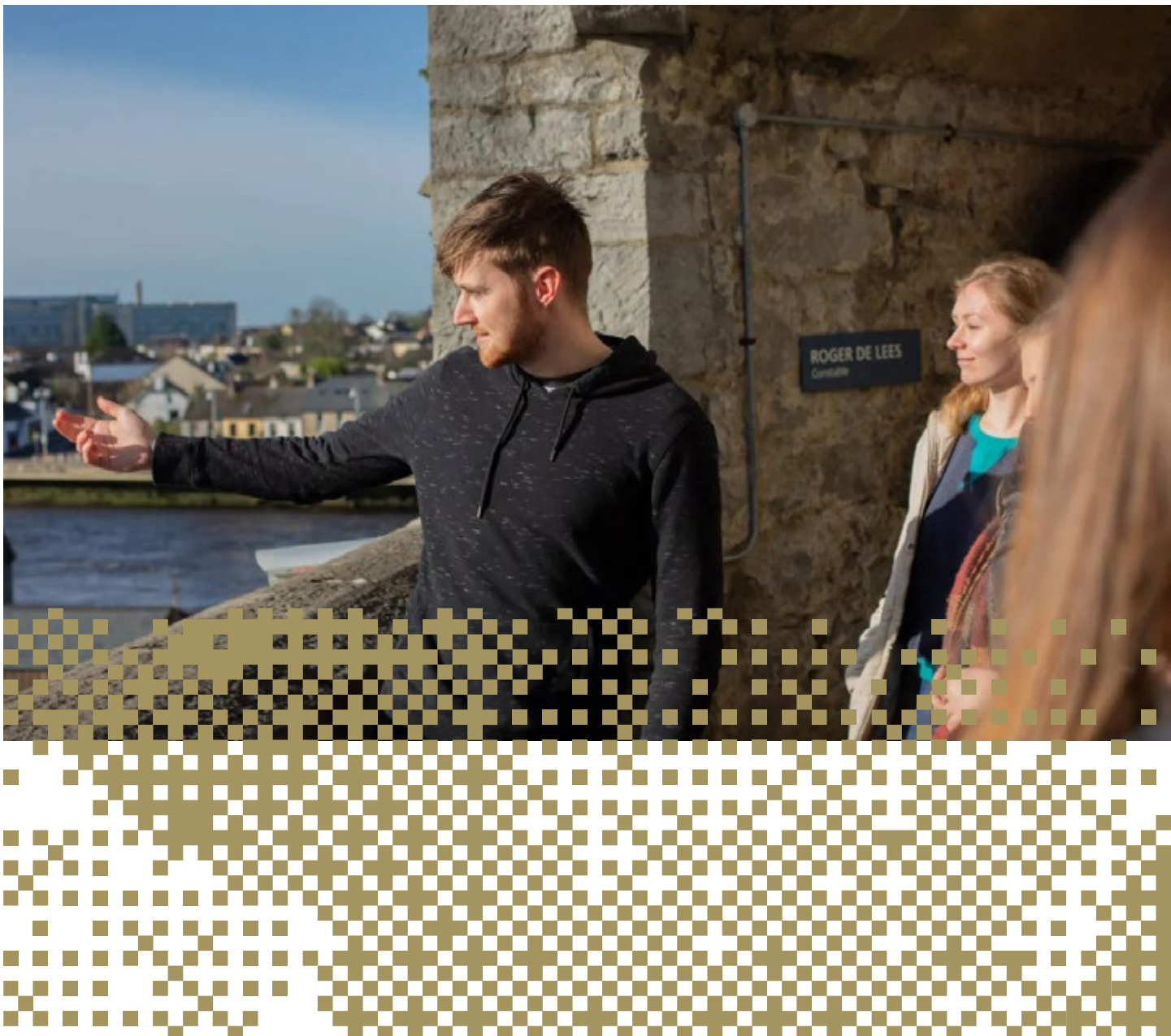
The students have provided positive feedback, such as “I found it fascinating to explore various international modes of travel, such as air and water” and “I enjoyed learning about global travel and tourism destinations.”

**Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach**

For this module, the assignment included a Group Active Learning Strategy through student-led group seminars (O'Connor, 2022). The lecturer leveraged group presentations in the form of student-led seminars for this module, which aimed to evaluate and critically appraise the significant issues affecting the global travel and tourism industry.

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## 6. Planning, Managing and Benefitting from International Placements

Dr Sinead Purtill

*Department of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*

### Teaching Context

BBS in Sport Management with International Placement Semester 6 (year 3)

Group size 2023: 11 students

### Brief Rationale

The international placement is an integral part of this degree programme. Students spend semester 6 on an international experience. This can be in a workplace or on an Erasmus experience in a third-level institution.

The students are expected to communicate effectively, apply creative technologies and apply their practical skills in a supervised recreation/sport/leisure environment, in an aspect of a specialised or general sub-field of business.

### Strategy / Approach

The international placement preparation module is delivered by a lecturer in semester 5. This is designed to help the student to secure an appropriate and relevant placement abroad.

All students will already have completed a six-week placement at the end of semester 4 (year 2). This is completed after the summer examination period and during the summer period at a local/national level. This is an important dry run to prepare the students for the overseas placement. They must prepare a cover letter, curriculum vitae and personal development plan for this short work experience.

### Observations / Reflections

The international placement of 2023 was very challenging. It was difficult to secure relevant placements. Covid-19 and the start of the war in Ukraine both posed significant challenges, uncertainty and fear. The students were asked to think about their preferences in May 2022. I encouraged them to stay in Europe because of the uncertainty. Unpaid experiences, small stipends and lack of accommodation were barriers. Practical issues around first-time passports, out of date passports, no European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), start-up finance, lack of experience of travel off the island of Ireland and other domestic situations were also challenges for students.

Lack of experience and sometimes lack of engagement by students were significant challenges for me. Students did not try hard enough to secure their own placement, and there was an expectation that I would produce an internship with all benefits for them.

I sent numerous e-mails to potential employers, companies and institutions outlining our programme, student attributes etc. and requesting opportunities for internships. I had several Zoom calls with potential hosts. I engaged with various recruitment agencies and online platforms in the quest to develop partnerships. In the end, I established a few very successful ones. All had experience with interns and had established learning agreements. I found that these contract learning agreements were very clear and thankfully the students fulfilled their end of the bargain in each of these. The placements that the students found themselves were not as well defined and I will be much more diligent with this in the future.

When speaking to the students about their experience abroad upon their return to TUS, they all believed that it had been a great journey in personal development. They learned to work independently and in group situations where language was a barrier that they needed to work on overcoming to achieve tasks assigned by the placement organisation. In year four of the degree program, students must complete a capstone project in a group. Their international experience will certainly help them to do this.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

I recommend the use of internship agencies where possible. This eliminates the pitfalls of lack of accommodation and other site/location-specific problems. Agents have a better understanding of the countries. Companies with established Internship programmes through their HR departments are much better organised.

I was supported by the International Office in TUS Athlone in relation to the Erasmus programme and country-specific regulations and requirements (visas).

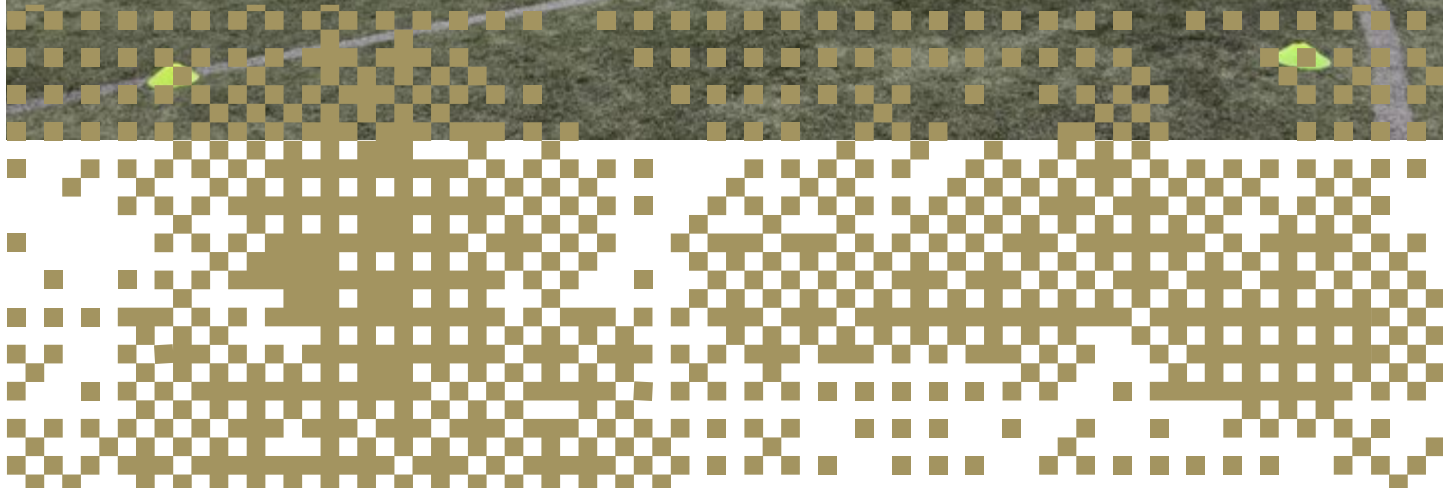
The internships/placements that I secured were successful and I will be able to send students to these establishments in the future. This helps in building relationships (making my job less difficult).

Onsite visits are also important. I was able to visit one establishment in the UK in June 2023. This was very successful and I am confident that they will take more students in the future.

Finally, the international placement is of huge benefit to our students. The students were exposed to new experiences, along with different communication styles and norms. This will help to enhance a student's ability to communicate effectively in diverse settings, something that is a valuable skill in a globalised world. Living in a different cultural context will make the student more self-aware and open and gives a more global perspective to their overall educational experience at TUS Athlone.

The personal development journey cannot be understated. I think this cohort learned an enormous amount. For many, it was the first time to live away from home. To negotiate new environments, see new places, meet different people and to become independent were the learning outcomes that we don't always measure.

As for my experience, it was a baptism of fire. I made lots of mistakes. I got frustrated and it took a lot of time. I am now a little wiser. I have a head start this year and I now look forward to doing it again...with fewer mistakes.



## 7. Developing the Global Tourism Issues Module for the B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management Programme

Dr Noelle O' Connor

Senior University Lecturer (N-TUTORR), Researcher and Educational Developer. CPID, TUS Midwest

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

I am responsible for teaching the Global Tourism Issues module (10 ECTS) as part of the B.A. (Honours) in Business Studies with Travel and Tourism Management programme. The module is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of key global issues that are significant to the travel and tourism industry within a global context. This final year module typically has a group size of 15-20 students and consists of a 2-hour lecture and a 1-hour tutorial.

To ensure that the module remains up-to-date with the constantly evolving global travel and tourism industry, I have updated it twice since its creation in 2012, through programmatic reviews that incorporate my academic research, relevant referred literature from the key journals, namely the *Annals of Tourism Research*, and my experience as a global extern examiner and validation panel member.



*The Shoes on the Danube Bank, Budapest*

### Brief Rationale

Tourism, in its widest sense, refers to the act of people travelling and staying in places outside their normal environment for less than a consecutive year for reasons such as leisure, business, health, or other purposes. The travel and tourism industry contributed around \$5.8 billion directly to the global GDP in 2021. Given the industry's profitability, many countries are motivated to adopt policies that promote the growth and development of travel and tourism at a global level (Statista, 2023). Therefore, the Global Tourism Issues module aims to analyse and evaluate key global issues that are relevant to tourism within a global, European, and Irish context. It explores the transformation of the meanings, forms, and management of tourism in post-industrial societies. Students are required to investigate current social, economic, and environmental conditions and their impact on shaping the contemporary tourism industry and its markets. The module also examines contemporary aspects of heritage, culture, sustainability, and ethics in tourism, and discusses the implications of climate change and the growth of ICT for tourism practice. Additionally, it specifically references the emergence of niche forms of tourism at in a global context.

### Strategy / Approach

As part of the module, students are required to complete an academic essay that must include references to documented research and literature on global tourism. They are also expected to lead a discussion during their Research Seminar related to their chosen topic. To continually promote internationalisation, the module compares and contrasts documented research and literature on the impact of key issues on the global tourism industry. It evaluates the future of tourism based on module research and discussion and assesses contemporary conceptualisations of social change as they relate to tourism. This analysis draws on key writers in these areas and relevant theoretical perspectives to examine demand for new tourist experiences.

Furthermore, the module critiques tourism development from both responsible and sustainable perspectives. It evaluates the social and cultural impact of tourism development or a proposed development project, formulates management strategies, and offers an in-depth analysis of current issues surrounding global tourism. Finally, students develop detailed knowledge and understanding of a range of emerging tourism forms and evaluate the importance, perspective, and value of travel and tourism at international locations.

## Observations / Reflections

In essence, this module enhances students' comprehension of the contemporary global tourism industry and its operating environment, which encompasses social, environmental, and economic factors. It also equips students with the requisite skills for pursuing graduate-level employment within the tourism industry. Positive feedback from students includes statements such as "The module's extensive coverage and the ability to engage in discussions on pertinent issues" and "The diverse range of global topics covered is captivating, particularly Dark Tourism and Sex Tourism".

## Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

Due to the nature of this module, I have used some very practical assessments including the aforementioned Research Seminar and Assigned Reading Exercise (O'Connor, 2022) which are both very effective assessment strategies for creating a culture of reading and independent study among a student cohort, especially in final year. It can also be developed to serve many higher-order, critical thinking learning outcomes.

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## 8. Education for Sustainable Development in Early Childhood Education and Care

Dr Bridget Kirwan, Ashling Sheehan Boyle and Clifford Guest  
*Department of Applied Social Studies, TUS Thurles Campus*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

Sustainability in Early Childhood Education and Care is a 4th Year module on the BA in Early Childhood Education and Care programme based in TUS Thurles. The module is new and exciting and enables the Programme and the students to respond to the challenge of Education for Sustainable Development. The module is delivered in 3-hour blocks, once per week.



### Brief rationale for why we decided to incorporate some level of internationalisation into our teaching

The module is delivered using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as an anchor, with a particular focus on SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 14, 15. The nature of the Sustainable Development Goals is that they impact on everyone, from an individual level right up to world level. To achieve this, we look at education for early years in various countries and compare these. Exploring the SDGs also encourages students to think about who to incorporate into children's play, while also considering the broader sustainability issues in the context of providing inclusive, quality early years education and care.

### Strategy / Approach

For this iteration, there were two elements in particular that we used:

- Assessment:** This was based on an investigation of the lives lived by children in developed and developing countries, and participants were asked to produce a profile on two countries (specific countries were allocated to the students). They were instructed to use similar headings so that comparisons could be made. These detailed: **General information** that would include details such as: size, population, governance, trade, economic profile including size of the national economy and GDP per capita etc., and any other information that students thought might be relevant. **Information on Early Childhood** such as: threats to early childhood development, nutrition, health, early learning etc., and any other information that students thought might be relevant.
- A Guest Speaker from India:** We invited Harshitha Poulanta, who grew up and was educated in India, to come as a guest speaker to the class to speak about her experience of being a child in India and the challenges of being educated in an old colonial country. The students also got a chance to ask questions and engage in conversation with Harshitha. Her presentation was supported by engagement with the video 'Raju and I', a story which focuses on children's rights.

### Observations / Reflections

- The challenge is perhaps finding a guest speaker from the country that you wish to focus on, but through our engagement with Erasmus projects we have developed connections from different countries that we can engage with.
- For students, the personal engagement was impactful and brought the story and experience of being a child in a country which experiences disadvantage at all levels in society. There is no comparison to hearing someone's personal story.
- In the context of society in Ireland, which is becoming more multicultural each year, it is essential for students to have an understanding of the global perspective on childhood and early childhood education.



**Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach**

- We supported this activity by asking students to create a learning tool that could be used in ECEC settings to raise awareness of one of the SDGs. The tool should have sufficient detail to be used by anyone in the early education and care sector.
- Encourage students to explore how learning experiences can be used to develop children's knowledge and awareness. For example, water play can be extended to explore habitats and water quality.
- Module collaboration can also be extended to embed nature pedagogy and outdoor learning.

- Aistear: Early Childhood Curriculum Framework for Children Birth to Six Years is currently being updated. However, the current version recognises children as citizens and many of elements of SDGs are embedded in the Principles and Themes.

**References**

Farrell, L. and Daly, M. (2023). Aistear and Environmental Sustainability. ChildLinks. Available at <https://knowledge.barnardos.ie/server/api/core/bitstreams/a4d0848e-7741-4268-bd70-01c39163924b/content>.

Raju and I (2020). [Animated film]. Directed by Gayatri Rao. India: Animagic. Available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CPgMDt-soWw>.



# 9. Piloting a Framework for Internationalisation of the Home Curriculum in TUS Midlands

Eimear Kelly and Catherine O’Donoghue

*Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development, TUS*

### Brief Rationale for this Project

The financial, strategic and pedagogical benefits of internationalisation have been recognised and incorporated in the mission statements of most, if not all, Universities and Higher Education Institutes, and within TUS, intercultural responsiveness and empathetic global citizenship have been identified as graduate attributes that our students are expected to demonstrate upon graduation. However, the extent to which this is evidenced by an explicitly internationalised curriculum is less clear. The aim of this SATLE-funded project was to develop and pilot a framework through which we could examine whether, how and where internationalisation of the home curriculum is incorporated in the design of our programmes and modules.

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

While Internationalisation of Higher Education has been a much researched and discussed topic for many years, there is a sense that its scope and potential may still be underestimated by many lecturers. It tends to be considered primarily in the context of mobility

programmes and collaborative research opportunities, organised or mediated by the International Office, and internationalisation of the curriculum is a less familiar concept. In an effort to ensure that the programme chosen for this pilot study, carried out in TUS Midlands, would be representative, as far as practicable, of a ‘typical’ programme, a deliberate decision was made to select a programme that had no explicit reference to internationalisation within its existing title. The programme identified was the BBS (Honours) in Digital Marketing, a four-year ab initio degree programme.

### Strategy / Approach

Leask (2015) outlines how academic colleagues might feel uncertain and unprepared for such a process (p. 108), and highlights the need both ‘to make space for and facilitate discussion, debate, and critique of issues and long-held assumptions’, and ‘to make specific efforts to engage staff from diverse cultural backgrounds in this discussion, specifically inviting their contributions and listening respectfully to their perspectives and suggestions’ (p. 114). These insights informed the design of the consultative process which is illustrated in Figure 1.

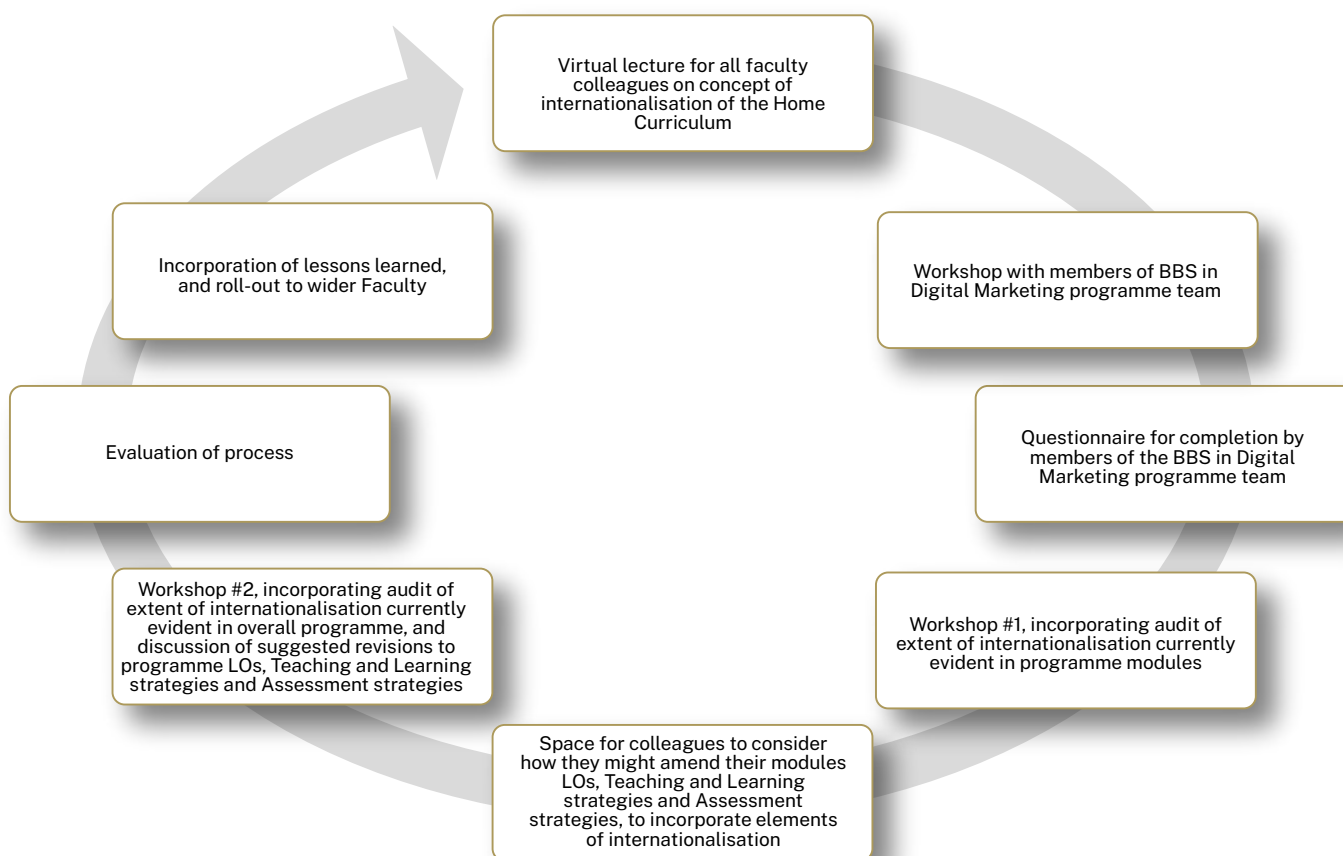


Figure 1: Outline of Consultative Process

	1	2	3	4
	Learning Outcomes	Teaching & Learning Tasks	Assessment Tasks	Overall Impression
<b>Year 1</b>				
Module #1				
Module #2				
Module #3				
Module #4				
	LO2			
Module #6				
Module #7				
<b>Year 2</b>				
Module #1				
Module #2				
Module #3				
Module #4				
Module #5				
Module #6				
<b>Year 3</b>				
Module #1				
Module #2				
Module #3				
Module #4				
Module #5				
Module #6				
Module #7				

Figure 2 – Audit of Internationalisation Levels

A key stage of the process was the audit of evidence of internationalisation within current modules. Firstly, colleagues completed in their own time an individual, reflective questionnaire adapted from the original template created by Leask (2015), in which they were asked to rate their modules, based on the content of the respective module descriptors, on a continuum from 1–4, where 1 indicated a localised curriculum and 4 indicated an internationalised curriculum.

Subsequently, a colour-coded audit was carried out during a collective Zoom meeting attended by all members of the programme teaching team. Colleagues completed an Excel sheet by colouring cells according to their perception of the existing level of internationalised learning outcomes, teaching and learning tasks, assessment tasks, and their overall impression of the level of internationalisation in their own individual modules. Elements which had scored a 1 on the questionnaire were coloured red, those that had scored 2 were coloured orange, those rated 3 were coloured yellow and elements rated 4 were coloured green. The aim was to provide the team with an overview in real time of the extent of internationalisation within the programme as a whole, via an instantly readable, colour-coded chart. An anonymised screenshot of one section is provided above, for illustrative purposes (see Figure 2).

In the follow-on discussion, some lecturers indicated that while there may not be explicit reference to internationalisation in their module descriptor, elements of internationalisation were introduced through case studies and examples used in class. Others noted that international students were encouraged to provide examples from their experiences in their home countries relevant to issues or topics being studied. There was a clear sense that the level of internationalisation evident in classrooms and lecture halls was not always explicitly captured in the course documentation.

Colleagues were asked to take time to consider whether they would or should make any changes to their module descriptors to reflect an internationalised dimension. At the start of the second workshop, held a few weeks later, they were invited to indicate whether they considered that internationalisation of the Digital Marketing programme was desirable. Of the lecturers present, 9 responded ‘yes’ and one responded ‘no’. When asked whether they thought that there was potential for some (more) internationalisation within their own individual module, 7 responded ‘yes’, two were ‘unsure’ and one responded ‘no’.

Ideas were then collected for how this might be achieved. Many of the suggestions entailed reaching out to internationally focussed companies and incorporating international elements, in the form of data, case studies and comparative analyses. There was also significant recognition of the potential offered by an increasingly diverse student population for the promotion of intercultural, cross-national teamwork. The accessibility of these ideas and relative ease with which they could be implemented underscores how practicable internationalisation of the home curriculum can actually be.

### Observations / Reflections

Examining the extent of internationalisation collectively, at programme level, allowed faculty consider where within the programme the desired graduate attribute of intercultural responsiveness and empathetic global citizenship could be attained, and how their individual modules could contribute to that goal. The impact that this initiative has already had can be measured by the fact that by the time the feedback survey was completed, nine participants stated that they had already begun the process of changing their modules to reflect a greater focus on internationalisation, and participation in the workshops added impetus to other internationalisation projects already in the pipeline.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

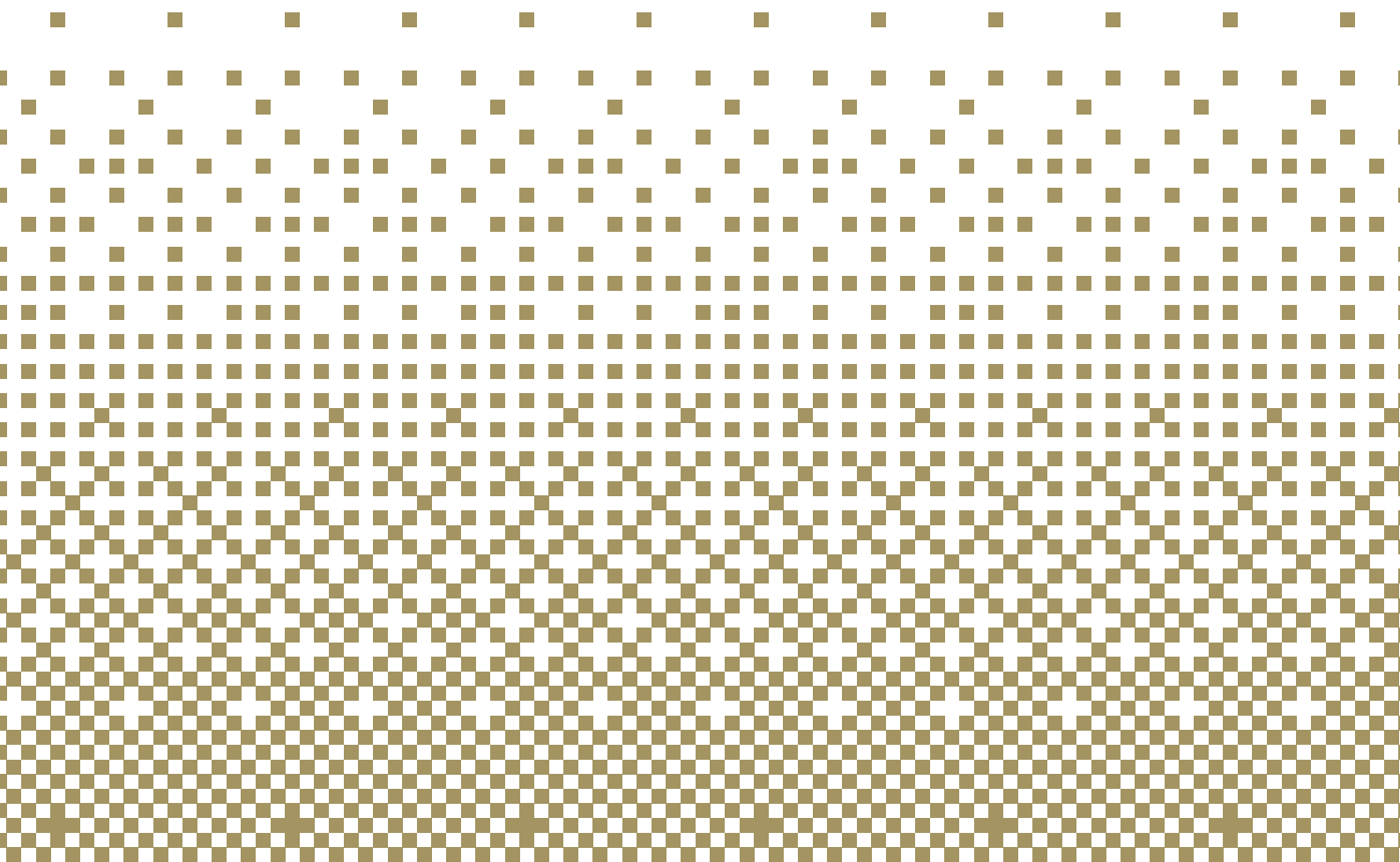
The process described briefly here is easily replicable and can not only be adopted for the purpose of assessing the level of internationalisation within a programme, but can also be adapted for an examination of a programme through additional lenses such as inclusive practice and universal design for learning (UDL) and graduate attributes more broadly.

*This is an edited, abridged version of a conference paper (Kelly and O'Donoghue, 2023) published in the INTED2023 conference proceedings.*

### References and Useful Links

Kelly, E. & O'Donoghue, C. (2023). There's no Place like the Curriculum for Internationalisation at Home, INTED2023, 6th-8th March 2023, Valencia. DOI: 10.21125/inted.2023.2179.

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# Internationalising Module Content and Teaching and Assessment Strategies



*'Internationalisation at Home [...] makes purposeful use of cultural diversity in the classroom for inclusive learning, teaching and assessment practice'* (Jones & Reiffenrath, 2018).

While internationalisation of the home curriculum may not always be explicitly considered in the design of modules, many colleagues nonetheless seek and find ways to introduce their students to global perspectives through their approach to teaching, learning and assessment. As demonstrated in the following examples, they embrace and draw on the cultural diversity in their classroom to create an inclusive environment in which reciprocal learning can take place, for the benefit of all students.

# 1. How Internationalisation comes into the Picture

Dr David Brancaleone

*Limerick School of Art and Design*

## Learning and Teaching Context

I applied my approach to history of art, visual culture and media, for a second-year undergraduate lecture course for 120 students and seminars attended by up to thirty students.

## Why internationalisation?

One good reason is because the student demographic is changing, due to institutional policy, resulting in growing attendance of overseas students from Eastern European and Asian countries. This encourages us to consider if what we teach could be more inclusive of a mixed cohort of students, not only from different backgrounds, itself a challenge, but also from a range of countries. The good news is that in my discipline, art history, there is a growing trend towards “decolonising” the curriculum. This means taking into consideration the fact that the current curriculum is predominantly Eurocentric, and biased towards British and North American art and visual culture.

## Strategy

The catalyst for me proved to be Covid-19 which led me to critically reviewing course content and asking: ‘What is essential?’ What ensued was a review of the status of material which has always formed “the Western Canon” – a “body of knowledge”, as Michel Foucault would call it. Internationalising my lectures meant questioning a prevailingly uncritical historical survey approach to challenge established, though often debunked, hierarchies of cultural politics. What or who is excluded? And what are the consequences of exclusion? Eurocentric Western history survey approaches are selective. But what were the criteria for selection? For example, Eurocentric art history leaves out of the picture Eastern Europe and art and visual culture produced in what was the Eastern Roman Empire. However, if we do not challenge narratives that privilege Renaissance realism and exclude Medieval symbolic semi-abstract art, we will be left with an impoverished account of history and of art. It also means that the West would continue to ignore the cultural achievements of the East or Northern hemisphere over South.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in dealing with so-called “Primitivism” in Western art, taught as a purely formal “style” choice, carrying no cultural or political undertones. Overturning such formalist approaches allows one to expose some twentieth-century Western art as colonialist and racist (informed by what would now be considered “supremacist” attitudes).

Such a questioning approach is shared by colleagues also working to “decolonise” the curriculum. In TUS Midwest, the rationale for change was presented in our latest Five-Year Institutional Programmatic Review.

It is easier to work in this way within seminars, because of their discursive nature. However, even lectures can be adapted. Thus, choosing to discuss the work of contemporary Nigerian artists or Dutch artists working in Congo, or Cuban artists working in New York or Israeli artists in Europe, has prompted issues relating to a broader view of society and attracts surprise and involvement.



## What steps can you take?

- By shifting from preaching (the traditional lecture and its “delivery”) mode to a structured lecture method, using Problem Based Learning (PBL) techniques we can problematise a linear approach to subject matter.
- Set up a problem and place your subject within its broader context, not only historical, but also cultural and even geopolitical. This leads me to include, for example, African visual culture and its plunder by the West and western art historians, such that its original way of seeing, is hollowed out. I bring in for discussion news reports about colonial-era plunder of artefacts still stored in Western museums, especially European and North American, so topical a problem today (e.g. the return by Germany of Benin bronzes to Nigeria in 1922).
- Cut down teacher talking time to increase group activities and free up space for peer discussion. International students then find themselves included if we include them, rather than talking at them. The way to do so is to set up a working context, then step aside.
- Listen to students: allow space for advice from foreign students. This can feed into the course content (for example, this year, Polish students drew attention to Polish contributions to performance art which I have never included).

- Use alignment with assessment using the Notebook format to encourage reflective learning and individual research, prompted by the PBL method.
- Look for so-called “controversial” debates in the area and offer them for discussion, or simply find a link to the broader context, but try not to adopt a position. I did so with the war in Ukraine, brought into the frame through memes, folk music, music videos and visual art. In another example, I focussed on media representation and visual art, photography or film, hinged on Gianfranco Rosi’s *Fire at Sea* 2016 documentary about migrants. This alerts students to issues of difference, otherness, and exclusion, for example in how migrants are treated in North America and Europe. Another example: anti-globalization protest movements of the twenty-first century and their media coverage and artistic representation. What do they tell us about internationalisation?
- Seminars (for example, my *Looking at Looking or Art for Social Change*) offer great opportunities, provided you build in more time for peer group discussion – even half a session. Student reluctance to discuss, due to lack of confidence, can be addressed if you include class activities and link them to assessment through the Notebook.

### Recognition and Awareness...



Gavin Jantjes,  
*Untitled, 1989*  
(detail)



Picasso, *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R.)*, 1907  
(detail)

### What are the Benefits for Students and Lecturers?

This approach, when facilitated by PBL and aligned assessment and discussion, tends to promote deep learning, as opposed to surface learning and very high marks. Student reactions tend to express surprise and delight, probably because they find this individualist approach to teaching, learning and thinking critically refreshing after twenty years of a neoliberal culture which restricts everything to a skills-mastering challenge. Naturally, strategic learners will smell a rat and do the bare minimum to pass, preferring to concentrate on the practical elements of their courses.

As for benefits for lecturers, this makes for more enjoyable and stimulating exchange, provided you are sometimes willing to become, paradoxically, your students’ student.

### Resources

YouTube material can be seamlessly edited into PowerPoints which is an effective way to break out of the stranglehold of static slide shows. Interviews and discussions are readily available and, if some thought is given to editing clips, become powerful source material, shifting the focus away from the all-knowing lecturer, and very relatable for students. To include interviews with international speakers allows people like Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie into the seminar or lecture. Her “We Should All be Feminists” is an example of an online TED Talk which can be set for an assignment. In class, the students respond enthusiastically to Adichie, who is one of the most vocal feminists today. Adichie sets an example of how to move away from victim culture to empowerment. In this example, an articulate black speaker is more effective on race prejudice than a white speaker would be.

My advice would be to adopt PBL and be drastic about how much one-way content you choose to impart. Bear in mind that a great deal can be done outside class, set as self-study assignments.

What is left is what needs to happen in class. The class becomes an event, if you make it so. Engender trust and develop confidence among the students by allowing for formative feedback. Build in stages of learning which can be two-way, so even if lectures are a one-way street, you can make space through email or MS Teams for feedback and follow up. Read Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation* (1987) and stop thinking in terms of teaching as “delivery” and you are bound to succeed. This approach works for this author. It may also work for you. This article was written bearing in mind any colleagues who may be open to, or actively considering, alternatives to current “delivery”-style approaches to their teaching. It is informed by the work of Paulo Freire in education, an approach which connects the specifics of any topic to the real world, and, most importantly, to the actual students in the classroom, offering genuine opportunities for two-way communication; for listening and learning from them, instead of only imparting. In my opinion, it puts inclusion at the centre of our work, perhaps even going further than inclusion towards fore-fronting the students in the classroom.

## 2. Exploring the Complexity of Culture through the Stories of Others

Fiona Walshe

*Department of Social Studies, TUS Midlands*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

I work with Social Care students who are completing one of the applied, skills-based modules called Contemporary Social Care Practice. This year, there are approximately 35 students in the group, and at least 7 are of those are of African origin while three are Swiss. It is likely that other ethnic minority groups are represented in the group also, but it is impossible to tell unless those students talk about their backgrounds. Sometimes we also have students who are on Erasmus programmes.

### Brief Rationale

One of the learning outcomes of this module aims to support students to build the skills they need to work with service users in a multicultural environment. This learning outcome is linked with a proficiency which is set out by the social care regulator CORU. Social care students need to be able to work with various groups and individuals from different cultural backgrounds when they graduate and become registered social care workers.

### Strategy / Approach

I am not as comfortable lecturing about culture as I would be with any other part of the syllabus, and I am always tentative with this topic. I don't want to use the wrong words, or make sweeping statements and generalisations, or 'get it wrong'. I feel that in my position as a lecturer, I should be completely clear on every aspect of culture and most of the time, I find myself wanting to just have a discussion rather than teach from PowerPoint slides. However, discussions can be unwieldy, and although I manage them well when we talk about other things, I worry that I might not be able to manage a discussion on culture quite so well. This year, I looked at the group in front of me and I was aware that some people in the class knew more about this topic area than I did. I wanted to find a way to draw those students out and encourage them to talk about their experience of culture in Ireland. Of course, they didn't need to open up, and I was aware that if they did, they might feel too exposed amongst their peers. However, I also felt that they would possibly get something out of a frank discussion and that the class would learn a lot too. I would like to say I decided on a strategy, but the truth is, I let the class flow as it normally did. I just hoped that I would think of a way to draw the students out and get a conversation going this year. I was 'going there'!

I began by showing the students a TED Talk, 'The Danger of the Single Story', by a Nigerian author called

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. I carefully watched their reactions throughout and I noted that the talk resonated with the African students in particular – they nodded their heads, said 'yes' aloud at times and smiled at each other. I also knew that the material struck a chord with the other students in the class because their attention never wavered, even though the video was quite long. From a personal point of view, I knew the parts that would give them food for thought because they had given me food for thought when I first watched it and culturally, we were similar. I knew that I had an opportunity to 'do something' with this. I stood there, held my breath for a few seconds, not wanting to waste the opportunity, and quietly said:

*'Discuss?'*

There was silence, so I asked if any of the students were from Nigeria and if anything from the talk resonated with them. One student said that, like the speaker, Irish people were always surprised to hear that English was her first language. A student from Ghana added that Mary, her white Irish friend in the class, asked her how her English was so good when they first became friends. Mary laughed and we all joined in because it was funny, and we all know that Mary asked the questions that many of us may have asked if we were in her shoes. I was relieved; I knew these two students were close friends, but I was conscious of Mary's reaction too. I didn't want her to feel singled out, so I suggested that she ask more questions that many others in the class wanted to ask. Then the talk began to flow. The women from the various African countries began to tell stories about what they had been surprised to see when they arrived in Ireland, and compared life in Ireland to life at home. The South African student talked about how white Irish people would give her bags of clothes and feel sorry for her.

The women from different African countries clashed on some issues and agreed on others, and the rest of the class watched on in a sort of disbelief. They learned in that moment that culture was complex, and I could see the lightbulb moments coming thick and fast in front of my eyes. I was acutely aware that I may have caused tension between these African women because they argued in an animated way among each other about their various traditions and about generalisations that are made about them, but later in the canteen, they reassured me that they had enjoyed the class, and they were all still on speaking terms!

Later in the week, I carried on with my PowerPoint slides and there was limited discussion until I asked them to consider various terms used to talk about different groups. I asked them to look at a description of the term



'Black'. I used a government report to explain what this meant in the Irish context. Again, the conversation was full of nuances and the white students in the class hung on every word. One of the Nigerian students said that she was happy to use the term Black, another said she did not mind it but her son who is in secondary school hated it. One of the white Irish students from Ballinasloe said that she was always afraid to use the term because she didn't want to offend anyone. The South African student asked 'Why would I be offended? I am proud to be black.' A student from Ghana said that she would prefer to be called by her name.

### Observations / Reflection

These conversations were insightful, and the students generally welcomed the chance to talk about these terms and issues. Regarding my own observations and practical strategies, I think that showing some content that is a little controversial or gets students thinking is useful, but it is important that there is a relationship or rapport between the lecturer and the students first. If the class know you and have some trust and feel safe, they will talk, but if they don't, it may not work, and you can't force it. I still feel like these classes are full of risk, but I think it's worth being brave and trying the conversational approach.



### 3. Embracing Diversity in the Classroom: Designing a Cross-Cultural Assignment for Students on the Access Programme [Special Purpose Award at Level 6]

Imelda Cooke

*Department of Social Studies, TUS Midlands*

#### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

TUS Midlands offers a one-year Access course which aims to equip students aged 21 and over with the necessary skills, knowledge and confidence to progress to third-level education at TUS. On successful completion of the programme, graduates can subsequently gain entry to a range of TUS courses at higher certificate/ordinary degree level for the following academic year. Approximately 24 students enrol in the programme each year.

The course comprises modules relating to computing, basic technology, science, engineering, business and humanities subjects. A core theme covered in the Sociology section of the Social Studies module relates to culture and cross-cultural communication, which is assessed in part via a pair presentation.

#### Brief Rationale

When the course was initially introduced, the majority of applicants were mature Irish students, many without a Leaving Certificate qualification, who wished to return to education. Over the years, however, the student profile has evolved in line with the changing demographic of the wider community so that now, many of the students who enrol on this programme have moved to Ireland from other countries. Within the last few years alone, we have had participants from Morocco, Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Latvia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Somalia, Cameroon, Botswana, Pakistan, Kosovo, India, Congo, Hungary, Ukraine, Brazil and Palestine.

Achieving communication competence in a culturally diverse society is necessary for personal and professional success. One way to enhance our understanding of communication as a relationship-building activity is to engage with people from different cultures. The assignment described here, devised for the Sociology component of the Social Studies module, gives students the opportunity to learn about communication and culture, an important aspect of sociology, by working with a person who comes from a different culture.

#### Strategy / Approach

Students work in pairs, and efforts are made to ensure that students from Ireland complete the assignment with students who have moved to Ireland from another culture. Each pair is required to choose 4 topics from a list provided, including: food; the education system

and their experience of it; religion; festivals and social life; marriage; family life; gender roles; and nonverbal communication including aspects such as personal space, eye contact, gestures etc. Drawing on their discussions, researched sources and the lived experience of the international student, each pair must prepare and deliver a presentation on the culture of the country of origin of the international student.

#### Observations / Reflections

Generally, students engage well with this assignment. Feedback from the students indicates that they enjoy learning about the other cultures in their class group. As demonstrated by the sample comments below, international students welcome the opportunity to talk about their own cultures and feel that their cultural experiences are included and valued. Meanwhile, Irish students gain useful insights into the cultural backgrounds of their peers.

One Irish student reported that the pairing assessment was “very enjoyable and most beneficial in every way. It was a unique way of learning about South Africa with the international student giving a fantastic personal view, particularly regarding Education”. Another said: “My experience of doing the social studies culture assignment was very informative and I learned a lot about a culture I had little previous information on (Brazil). I found their values and traditions very cool and it was great to learn something new about how other cultures celebrate marriage and major milestones and how religion shaped their country’s culture”. The feedback from a Palestinian student was that “it was a great experience on the personal and educational side. I was very happy to introduce myself and my culture as a Palestinian student”, while a Brazilian student said: “It was a pleasant experience to share information about the country I came from with my partner. It was also nice to learn updated information about my country and remember things I had forgotten for the simple fact of not living there anymore. I am happy to say that me and my partner have learned a lot about the culture of Brazil. For me also came to light that I could not explain some information in English until I read it in English first. Now I feel more prepared to talk about my own culture to anybody”.

In addition to the sharing of cultural insights, the assignment also provides students with an opportunity to practise the transferrable skills learned in the Communications module of their programme in a meaningful way.

**Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach**

Due to the changing cohort of students each year, it is not always possible to pair Irish and international students one-to-one. While working together on a one-to-one basis works best, it is sometimes necessary to have larger groups.



## 4. Looking at Death, Loss and Grief from an International Perspective

Jennifer Moran Stritch

*Department of Applied Social Sciences, TUS Midwest*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

Subject domain – Personal Development – Loss and Grief for Social Care Workers.

Group size – 50 – 70 students in a 2 hour weekly lecture format.

Stage of the programme – Final year, BA in Social Care Work students.

### Rationale for including Internationalisation in my Teaching

Social care workers support a wide range of people in need, including migrants, refugees and those seeking asylum in Ireland. They are often the professional who is, on a regular day-to-day basis, closely accompanying an individual affected by trauma or grief. Sometimes the trauma can be from a previous experience within their migration journey, or it can be the death of a loved one or friend in their country of origin while they are here in Ireland. Death and grief are challenging things for all of us, but the challenge is especially difficult for people living in Ireland who do not have immediate access to familiar cultural ways of dealing with the loss of a loved one. They may not be able to attend the funeral or disposition rites, or may not have regular contact with friends or family members at home. These situations can complicate the grieving process, which can have negative implications for their mental and physical wellbeing going forward.

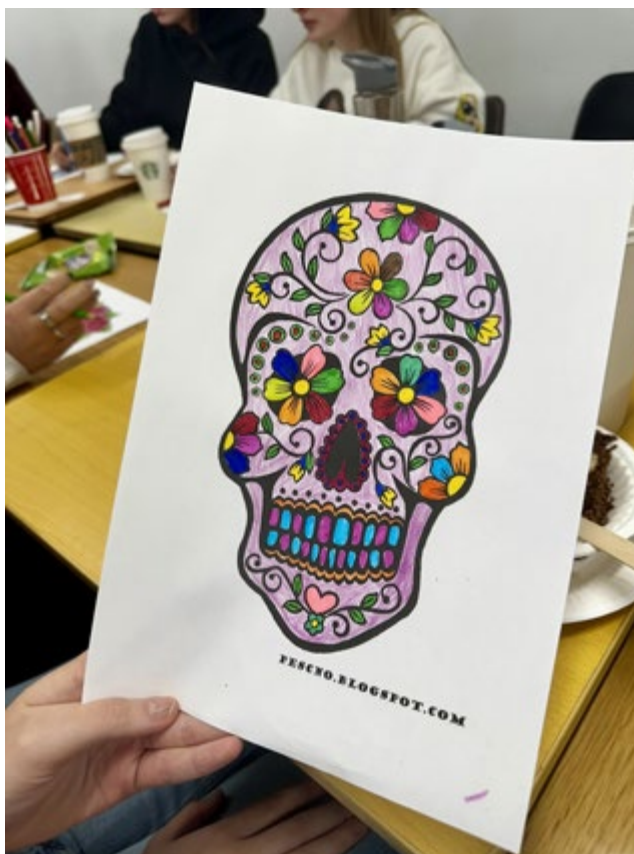
Social care students need to have an international perspective when considering their overall practice. Because of the nature of their work, they need a good understanding of the ways that different societies grieve and how to best support someone from another culture who is affected by loss.

### Strategy / Approach

Steps in presenting this multicultural view of bereavement:

1. The topic of global perspectives on grief is included in the semester syllabus, so students are aware that it is covered in the module, usually in the second half of the semester.
2. I upload three short articles looking at different ways of grieving according to cultural and religious systems, and ask the students to read these and then respond with comments in a Moodle discussion forum. This task is set for the week before the lecture on multicultural bereavement.

3. I then provide a short 1-hour lecture looking at differences in bereavement rituals between Ireland and several other countries (e.g. Nigeria, USA, UK, Thailand). I vary these countries each year depending on the class cohort I have, as I try to include the countries of origin for students I am currently teaching. This allows those students, if they wish, to talk about their own religious and cultural deathways and what it is like to adapt those to what is currently available in Ireland.
4. Students are then asked to do a reflective journal entry on their experience of learning about death and grief rituals from other cultures, and what implications that learning may have for their future professional practice as a social care worker. This journal entry becomes part of their portfolio and synthesis essay which they submit for marking at the end of the semester.



### Obstacles or Challenges Experienced

I have not encountered any major challenges to this activity, other than minor scheduling issues in attempting to get a guest speaker to come in for the second part of lecture. The students are generally very motivated to

look at this issue and to expand their knowledge of how death rituals vary from culture to culture, and how to best support someone who is both grieving and separated from their homeland and extended social network in their country of origin.

### Student Reactions

The students are genuinely interested in the information presented. Our student cohort in social care often includes people who are not originally from Ireland, so they are able to speak about death and funeral rituals in their countries of origin and how they differ or align with those that are dominant in Ireland. I find that students from other countries are very open to discussing the differences between their culture and the one they encounter in Ireland, and this kind of sharing and peer learning is extremely powerful. It also gives Irish students a chance to reflect on their own understanding of death customs in Ireland, and how we use them to express and process grief.

Images and videos that I show in lecture to explore international deathways are always of interest to students. I tend to focus on three or four different cultures, including at least one from the Global South, one from North America, the Traveller tradition in Ireland and the variations that are found in the United Kingdom. I'm very careful to encourage the class to consider these differences from an inclusive, non-judgemental perspective, and to avoid seeing different customs as "strange", weird or unhealthy simply because they differ from what Irish people would recognise as the norm. I also try to choose countries that are connected to the students in the current cohort, to give them the opportunity to speak about their homelands and what it is like for them when a death occurs at home.

### Benefits for Students

Ireland is becoming an increasingly multicultural country, with a changing landscape of death rituals and bodily disposition methods included in this diversity. Social care workers need a level of awareness around this, so that they can support people in an informed and compassionate way if they are affected by bereavement. Working with people who have come to Ireland from other countries, whether as economic migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, means that social care workers also need to be sensitive to those who are experiencing cultural bereavement as a result of a sudden and perhaps traumatic departure from their country and culture of origin.

### Benefits for the Lecturer

As a thanatologist, I have a deep interest in how culture and society shapes the way people respond to death and grief. I enjoy learning along with the students, and it is a wonderful opportunity for students who hail from countries and cultures outside Ireland to share their personal perspectives. By bringing in guest speakers when available, I can strengthen my relationships with community leaders from NGOs and religious organisations who provide support to migrants in Ireland. This adds a layer of learning for the students that they really appreciate, and gets them to think about making their own professional connections as a future social care practitioner.

### Recommendations / Practical Hints

Academic literature – I post several articles about multicultural deathways on the Personal Development module Moodle page, and ask students to pre-read these prior to the lecture and then use a discussion forum to provide comments and insights.

Guest speakers have included representatives from DORAS ([www.doras.org](http://www.doras.org)), a migrant support organisation headquartered in Limerick, along with religious leaders from the local Muslim community and funeral professionals from the greater Midwest area.

### Resources – websites listed on Moodle page for students to consider:

Irish Childhood Bereavement Network  
[www.childhoodbereavement.ie](http://www.childhoodbereavement.ie)

Irish Hospice Foundation [www.hospicefoundation.ie](http://www.hospicefoundation.ie)

HSE Intercultural Guide available at: <https://www.lenus.ie/bitstream/handle/10147/311962/HSEinterculturalguide1.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

## 5. Appreciating Differences using Relationally Reflexive Learning Groups

Dr Karen Leonard

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### Rationale

Having taught social care modules for many years, I noticed students found it difficult to reflect on themselves and their practice. As lecturers, we tended to use individualised, de-contextualised forms of reflection such as Kolb (1984) and Gibbs (1988), that did not take account of students' family and life experiences before commencing the social care course. In my doctoral research I set out to address this gap, by providing a different teaching and learning context where relational reflexivity in preparation for practice was emphasised. Helping students to become more aware of their prejudices and attitudes about others was a significant aspect of the module that I developed from my research (Leonard, 2020).

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

As part of the research, three groups of social care students participated in relationally reflexive learning groups as part of their Placement Preparation module across an entire semester in 2017/2018. Two research groups were conducted with third-year students (n=29) who had previously taken the traditional placement preparation module and had been on two placements, and one group with first years (n=13) who were preparing for their first placement. Students who did not wish to take part in the process, or changed their mind, could attend the traditional placement preparation classes.

### Approach to Teaching and Learning

These reflexive learning groups were collaborative in nature, meaning as a lecturer I was engaged in a public reflexivity with students where I shared with them what was emerging for me within the dialogue. While each group session did have a theme such as motivation to care and family roles, ideas and learning emerged between us in the group, without the need for traditional teaching aids. Group membership was closed and restricted to fifteen students in total, with the group arranged in a circle in the classroom. There was a combination of Irish and international students, which brought an added richness and depth to our discussions especially around social differences and cultural background.

We used the Social GRRRAAACCEESSS an acronym for various social differences, (Gender, Geography, Race, Religion etc.) as developed by John Burnham (2012), to open up a dialogue between us on cultural and religious differences. The themes of the sessions helped me facilitate discussions on difference, identity and culture respectfully and inclusively. For example, one student,

originally from a country in Africa, was able to talk openly and calmly about some racist experiences she had been subjected to by a client, when working previously as a care assistant. We were amazed at how she was able to see things from their point of view, while caring for them respectfully and ethically. Her transparency meant others were more likely to share their views and experiences also. Students noticed that hearing others' family and cultural experiences helped them question their taken for granted knowledge of family life, with some mentioning they were more curious regarding another's personal circumstances.

Being able to discuss our social differences in this way meant that in practice, students felt more able to ask clients about their customs and values, rather than adopting their usual position of shying away from this conversation for fear of upsetting or insulting them. This improved cultural competence was directly related to our group discussions on appreciation, difference and prejudices.

### Benefits of the Approach

A model of relational reflexivity for education was developed whereby students are encouraged to reflect on their past experiences, their family of origin, their ideas and attitudes about others, and are encouraged to explore how these experiences might help or hinder them when building relationships with clients.

This form of teaching and learning brings benefits for students, lecturers and service users in terms of quality of education and care provision. From their involvement in this relationally reflexive process, students gave many examples in their reflexive diaries of how they responded differently to clients and other professionals when on placement. As a lecturer, I noticed being outside the traditional student/lecturer role meant I was able to let go of the pressure to have all the knowledge and be the expert, and viewed students as having valuable cultural knowledge and familial experiences to share, that would improve the learning experience for us all.

### Recommendations

Education providers and lecturers could use this model within a wide range of health, social care education and training modules, as a supervision model or for continuous professional development (CPD). I would recommend that in the first session a lot of attention is given to setting the context and making sure issues such as confidentiality, safety in the group and support services are addressed before any reflexivity occurs.

As a systemic and family psychotherapist, I have a wide range of experience of facilitating groups, and this was hugely beneficial in managing this learning experience and the group process. However, discussions on personal values or cultural beliefs can evoke strong opinions that can be potentially prejudicial and hurtful to others in the classroom. To manage this, smaller groups and a possible co-facilitator might be a way of dealing with the challenges of navigating group dynamics associated with this form of learning and teaching.

### References and Resources

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## What I learnt from this module?

*I am more aware of quality in social care*      How I am affects others

*I Need to feel supported*

*My family can impact on my practice*

There can be little difference between my story and a client's story

*I can try to be more in the moment with a person*

*There are all different types of families*

*I feel more confident*

*I am part of the relationship with a client*      *I feel guilty*

*I can speak up at meetings*

*My role in my family can affect the work*

*I can speak with people about their culture*

*What social care students said they learnt from the relationally reflexive learning process*

## 6. Inclusive Activities incorporating Languages and Cultural Sounds

Patrick Mark Duffy

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### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

This activity is ideal for first-year students, and is best delivered during the initial classes at the beginning of their first academic year while students are being introduced to their peers. This activity was completed with students of Music Technology and Production from 2020-2023. The class sizes were around 28 students per class.

### Brief Rationale

The rationale behind this activity is to provide an icebreaker that incorporates the cultural differences of the class in a domain-relevant way, in this instance exploring students' native languages and cultural sounds. We are lucky to have a number of international students in the Music Technology programme and these activities aim to make them feel welcome and integrated as well as provide an opportunity to dispel the nerves of initial introductions.

### Strategy / Approach

The strategy works in two main parts – an Icebreaker activity and a Sound Bank activity. I begin the first class with the new cohort by projecting a basic 'Good Morning/ Afternoon & Welcome' slide while playing music. I introduce myself and the module and begin an icebreaker activity. Instead of asking them to 'tell everyone a bit about yourself', I ask what languages we have in the room. When they tell me, I add the language to the welcome slide with a translation of 'Good Morning and Welcome' in each language.



When we have represented each language with a translation, I ask the students who provided me with their language to teach me how to say 'Good Morning and Welcome' in their native language. This does a few things; it opens a fun dialogue between lecturer and student where the student feels they are teaching the lecturer something, and it also acts as an introduction of error on the lecturer's part. When I inevitably cannot pronounce something correctly and a student corrects me, it sends

the message 'in this class it is ok to try something and be wrong', which is a vital message to send on the first day. We also laugh a lot when trying to say things in the various languages.

The second part of the activity is centred around cultural 'Soundmarks' – a soundmark refers to a sound which is unique or possesses qualities which make it specially regarded or noticed by the people in that community. Some examples of these Soundmarks are The Angelus (an Irish call to prayer) or Adhan (Muslim call to prayer) or more general sounds such as the rain of the western coasts of Ireland. Throughout the year, in various recording workshops, students are invited to upload any cultural Soundmarks they find to a shared Class Sound Bank for their peers to appreciate and use in their creative work.

At the beginning of each lecture and lab I display the welcome slide and play music from the various countries as students are entering the room. We play a game where they must guess the country of origin from the music alone. This year we have English, Irish, Romanian, Russian, Polish, Mandarin, Nepalese, Punjabi, and Swedish to represented in the welcome message.

### Observations / Reflections

The benefit for students is that the introduction is less anxiety-inducing; students have told me that they dread the introduction activities. It takes the focus off them and their public speaking and emphasises the unique and interesting differences in the room. Students have also said that this activity made them feel welcome and more at home in a foreign country.

The benefits to me are that I get to begin the year by making the students feel welcome and also break down a barrier between lecturer and student through an introduction of error on my part. This encourages students to ask questions and attempt answers when they see that there is no embarrassment around being wrong. I also learn a little bit more about each language and we get to start the year with laughter.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

Running this activity is very simple, you only need Google Translate and a PowerPoint slide and the idea is applicable to any class or domain. The Class Sound Bank is optional – and more appropriate for music students who engage in sound recording.



## 7. Water Rights in Malawi: Collaborating with Trócaire on an International Challenge-Based Learning Project with Game Art & Design, and Creative Media Students in TUS Clonmel

Paul Keating and John Hannafin

*Department of Digital Arts and Media, Limerick School of Art and Design, Clonmel Campus*

### Background to the Project

The Clonmel based Digital Arts Lab (DAL), which is part of Limerick School of Art and Design's Research Institute, has a particular commitment to working on local and global development projects. The staff attached to the DAL also teach on the undergraduate programmes in Game Art & Design (GAD), Digital Animation Production (DAP) and Creative Media & User Experience Design (CMD). We are always exploring ways in which to integrate our research and development projects with our teaching and learning as we find it benefits both the students and the projects we are working on. "Water Rights in Malawi" is a good example of how such synergies have been applied in practice.



Staff in Clonmel have been collaborating with Trócaire's Global Citizenship Education unit for many years. We have supported them in developing their use of games as a way of engaging young people with issues of social justice and sustainability. In 2023 we

began developing the idea of using the subject of Water Justice as a theme for our First Year Game Design Module with GAD students. Trócaire suggested that we also use Malawi as the context, as they themselves were creating educational resources based on Malawi. We decided therefore to set the assignment for the module to be a board game which raises awareness about and empathy towards people of rural Malawi struggling to access water. There were 24 students in the first year GAD, however there was also a small group of 6 in first year CMD, who we felt might also benefit from such a project. We therefore set them a brief to design a prototype for a digital application in a parallel process, addressing the same issue.

### Grounding the Project in Real Stories

At the beginning of the year, both groups of students participated in a workshop facilitated on the Clonmel Campus by Stephen Farley and Aine O Driscoll of Trócaire. Aine had just returned from Malawi and shared the stories of a particular family and community she had met there. The group learned about the Sustainable Development Goals and water rights in particular. In their module they had learned about design thinking, games

design and game-based learning, however it was the stories and images of the people, their culture, their lives and places which had the greatest impact.

### Researching the Issues

Once the brief and the context were presented to students, they were given a month to research the issue, the country, and the communities, while also developing concepts for their games and apps. On 10th November, the students presented their research and analysis to



*Early Prototype Player Profile*

two Malawians, Desire Mpange, a Development Studies academic from UCD, and Prishella Row, an activist and author based in Dublin. This session had an intensity and authenticity which had a real impact on both the students and our two visitors. Prishella and Desire commented on how accurately the students had presented the lives of their compatriots, they clarified

some cultural and geographic points, answered some very specific and probing questions, and became quite emotional when acknowledging the students' efforts in researching, and their sensitivity in representing, their home country. The students, for their part, left with energy, confidence, and a renewed commitment to the project.

### Developing the Prototypes

The deadline for the project submission was set for early December. Prior to this, there was a further workshop with Trócaire in order to refine the game concepts and ask advice on character and contextual issues. This was done remotely towards the end of November when each of the 6 teams presented their games. Feedback from Trócaire staff was very comprehensive and not only addressed the game play, but also the ethical appropriateness and cultural efficacy of the various elements of the game, its narrative and visual images. This session gave the students a very clear message that their work was being taken seriously, was informed by ethical considerations, and needed to address Trócaire's priorities and standards as well as those of their course.

### Presenting / Playtesting the Games

Trócaire were so encouraged by the emerging games that they invited the students to their offices in Maynooth on 11th December in order to playtest them with their Development Education team and a group of NUI Maynooth student teachers. This presented an immovable deadline for the project, and it became apparent that there was more at stake for students than a module mark. The 3D printing, photocopying, cutting and pasting was intense for a couple of days prior to the deadline. Notwithstanding the stress and several technical challenges with equipment, all of the teams had their games completed and ready for the event. Everybody attended, at a time of the year when there are often other academic and family demands.



*Student Printing and Painting Game Pieces*

### Playtesting with Trócaire

The playtest event itself, which was also the final project submission, was a mix of nerves and fun, as all good games events should be. The students set up the room, laid out their games and invited the NUI students and Trócaire staff in to play.

The six games were received very well. Trócaire spoke about how the art and the design elements of the games were very impressive and how the issues and brief were very well met from their perspective. From a Game Design perspective, teaching staff were impressed with the playability of most of the games and the completeness of the games produced. The students themselves were their own best critics and they realised where the strengths and weaknesses of their games and those of their classmates lay. The CMD students also presented their research remotely to the Trócaire fundraising team. They presented two prototype apps related to raising funds and resources to address some of the challenges of water rights in Malawi.



*NUI Maynooth Student Teachers and Trocaire Staff play the Games Student under the guidance of GAD students.*

### Reflections on the Project

The project has been both challenging and very rewarding from a range of perspectives.

**Authenticity:** Engaging the students with such an issue and requiring them to research and present their work to Trócaire and to a Malawian academic and activist gave focus and authenticity to the process. They had to be sensitive to an unfamiliar culture and how this was represented in their work.

**Complementarity:** The integration of teaching, research and development across two academic programmes, while complex, worked very well. The CMD student research informed the digital games development. The design concepts being brought forward by the GAD students informed the CMD students. The teaching staff were learning from each other and from the students about a context new to all. The staff in Trócaire appreciated the game design expertise being brought by the students, and they in turn were sharing their expertise in using games in development education.

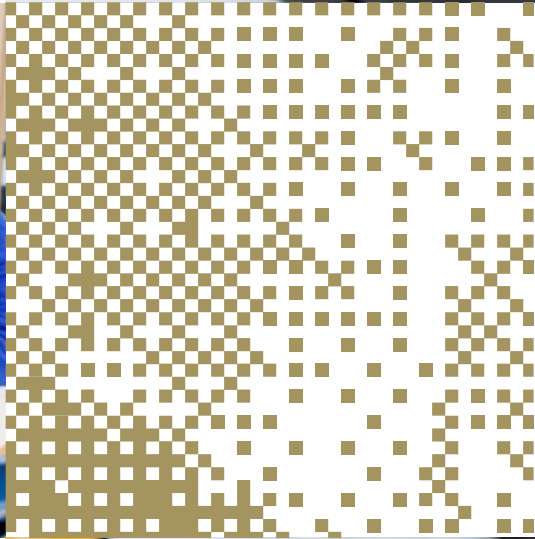
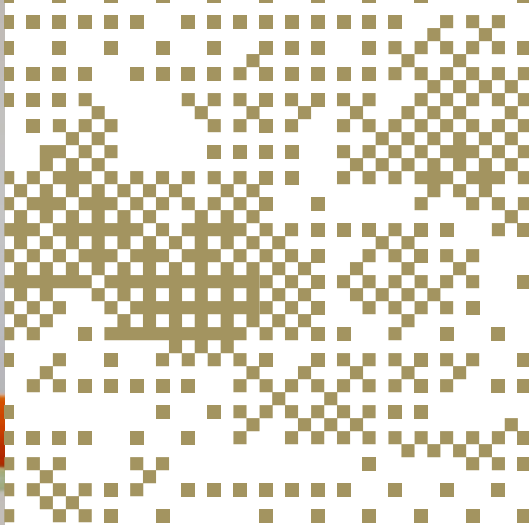
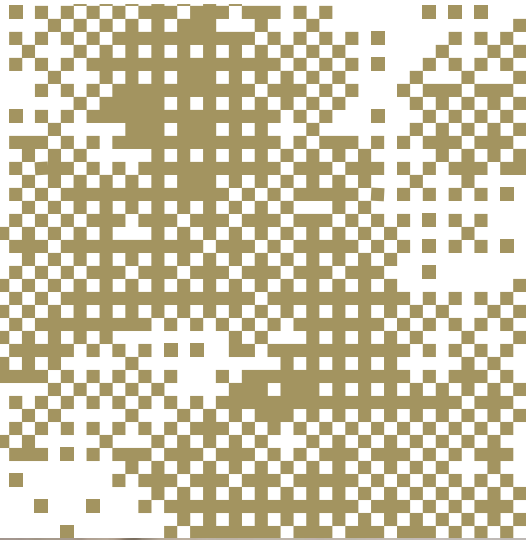
**Commitment:** It is worth noting that students' contribution to this project was over and above what they would normally be expected to input for a 5-credit, level 6 module. In addition to their teaching, staff contributed considerable time to develop this project. Trócaire staff facilitated two workshops for students at no cost to TUS, while we had two guest lecturers contribute to the modules related to the project and paid for by the academic department.

**Confidence:** The fact that our students travelled to Maynooth and collaborated with a class of student teachers was important in building their confidence and identity as HEI students. The positive feedback from an organisation like Trócaire was also important in this regard. There was personal value for them in looking at an international context and linking with development organisations, seeing the potential they have to make an impact.

Perhaps the last word should be left to one of the students who observed “*the challenge was to make a game which was fun, authentic and respectful towards the people... we had to do so much research about Malawi before we even had a clue about what we were doing....*”.

*Patricia, Malita and Patrick, the family at the centre of Trocaire's presentation to students on Water Rights in Malawi*





# RUN-EU Projects and International Collaboration



*‘RUN-EU is a transnational alliance of higher education institutions working together to create a regional development-oriented European University that embodies the values of sustainability, multiculturalism, and inclusiveness in all its work’ (TUS, 2023).*

RUN-EU was established in 2020, under the European Universities Initiative. The constituent universities represent a community of over 100,000 students, 11,000 staff and 100 research institutes, centres and groups. Our membership of this alliance provides numerous exciting opportunities for TUS colleagues and students to co-design and participate in joint learning and research activities, from Short Advanced Programmes (SAPs) to European degrees up to PhD level. A sample of these initiatives is included here, together with further examples of international collaboration and co-operation.

# 1. Teaching and Learning about Intercultural Communication through a Short Advanced Programme (RUN-EU)

**Dr Geraldine McDermott**

*Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development (CPID), TUS Midlands*

**Title of the Programme: Who are we? Mapping the Identity of the RUN-EUer.**

**Teaching Team:** Dr Geraldine McDermott (TUS, Ireland); Eimear Kelly (TUS, Ireland); Dr Helen Sherwin (SZE, Hungary); Dr Júlia Szóke (SZE, Hungary); Anikó Makkos (SZE, Hungary); Paula Cardoso (IPL); Lotta Hirvonen (HAMK, Finland); Jeanette Klomp (NHL, Netherlands); Natasha Doshi (FHV, Austria)

## Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

This Short Advanced Programme (SAP) is delivered online via Teams or Zoom twice weekly for 4-6 weeks and culminates in a week-long face-to-face programme in the host country (one of the six RUN-EU partners). Approximately 30 students are selected to participate in the programme and they come from a variety of disciplines within the RUN-EU universities (Ireland, Portugal, Austria, Netherlands, Hungary, Finland).

Each of the RUN-EU partners leads at least one of the two-hour sessions, focusing on their area of expertise. There is significant emphasis on team building and student exchange. Online breakout rooms and the use of student engagement platforms such as Vevox, Miro, and Padlet facilitate the exchange of ideas and experiences. Individual reflection, problem-solving tasks, project work, role-plays, presentations and peer teaching/learning are included as active learning strategies to maximise student engagement.



## Brief Rationale

The European Regional University Network (RUN-EU) provides TUS students with an opportunity to experience the cultural diversity and pluralism of a European network of higher education universities. However, in order to foster collaboration and trust, and to build strong relationships for future development, the SAP team felt it was important for students to think about the cultures they were engaging with. So, in this Short Advanced Programme we encourage students to consider the following questions:

- What is this world of RUN-EU?
- How can I navigate my way through it?
- Who am I in it?
- Who is the RUN-EU student?
- How can I study and work effectively in such a multicultural context?

## Strategy / Approach

Following an initial welcome from the host university in the introductory online session, students immediately begin working in their country groups to prepare a short presentation in response to the questions: What is my culture? What does culture mean? What national cultural themes can we present to others?

In subsequent sessions, they are introduced to theory relating to intercultural communication, to provide a foundation for their discussions about the challenges associated with communicating in different cultures. The following questions guide this discussion: How does communication differ between cultures? How does my culture view other cultures? They also explore intercultural communication in an academic context and get to know what academic life is like for students in the partner universities.

## Language Tasters

Alongside the course content which focuses on intercultural communication, the students are introduced to the languages of the RUN-EU partners, through a series of language taster workshops. Lecturers from each country teach the students how to say basic phrases in their language and also introduce them to the culture of that country, e.g. music, song, history, folklore.

## Face-to-Face Week

During the face-to-face week in the host country, students participate in an academic and cultural programme. The academic sessions also have an active learning focus and are interspersed with short lectures and hands-on activities. These include a wider discussion on what it means to be European and a RUN-EU student and how to manage conflict when it arises. Activities include the following:

1. Students initially work in their country teams to teach other students something from their culture (e.g. dance, song, card game, local dialect). This reinforces the sense of self and cultural identity.
2. Students are mixed into cross-country groups to produce an artefact (physical or digital) which represents the RUN-EU student. This exhibition takes place on the final day of the SAP.

### Observations

The initial idea for this SAP came from a conversation amongst language lecturers at a RUN-EU event and since we all came from a background where we understood the value and importance of intercultural competence, it was easy to collaborate on a programme proposal. However, just as for the students, we come from different university cultures, so an openness to adapt and a flexibility in terms of our teaching approach was needed from the beginning. The challenges we encountered included:

- Selecting a platform that we could use for the resources and links to the online classes. MS Teams was selected and the host university oversees the management of this for the relevant SAP. However, for the online classes both Zoom and Teams are used, depending on the lecturer's preference.
- Identifying the content and activities each lecturer wanted to teach. Here we were guided by professional expertise and personal preferences. There are currently nine lecturers from the six RUN-EU partners involved in teaching the programme. The experience of engaging with different teaching approaches contributed to students' intercultural competence.

- Attendance: sometimes the scheduled class times clashed with student timetables so we adapted the programme to give students greater flexibility. We ensure that students are actively engaged in the session and we also record the sessions so they can catch up if needed.

### Evaluation

At the end of each programme we run two surveys to evaluate the student experience. The first focuses on the specific contents of the programme and is designed by the teaching team. The second is a LearnWell questionnaire, administered by the RUN-EU Future Advanced Skills Academy (FASA). Below are some student responses from the first edition in Portugal:

*"I had so much fun and met some great people. Was an experience I Will remember forever. I learned a lot about different cultures and countries"*

*"At the beginning it felt a bit like a slow process, especially trying to get to know everyone through zoom but the in person experience was unbelievable, it exceeded my expectations".*

### Recommendations

TUS staff can get involved in developing a SAP and TUS students can apply to any of the RUN-EU SAPs on offer. To find out more, visit <https://run-eu.eu/study-programmes/>



## 2. Regional University Network - European University (RUN-EU) Short Advanced Programme (SAP) on Sustainable and Inclusive Marketing Strategies

Louise Murray and Sinead O'Connell

*Department of Business and Management, TUS Midlands*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

**Subject Domain:** Sustainable and Inclusive Marketing Strategies

**Group Size:** 30

**Delivered:** Blended Delivery - TUS Athlone and online, January/February 2023

**Stage of Programme:** 5 ECTS stand-alone module open to RUN-EU students from all cycles of studies, with particular emphasis on students from Digital Marketing, Business, Design and Communications.

### Brief Rationale

We wanted to capitalise on TUS's membership of the RUN-EU by creating a Short Advanced Programme (SAP) in keeping with its vision. RUN-EU aims to secure the sustainable economic, social, cultural and environmental progress of its regions and stakeholders by providing students, researchers and academics with green, digital and inclusive skills that will help them increase the competitiveness of its regions and reduce existing regional development disparities in the EU.

Our SAP included students from 15 different countries around the world who were studying at the 7 different university members within the RUN-EU. It was designed

to provide the students with an awareness of ethical and sustainable approaches to designing and implementing marketing activities within the organisations they will work with and for, and ultimately contribute to the triple bottom line of planet, people and profits.

Our blended delivery approach encompassed interactive presentations and workshops with multidisciplinary team assignments. The main assignment involved the creation of 6 groups with a mix of students from each of the RUN-EU Universities. The assignment brief was to develop a sustainable and inclusive marketing strategy for Youth Work Ireland Midlands (YWI Midlands), a not-for-profit organisation whose core focus is the social, personal and educational development of young people, enabling them to take greater control over their lives by being given opportunities to make choices, take decisions and exercise responsibility. This organisation was chosen as it was agreed that the most valuable experience the students could get from our SAP was to have a live industry experience with a regional organisation that is held in high regard for its inclusivity.

This SAP also provided a unique opportunity for students in the home university of TUS to benefit from an intense study experience with students from across the RUN-EU but without having to leave their campus.





### Strategy / Approach

We developed this SAP together as part of a collaboration with another RUN-EU University member, NHL/Stenden in the Netherlands. Our SAP formed part of a stackable set of SAPs under the umbrella of Sustainable Digital Marketing. The other SAPs were delivered in NHL Stenden (Impactful Content Creation and Ethics in a Digital Age).

The SAP was developed over a 12-month period with colleagues from TUS and it included collaboration and engagement with members of the teaching team from NHL/Stenden. Our NHL/Stenden colleagues were involved in the delivery of our SAP in Athlone, as we were in their SAP delivery.



### Observations / Reflections

The SAP proved very popular and was the most subscribed SAP from students across all of the RUN-EU partners. Despite this, there was the least demand in TUS and we found the opportunity for additional learning (outside of their programmes of study) only appealed to students who were highly motivated. However, the positive word-of-mouth from participating TUS students and the visibility of the SAP on the Athlone campus will go a long way to encouraging all students to get involved in future similar programmes.

We conducted research after the SAP was finished and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Verbatims from the participating student reflective video diaries were also hugely positive. The students talked about having had a once-in-a-lifetime experience in Athlone, making friends for life from countries all over Europe, and learning so much about other cultures through teamwork in class and also during social activities in the evenings.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

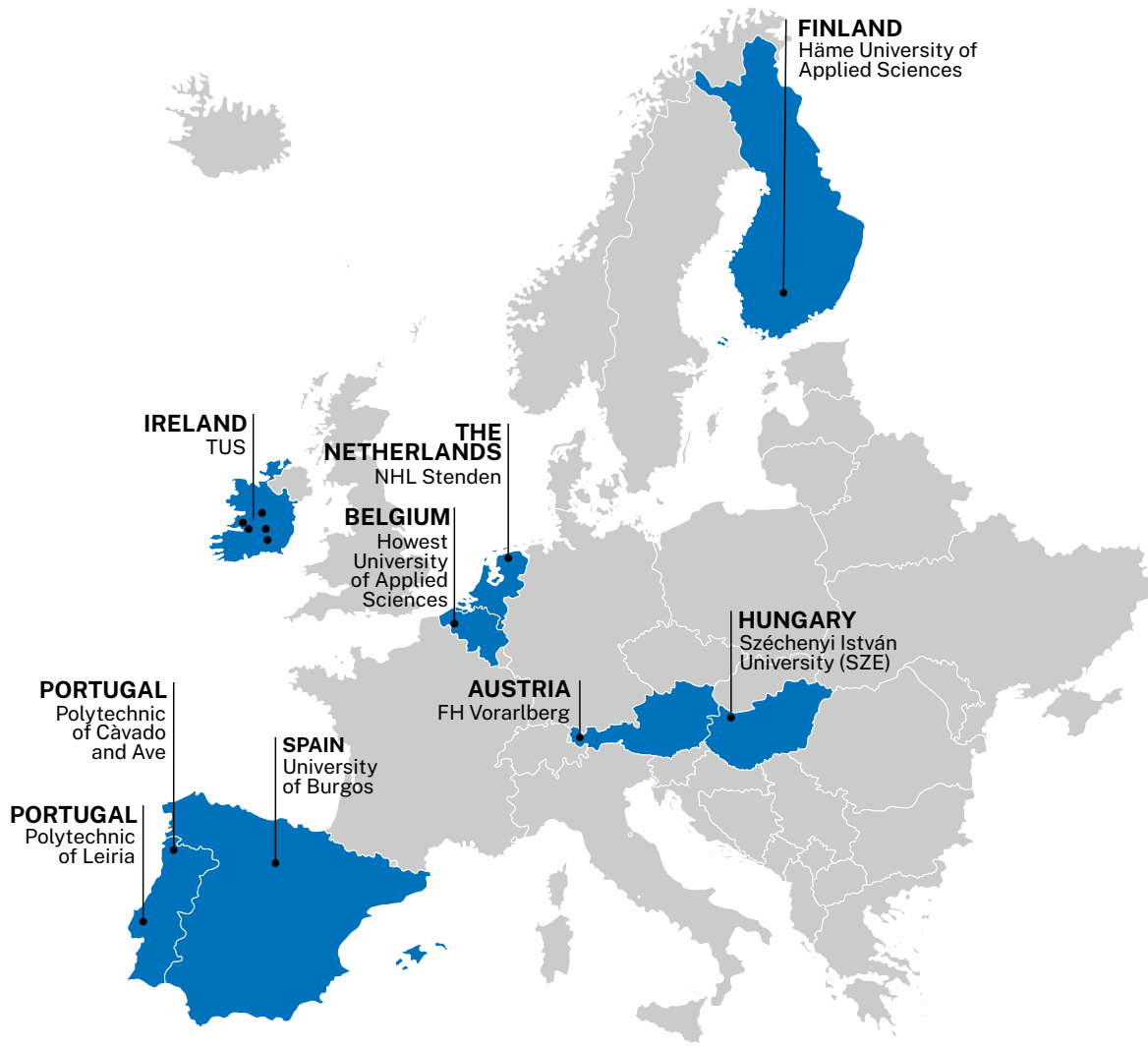
The SAP framework within RUN-EU offers an incredible opportunity for staff and students to experience teaching and learning in an international environment. The hesitancy of other TUS lecturers to get involved a RUN-EU SAP delivery was quickly overcome as soon as they were directly involved. The benefits and reward of teaching a group of students from a mix of countries who are all highly motivated to learn was clear to all who joined us on the SAP delivery. This needs to be communicated to all other staff to encourage them to participate in the future.

As we were the first to run a programme like this in TUS Athlone, we had a valuable learning curve and so were happy to share the highs and lows of our experiences with other colleagues who were set to deliver future SAPs. We would have appreciated this insight when we were developing our SAP.

Greater accessibility to funding at a Departmental level is needed for these types of initiatives to cover the requisite team-building and social activities.



# RUN-EU Research Initiatives



The Regional University Network (RUN-EU) is a European University which brings TUS together with other universities in the RUN-EU alliance from Portugal, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Austria, Spain and Belgium. Within RUN-EU, TUS leads an embedded Horizon-funded project called RUN-EU PLUS, which focuses on the creation of professional practice-based research programmes for business and society. The overarching aim is to explore collaborative research opportunities with industry and societal organisations for regional growth and development. Examples of how this aim is being realised are presented in the following articles:

- Researcher Skills Training
- Research Exchange
- Research Challenge Short Advanced Programmes (SAPs)
- Joint PhD Supervision

### 3. RUN-EU PLUS Researcher Skills Training

**Dr Siobhan Moane**

*RUN-EU PLUS Project Manager & Co-ordinator at Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest*

#### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context



A key objective of the RUN-EU PLUS project is to strengthen the human capital capacity through research skills training and the development of a Researcher Career Development Programme with support tools including a Cloud of Knowledge Portal and Research Career Evaluation System.

The skills training programme focuses on research skills, transferable skills, open science practices and career development. The programme is available to (and has been attended by) all researchers across the RUN-EU alliance. The workshops have been attended by postgraduate students (early-stage researchers), postdoctoral fellows, academic researchers and supervisors and research managers. All workshops are delivered online.

#### Brief Rationale

The idea is to develop a research community across RUN-EU where researchers can network and collaborate on research projects and supervision of research programmes.

#### Strategy / Approach

The RUN-EU PLUS project is divided up into work packages (WPs) and there is a researcher training element in each. Leaders of these 3 work packages (WPs) work together to design, develop, and deliver the programmes. TUS leads the RUN-EU PLUS project and therefore guides its strategic direction.

#### Stages of the Process

The project has identified the following procedure for the development of the workshops:

1. Scope out workshop/training programme aims and objectives and target audience.
2. Undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment for the workshop in fulfilment of RUN-EU PLUS Deliverable 1.1 Protection of Personal Data.
3. Prepare and agree agenda with RUN-EU PLUS members as appropriate (content and delivery guided by previous feedback from RUN-EU researcher community).
4. Identify appropriate presenters and facilitators.
5. Seek presenter permission to record and disseminate presentation videos.
6. Liaise with RUN-EU communications team to develop workshop promotional material and call for registrations.
7. Host RUN-EU university to set-up registration process and provide details to RUN-EU communication team.
8. Feedback from registration process to inform final workshop agenda, content, and delivery.
9. Participant feedback invited at end of workshop.
10. Certificates of attendance and presentation prepared and circulated.
11. Inform RUN-EU mobility officer of workshop attendees to record virtual mobility activity.
12. Dissemination articles prepared (including testimonials) in collaboration with RUN-EU communication team and WP7 (Dissemination).
13. In collaboration with the partner responsible on the RUN-EU PLUS Cloud of Knowledge Portal, all relevant training material will be available to researchers (as appropriate) on the portal.

#### Observations / Reflections

Feedback surveys are completed by participants after each workshop and included in reports to the EU. The following quote of one participant, Dr Camila Bibiano, Postdoctoral Researcher, Health, and Biosciences Research Institute (LIFE) TUS, Ireland, summarises well the evaluation discussion and the open feedback given on the survey:

*‘What surprised me the most during the RUN-EU PLUS Attractive Researcher Career Paths workshop was the fact that the programme also brought topics that are not so often discussed in research community events. The participants had space to express themselves and to give their opinion about the pros and cons of this career field in their country, such as the benefits of travelling and getting to know people and different cultures, and some cons, such as temporary contracts and stability. I was completely satisfied with the event and that RUN-EU is considering and embracing all points related to research careers. It means a lot to us researchers and encourages us to keep pursuing this path.’*

From the presenter point of view, the quote of Professor José Gomes, Coordinator Professor, Polytechnic of Leiria, Portugal, wraps up the experiences of the workshop presenters:

*'The opportunity to share challenges and expectations of RUN-EU researchers is particularly relevant to allow the construction of a common path that values research and researchers. A path that sees researchers as essential resources for the success of higher education and thinks about researchers as people who need stable conditions to be more productive in their work. Being able to hear researchers at different stages of their careers about their wishes, their fears, their dreams, in an open environment and with space for sharing, was extremely enriching.'*

In addition to the survey feedback received from the first researcher workshop held on 6th June 2022, (both in structured and open questions, n=22), some discussion towards the end of the workshop schedule raised some views and practical suggestions from participants to which attention will be paid in future workshop implementation. These include:

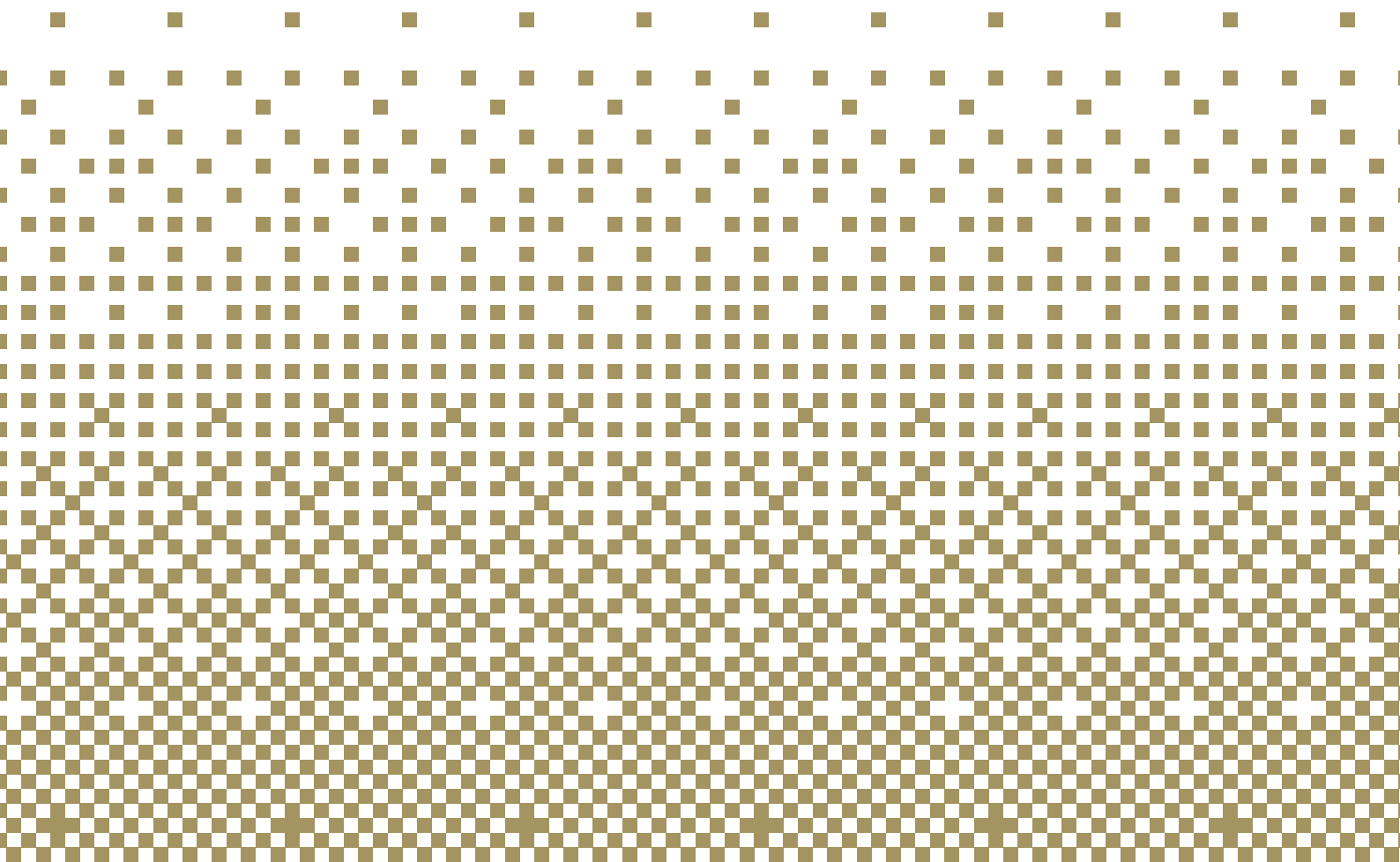
- Breakout rooms are viewed as valuable by participants as they allow structured discussions while at the same time invite open discussion around personal approaches to selected discussion themes.
- The length of the workshop lasting six hours is challenging for participants; it is difficult for researchers to take the whole day off from other duties and commitments.

- The number of potential participants may be limited for some workshops due to a limited target group in the workshop thematic area or target audience.
- As there are many presentations it is important to retain focus on the themes relevant to the workshop title; in practice, it would greatly help participants if presenters clearly explained the relevance of their content in the context of the workshop theme.
- The variety of interaction tools used in the workshop is welcomed by participants.
- Well-prepared presentation slides in terms of colours, pictures, graphical and schemes support participant learning.

#### **Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach**

Breakout rooms are valued by participants as they are shy to speak in public.


Plenty of time should be given to breakout room discussions so people can relax and get to know each other.





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## 4. RUN-EU International Research Exchange

**Dr Siobhan Moane**

*RUN-EU PLUS Project Manager & Co-ordinator at Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context



A key objective of the RUN-EU Research Discovery Programme and the RUN-EU PLUS project is to develop a research community across the RUN-EU alliance

and to strengthen collaboration with external business and organisations for regional development. One way of sharing research infrastructure and expertise within the RUN-EU Research Cluster areas is through the RUN Discovery Research Mobility Programme. Researchers (from early-stage to senior researchers) may apply for a 1-month or 3-month placement in the research facilities of another RUN-EU partner under the supervision of a senior research manager.

### Brief Rationale

Research exchanges share expertise and build inter-alliance capacity in terms of research offerings to external partners. It also provides internationalisation opportunities to TUS researchers. The outcome is joint research projects and joint publications, and new international opportunities for our researchers.

### Strategy / Approach

An open funding call exists to which TUS researchers can apply for support to undertake a research mobility placement in another RUN-EU partner's research centre or group. It must be noted that TUS often receives RUN-EU partner researchers and hosts them in their research facilities also.

### Observations / Reflections

Most researchers wish to undertake a 1-month (max) mobility placement and not 3 months. Student reactions have been very positive.

### Benefits for Students

International experience, access to state-of-the-art facilities and expertise, joint research projects and joint publications.

### Benefits for Researchers

Access to state-of-the-art facilities and expertise, joint research projects and joint publications.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

Mobility trips should be no longer than 1 month.



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## 5. RUN-EU Research Challenge Short Advanced Programmes (SAPs)

**Dr Siobhan Moane**

*RUN-EU PLUS Project Manager & Co-ordinator at Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context



Short Advanced Programmes (SAPs) are week-long in-person RUN-EU courses designed by inter-alliance academics delivered in-person by a host RUN-EU partner. Students are guided through prescribed preparation work prior to their in-person week in addition to completing reflection activities after. Based on transnational curricula and focused on the future advanced skills needs, SAPs enable the promotion of flexible transnational mobility of students, innovative pedagogies, and blended learning activities. They are a means to increase the effectiveness and flexibility of Higher Education and to provide upskilling and reskilling opportunities to the labour force.

RUN-EU SAPs must be designed to provide the learner with specific knowledge, skills or competences that respond to societal, personal, cultural or labour market needs. They bring students from all RUN-EU partners together for a week to focus on a particular contemporary global challenge. SAP research challenges are a particular type of SAP in which a specific challenge is posed to teams of participants who work together over the week to design a unique way (based on their collective expertise in diverse areas) to address their challenge, which they pitch to a panel of experts at the end of the week.

### Strategy / Approach

Participation can be by individuals or a group of colleagues. It may be a TUS group of academics who are interested in a particular topic, or an individual. SAPs must have a lead and a co-lead RUN-EU partner.

### Stages of the Process

SAPs are proposed to the RUN-EU work package dedicated to SAP development who review the application. Once approved, the SAP is validated by the lead partner.

### Observations / Reflections

#### Obstacles or Challenges Experienced

- The academic calendar limits when TUS students and staff are available to attend.
- Funding limits the number that can attend.
- Student reactions have been very positive.

### Benefits for Students

International experience, working in both interdisciplinary and international teams, exposure to new cultures, developing solutions to contemporary global challenges.

### Benefits for Colleagues

Academic staff get to work with international partners on interdisciplinary topics. These SAPs often lead to collaboration on modules, special purpose awards and research projects.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

Resources needed include funding and flexibility to widen access to staff for SAP development and delivery and for student participation.

Any colleague who is interested in trying something similar should contact the TUS RUN-EU office.



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## 6. RUN-EU Joint PhD Supervision

**Dr Siobhan Moane**

*RUN-EU PLUS Project Manager & Co-ordinator at Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest*



RUN-EU has offered TUS the opportunity to develop many co-supervised PhD programmes between our faculties and our RUN-EU partner universities. These PhD programmes are focused on the thematic areas of sustainability, digitalisation and social innovation and are currently in place for Business, Tourism, Engineering, Art & Design, Science, and IT. The opportunities which these programmes have presented and the good practices which have been developed have been identified by the Faculty of Business and Hospitality in the Midlands Campus, where currently nine PhD programmes are co-supervised with HAMK University of Applied Sciences, Finland and the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria, Portugal, and are listed in the table below.

Some of the opportunities we have availed of directly due to the RUN-EU network include:

Co-creation of proposals	Our projects have benefitted from co-operation across RUN-EU from the design stage where we have co-created our project proposals based on the academic needs, industry needs and the contribution to knowledge, in partnership with our own research strategy and the needs and aspirations of our RUN-EU partners. This has allowed for development of robust, interesting proposals, with international dimensions.
Mobility opportunities	Many of our postgraduate students have availed of month-long mobility visits to the partner universities. This has given them opportunities to present their work to diverse audiences, avail of specialist facilities and access in-person contact with their international supervisor.
Ongoing supervision	Our PhD is structured, with the taught elements available online. This allows our partners who are based abroad and taking the PhD part-time to access classes remotely. We can then host our supervision meetings on Zoom, or in-person when the students or staff avail of the mobility options. This has worked well for facilitating international supervision teams and also for ongoing quality checks, annual progression meetings and transfer viva voce examinations.
Upskilling TUS and partner university staff	Some of the PhD students are staff members enrolled in partner universities. The RUN-EU network and access to international supervision has allowed them to upskill and gain further qualifications. The process has also facilitated such staff in obtaining an international experience at home. Finally, there is an added benefit for RUN-EU partners who need to build supervision experience prior to their home institution receiving authority for such awards.
Enhancing the ongoing quality process	The opportunity to collaborate with the RUN-EU network has opened up access to experts for many stages across the doctoral journey, including proposal review, viva exams, co-publication, guest lecturers, joint funding bids involving PhD students.

The process is not without its challenges. For example, we frequently have to learn partners' localised requirements from a regulatory perspective which can differ from our own. As the lead partner in the above projects, we utilise our own quality frameworks, but it can sometimes take time to explain our own requirements to partners. In addition, pragmatic issues such as time zones, language, cultural issues, non-alignment of annual leave days etc. can also create minor challenges. However, these are a small price to pay for the enormous benefits brought from an expertise, funding, collaboration and mobility perspective noted above.

With the recent expansion of the RUN-EU network to include Howest University of Applied Sciences (Belgium) and Universidad de Burgos (Spain), we now have the opportunity to collaborate with two new partners, both of whom are keen to build on international research collaboration.

## 7. Across Border Learning: TUS and McEwan University: An Irish-Canadian Experience

Dr Caroline Coyle

Department of Social Studies, TUS Midlands

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

Over the last fifteen years, a study tour group of around 30 students and their lecturers from the Department of Child and Youth Care (an allied field to social care), MacEwan University Edmonton, Canada, has joined with the social care students at the Athlone campus of the Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) to participate in lectures and workshops. This cultural exchange provides an opportunity for the sharing of Irish/Canadian beliefs, values, cultural perceptions, and histories that they work from, and within, and the cultures, policies, and practices that impact children, youth, their families, and their communities.

In a pre-pandemic world, this annual study tour led to international collaborations between the Irish and Canadian students, yielding student exchanges, and at one stage, international practicum opportunities, and students crossing borders for graduate studies and employment.

In February 2020, when the Canadian students along with their lecturers, Dr Shemine Gulamhusein and Christine Pope, last visited, I invited them to join the Y2 Irish social care students for our Interactional Approaches to Drama class, during which I facilitated a collaborative poetry workshop exploring Identity through Mythology. Practical group facilitations form part of this module, which focuses on the use of therapeutic drama in the social care context.



### Strategy / Approach

McEwan University is situated on Treaty Six Territory land, the traditional gathering place for many Indigenous people, and the Canadian student group included First Nations, Métis and Inuit students. After initial introductions and warm ups with the Irish/Canadian students, I facilitated a poetry workshop, situating the students in the context of the midlands landscape by

exploring the mythological story of the Goddess Ériu, sovereign Goddess of Ireland, buried at Uisneach, the sacred centre of Ireland.

Being cognisant of the power of poetry as a medium to initiate discussion and engage in a healing journey, a discussion ensued on how narrative approaches to teaching such as storytelling, mythology, and poetry have the potential for therapeutic transformation. Students were given copies of poems to explore further discourse around poetic expression and engaged in a lively dialogue that unpacked lived experiences. Finally, I invited the MacEwan and TUS students to participate in the creation of a collaborative, communal poem. The prompt for this poem was: to share how you are feeling about your identity in a few words, sentences, or phrases.

The students' ability to freely express themselves was enhanced by maintaining anonymity. Spooling the mixed threads of students' feelings into similar themes, connected pieces, or words that 'spoke to each other,' I weaved the tapestry of the communal poem back and forth along a frame loom of relational experiences that emerged from being in liminal space together. The finished tapestry became the collaborative communal poem, *To Pour for your Empty Heart, To be able to Pour for Another*' (Please see page 76).

Both student groups expressed their joy in participating in the collaborative poetry workshop, reflecting that it provided a space and opportunity for them to tap into the inner self-reflectivity on identity. Everyone was given a copy of the poem and an electronic copy was later emailed. Shemine and I also arranged to continue exploring the 'Across Border Learning' from the students' shared learning experiences.

### Observations / Reflections

Two major outcomes arose as the result of the Across Border Learning and Across Virtual Border Learning experiences, with benefits for students, Shemine and me, and our academic community of practice in the social care/child and youth care context.

The first was a shift in student perceptions, understandings and practice orientation as evidenced in the observations Shemine recorded of her students watching and discussing my guest lecture.

*'As students discussed Coyle's presentation, their renewed sense of creative and joyful inspiration became evident as their video cameras started to turn on, their bodies in upright positions, leaning into their computer screens, and their simultaneous chatter verbally and in the chat-box. Our virtual classrooms lived space started to take a new shape as students spoke about their individual hobbies and passions and their desire to unpack Canadian history and gain further insight into the context that they practice in. Students spoke directly to pursuing courses in Indigenous studies, to learn about the narratives shared within the Canadian context and wanting to integrate historical and mythological narratives in their practice'* (Gulamhusein and Coyle, 2021).

Additionally, the students spoke about their negotiated meaning-making around feelings of joy when they had been engaged in a specific art work in the past; reinforcing how using 'collaborative art-based work with those we support in social care has the potential to be beneficial in relationship development' and 'the power of including such practice in social care is critical'. (Gulamhusein and Coyle, 2021).

Making meaning of diverse and joyful collaborations with children, youth and families led Shemine and me to think about reimagining social care / Child and Youth Care CYC through the acronym of ANSEO (Arts, Nature, Spirituality, Education and Other), resulting in the second outcome of the Across Border Learning and Across Virtual Border Learning experiences: the creation of the 1st Global Perspectives in Social Care / Child and Youth Care (CYC) Irish/Canadian online Symposium with the theme of Reimagining Social Care / CYC Practice through Arts, Nature, Spirituality, Education and Other (ANSEO), which we hosted on 18th June 2021.

In the Irish context, the Irish word ANSEO meaning 'here', would be familiar to most Irish people as the word they answered in reply to a teacher's roll call in national/ secondary school, meaning 'I am here I am present'. In the context of social care, ANSEO is used to confirm that we as practitioners are here with you; we are present with you, present in the therapeutic relationship with the child, adult, family or community, working through ANSEO. It is in the being 'anseo' (here) that our work thrives, to focus on internationalisation advancements (e.g., increased utilisation and collaboration via technology beyond geographical borders), especially during global shifts, such as the pandemic.

Our Canadian/Irish connection continues to develop in international terms. Students, lecturers, and members of the community from Ireland, Canada, the UK, USA, and Africa, including members of the Beardy's and Okemasis' Cree Nation, and members of the travelling community in Ireland, presented at the 2nd Global Perspectives in Social Care/Child and Youth Care CYC Symposium in 2022.

### Brief Rationale

The exponential rise of technology has made the world a smaller place, in the sense that we have instant access to what is happening in the world and how it may affect us. From an academic perspective, the introduction of online teaching during the pandemic has paved the way forward for the possible incorporation of international hybrid/blended learning. Social care work can transcend borders and boundaries; what's happening in one part of the world can impact on our national planning policies for social care practice, as in the case of the war in Ukraine and the Ukrainian refugees who fled the war and are living in Ireland.

International factors such as mass migration, growing poverty and inequality, homelessness, universal human rights, indigenous rights, multiculturalism, transnationalism, and environmental sustainability can impact the local contexts (Akimoto 2008; Ife 2010; Dominelli 2024).

Furthermore, students need to be prepared for employment internationally. Having the Canadian/ Irish perspective on social care gave a global context to social care; both student groups learned from each other, and from the lecturers; lecturers learned from each other. That learning in turn was incorporated into their respective curricula with opportunities for virtual guest lectures, workshops and reflection.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

By constructing a multicultural curriculum and culturally sensitive teaching and learning and assessments, students, as with the experiences of the Canadian and Irish students, have an opportunity to gain an insight into different cultures, cultural engagement and broaden their learner experiences.

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## 8. Designing an International Evaluation and Assessment Activity

Dr Derek McInerny and Sharon Lucey

*Department of Marketing, Enterprise and Digital Communications,  
TUS Midwest*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

As part of successful RUN-EU mobility and collaborative programme grant applications in 2022, several staff came to the International Conference on Applied Research in Management and Economics (ICARME) held in IP Leiria in June 2022. Following the conference, lecturers from the Department of Marketing, Enterprise & Digital Communications in TUS worked with lecturers from the Centre of Applied Research in Management and Economics (CARME) in Politécnico de Leiria (IP Leiria) on an international peer assessment activity.

This peer assessment in-class activity was initially centred around a Business Plan module delivered on the Masters in Business in International Entrepreneurship Management in IP Leiria. Going forward, and following further discussion, plans were made to include and incorporate elements from both the Business Consulting module (Year 3) and the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Policy module (Year 4) from the BBS in Enterprise & Innovation in TUS in the academic year 2023/2024.

Approximately 20 students completed the module this year in Leiria, representing 10 different nationalities. Students were tasked with developing a business plan for a new product or service to deliver to the Irish market. Students worked in self-selected groups over the course of the semester, with TUS lecturers assessing their progress four weeks before final submission. TUS lecturers travelled to IP Leiria for in-person presentations from each group. Constructive feedback was provided, with each group having an opportunity to implement this feedback into their final business plans. Their lecturer was responsible for the final grade. Ultimately the aim of this collaboration is to have TUS students perform the same assessment within the Portuguese regional economic environment. By confining the assessment to small and medium sized enterprises it is felt the assessment stretch and workload for the students is on balance in both locations. All the projects undertaken by the Portuguese students were within the micro, small and medium sized firm category. Potentially we would like to see the range of Irish and Portuguese SMEs profiled into a case compendium and published.

### Approach

Internationalisation has been at the forefront of modules and activities in the Department of Marketing, Enterprise and Digital Communication in recent years, with undergraduate programmes restructured to be more internationally specialised. This aims to facilitate mobility pathways for inbound international learners,

and key within this is the ability to build international collaborations and networks.

To begin the process, team members researched programmes across the suite of offerings within universities in the RUN-EU network and identified IP Leiria as strong potential collaborators. This collaboration was fully explored to establish opportunities for the sharing and integration of specialist knowledge. Numerous online and face-to-face meetings were held with various members of the CARME team over the course of one year. This led to securing agreement on collaborative objectives and the sourcing of relevant supports to ensure that tasks could be allocated appropriately between partner institutions. Appropriate modules were identified, and TUS staff were invited by lecturers in IP Leiria to be involved in an international assessment and evaluation activity. A work plan for agreement on assessment and evaluation criteria was developed and approved.

### Benefits for Staff

- Interdisciplinary knowledge transfer, enhanced teaching skills and expertise, peer learnings and collaborations, integration of teaching teams and upskilling the lecturer in a variety of areas.
- Exposure to international work environments and cultures broadens professional perspective one's own work. Different pedagogical approaches can be learned and applied.

### Benefits for Students

- Students were highly enthusiastic about the opportunity to research the Irish market and present their interim findings to international lecturers. This increased the motivation and engagement levels of students.
- Given the international profile of participating students, exposure to international contexts was important.
- It provides reciprocal international travel opportunities for students.

### Recommendations

Staff and researchers from TUS and IP Leiria have substantial experience in teaching and course development within management, enterprise, and innovation. This provides great potential for guest lecture delivery, joint assessment development as well as providing project/assessment support. Identifying appropriate partners and modules is key to the success of this type of international assessment activity.



## 9. Social Psychology Global Classroom Initiative

Dr Geraldine Maughan

*Department of Applied Social Sciences, TUS Midwest*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

The Social Psychology and Groups module is part of the Social Care Work curriculum at TUS Moylish, with an average cohort of 70-80 students. The Global Classroom partner is Drexel University, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences, Philadelphia, USA, with 20-25 students enrolled on their Social Psychology module at any stage of their undergraduate studies.

### Rationale for Internationalisation

In June 2019, I presented my research at a conference on “Learning to make a social difference,” at QUB where I met Professor Maureen Gibney from Drexel University. After my presentation on “Personal development modules making a social difference”, Prof. Gibney approached me to discuss the possibility of creating a Global Classroom together. The objective of this Global Classroom was to leverage the asynchronous nature of Drexel’s Social Psychology module and our face-to-face delivery to connect learners from different countries and enable them to share their unique perspectives and insights. Through this initiative, we sought to promote cross-cultural understanding, enhance learners’ cultural knowledge, and foster personal and intellectual growth. The global classroom initiative was launched in September 2019.

### Strategy

Prof. Gibney and I engaged in extensive correspondence and virtual meetings to finalise our teaching, learning, and assessment approach for the Global Classroom initiative prior to its launch in September 2019. While my classes were initially held face-to-face and online, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated a transition to fully live online teaching. Throughout the semester, Prof. Gibney delivered three lectures to Drexel and TUS learners, and I reciprocated with three live lectures for Drexel and TUS learners. These lectures were recorded and made available to learners who were unable to participate in real-time and were uploaded to the Drexel Blackboard.

We employed weekly online discussion boards to assess our learners, grouping them with at least two Drexel learners. Each week, reading materials and discussion questions were provided, with TUS learners expected to respond to a Drexel learner’s post, and vice versa. We also tested various group projects throughout the three years of this initiative.

This Global Classroom initiative was inspired by Virtual Learning Exchange (VLE) and Collaborative Online

International Learning (COIL) approaches, aligning with Chapter 6 of our National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030, which promotes internationalising higher education. The strategy highlights the increasing significance of international collaboration between institutions, international mobility of learners and staff, and opportunities for Irish educational institutions to contribute to the global trend.

### Observations / Reflection

Professor Gibney and I encountered challenges when navigating the differences in our respective curricula. From a social care work programme, my curriculum had to comply with regulatory standards of proficiency, whereas Professor Gibney had more flexibility. To ensure that the assessment strategies aligned with the learning outcomes and standards of proficiency, compromise was key to progressing the initiative. Despite the enjoyable experience, the Global Classroom initiative significantly increased my workload due to the weekly grading of the lengthy discussion boards. The planning process and resolution of any arising issues were also time-consuming and required patience and negotiation skills. The learners required further support to negotiate the material and technology side of the initiative.

To evaluate the success of the Global Classroom initiative, we anonymously surveyed 25 TUS students from this year’s cohort and the 2021 cohort. The respondents found the experience of working with Drexel students to be beneficial, but challenging due to the differences in teaching approaches and the fact that the Drexel students were part of multiple programmes, unlike the TUS students who were enrolled in a single programme. The weekly discussion boards were the highlight of the initiative for most learners, providing an opportunity to engage and stay attuned to the module for the entire semester. However, there is still room for improvement in the assessment approach.

The benefits of the Global Classroom initiative were primarily individual, with learners gaining exposure to various cultures, healthcare systems, poverty, race and ethnicities, and the cost of, and access to tertiary education in the USA and beyond. Additionally, the initiative provided opportunities for learners to communicate and collaborate with individuals from different backgrounds. As an academic, I appreciated working with a colleague from another country and gaining insight into their perspectives on teaching, learning and assessment. Professor Gibney was in awe of the Irish engagement in an external examination process and also by the robustness of that process.

### Recommendations / Practical Hints

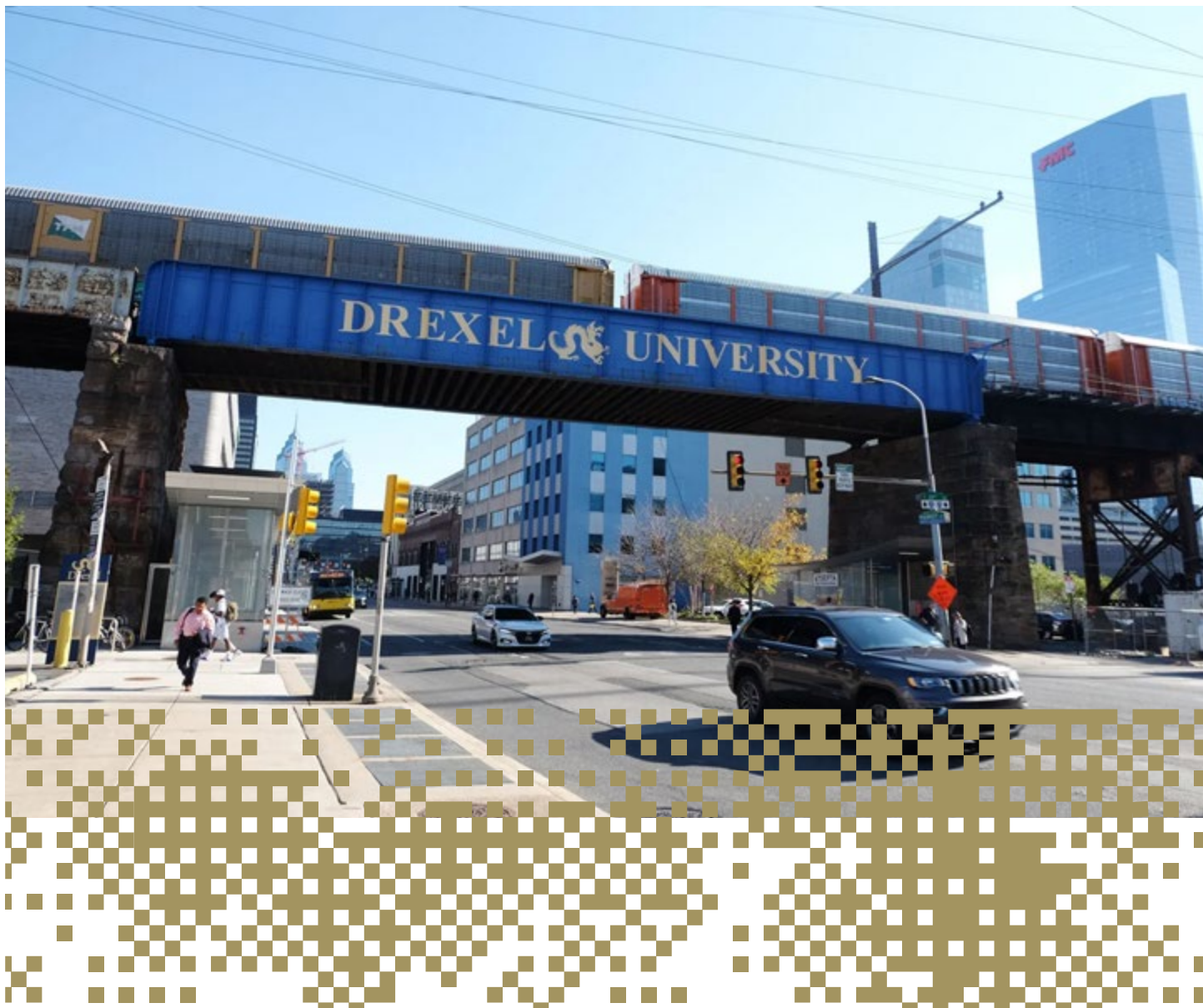
Since this Global Classroom was a new experience, I strived to immerse myself in the literature and also peer reviewed seven abstracts for the International Virtual Exchange (IVE) conference in Valencia in October 2022. Many of the papers focussed on COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning), yet, none of the papers reviewed resembled what Prof Gibney and I created. Every group of collaborators chose their own path which makes IVE and COIL incredibly flexible and unique.

I would recommend involving all campuses that teach Social Psychology at TUS in this initiative. Please reach out if you have an interest in IVE/COIL or assisting with a bid to bring the VLE conference to TUS.


And finally, have fun with it!

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# Intercultural Awareness Training and Extra-Curricular Initiatives



*'As learning not only takes place within formal classroom settings, more informal activities, such as intercultural communication workshops, buddy programmes, language tandems, service-learning activities or cultural programmes lend substantial strength to Internationalisation at Home and can help deliver comprehensive internationalisation' (Jones and Reiffenrath, 2018).*

In proposing their definition for Internationalisation of the Home Curriculum, Beelen and Jones (2015, p.69) write that it is the 'purposeful integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the formal and informal curriculum for all students within domestic learning environments'. Earlier entries in this compendium have described strategies that ensure that global perspectives are included in the formal curriculum. What follow here are examples of how internationalisation can be supported by informal or co-curricular activities across TUS.



# 1. Connecting with Students through Minecraft

Dr Mairead Seery and Dr Karol Fitzgerald

Faculty of Engineering, TUS Midlands

## Context

This paper describes a workshop ‘Connecting with students through Minecraft’ designed for the RUN-EU Future Advanced Skills Academies (FASA) in TUS Midlands in March 2023. The FASA aims to develop initiatives and learning activities which promote the development of transversal skills and gathers data about student learning processes and well-being through the LearnWell self-reflection tool.

The workshop proposed a virtual teambuilding exercise in Minecraft Education which ran in-person on site in TUS Midlands over the course of one afternoon (approx. 4 hours). While not specifically designed with an internationalisation dimension, it indicated an opportunity for greater integration of international students within the student body.



## Design and Preparation

The workshop was designed and run by two TUS Midlands lecturers from different disciplinary backgrounds - software design and languages and communication. Workshop preparation involved creating a virtual world using Minecraft Education where students would complete a building task. Alongside this, a range of facilitative interventions were devised to support and promote communication and collaboration during the workshop. Administrative support and preparation for the event (refreshments, prizes etc.) were provided by the TUS Midlands RUN-EU project team.

## Intervention

<p><b>Participants</b></p>	<p>The workshop was advertised to all students through the Students’ Union. A total of 25 students registered but only 12 participated on the day. Students ranged from first year undergraduate students to post-doctoral researchers across all disciplines. All of the students had registered individually without knowing any other participant.</p>
<p><b>Team Formation</b></p>	<p>After an icebreaker where students were facilitated to mingle and interact, the facilitators set up four teams of three students. Students were included in the team formation process which created diverse teams by distributing students from different disciplinary backgrounds and year groups, and with different levels of experience of Minecraft.</p>
<p><b>Interactions</b></p>	<p>The workshop took place in an IT lab configured to allow people to work in pods. Once seated in their team area, students entered the virtual world in Minecraft Education. While students were logging on and accessing the application, they also answered questions anonymously on the university polling application (Vevox) on their phones. Multiple choice questions were designed to give the facilitators a better insight into the students’ background (‘How good is your English? Select one option A-D’) and to gauge comfort levels with the activity (‘Temperature check! Choose the answer that is closest to how you feel’).</p>
<p><b>Task Completion</b></p>	<p>Once the initial Minecraft orientation was complete, students were teleported into their virtual team zone where they were to complete the task of building a house. Students had access to whiteboards to brainstorm their design before commencing the building task in the virtual world.</p>

**Reflection**

The workshop was a success with all teams completing the virtual building task which was showcased towards the end of the workshop. Students visibly enjoyed themselves throughout and confirmed this in the facilitators’ own evaluation at the end of the workshop.

The workshop appears to have appealed to the international student with over half of the participants reporting that English was not their first language. Student motivations for taking part were “*trying something new at university*” and “*meeting new people*”. Students reported that during the break, they had talked about topics other than the building task, showing that the workshop did indeed allow students to make connections with each other.

Recommendations for a future workshop of this nature are to ensure a larger cohort of participants; use laptops rather than university PCs for greater flexibility and operate a check-in system early on the day of the workshop in order to troubleshoot any technical and log-in issues in advance.

**Future Development**

Overall, using Minecraft Education holds promise for promoting diverse collaboration within the student body. At the time of writing, the Students’ Union of TUS Midlands are exploring the possibility of running a Minecraft ‘*Buildathon*’ as a student society event. Future iterations of the activity could include designing tasks which incorporate an international perspective. Students might have to complete a building task for a specific non-Irish context, thereby promoting an international focus; alternatively, students can be asked to adapt an aspect of the TUS or local environment to make it more welcoming to an international student. If students can collaborate on these tasks in internationally diverse teams, the learning will be all the richer. By using their imaginations, working creatively and communicating with and about the ‘Other’ to solve problems, students can be given the opportunity to develop skills in the virtual world that they can use in the ‘real world’.





## 2. Fostering an Environment in which Students learn about Cultural Values from Each Other

Mary Simpson

*Director of International Relations, TUS Midlands*

### Summary

TUS International Office supports international learners at TUS, develops partnership agreements, manages the Erasmus+ mobility programme and promotes international mobility opportunities to students and staff.

### Rationale

TUS traditionally welcomes incoming international students from EU and Non-EU countries each academic year. The International Office is committed to promoting Internationalisation at Home by fostering an environment for students to learn about cultural values from international learners. Students will develop greater interest in opportunities to engage in study abroad/ international placement opportunities from meeting international learners on TUS campus.



### Strategy / Approach

TUS is committed to enhancing our learner experience. An induction for new international students with teambuilding and cultural activities is organised at the start of each academic year. Student supports such as the Counselling services, Health service, Careers Office, Clubs and Societies, Sports activities, Academic Writing Skills and English language support are introduced to new international students. Existing TUS students are encouraged to become student ambassadors to advise new international students on activities and participate in cultural events such as a boat trip on the River Shannon, and a visit to the Cliffs of Moher. Transfer from Dublin airport to Athlone is organised by the International Office for international students arriving for the first time in Ireland. An International Student Experience Officer leads a team of student ambassadors to meet students on arrival to check if any international students require support during the period that they are settling into life

and study at TUS. Many international students transfer to TUS from our partner universities and this support service is greatly valued by our partner universities in choosing TUS as a destination for study abroad for their students.

Cultural activities are organised on campus during the academic year to promote cultural awareness among our learners. Students celebrate Diwali, Spring Festival, Carnival, Eid and share traditions with other students.

### Observations

In the past, international students participated in the student ambassador programme but we also encourage local students to get involved to meet new international students on arrival at TUS. Some students are busy with their own class commitments so we need to motivate them to value the experience more.

TUS Green Campus was launched during academic year 2022-23. As many international students come from countries where there is commitment to green activities from an early stage of their academic learning, it is in the interest of sustainability for TUS to harness their experiences and motivate all students to get involved at the start of the academic year.

International students participated in the “Taste of TUS” event during academic year 2022-23 where international students showcased culinary treats from their own country and there were opportunities to sample dishes. Events such as this facilitate immediate exchanges between students and awaken interest in finding out more about traditions in different countries.

TUS International Office also promoted International Day whereby opportunities for study abroad and international placement were promoted. Representatives from Regional University Network (RUN-EU) participated in the event and shared information about programmes to suit TUS learners. This event will now be scheduled once a semester for students to plan for an international experience during their study at TUS.

### Recommendations

- Develop a digital badge or recognition process for the student ambassador programme.
- Launch calendar of activities at the start of each semester so local and international students can decide to get involved.
- Promote international activities on campus on social media channels with support of TUS Students’ Union.

### 3. Intercultural Awareness Workshops for Academic and Administrative Colleagues

Eimear Kelly and Catherine O'Donoghue

*Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development, TUS*

#### Summary of the Context

TUS currently has students from over 100 countries whom we endeavour to make feel welcome and at home. They are supported with a range of services and resources. In addition, an ever-increasing number of 'home' students from diverse cultural backgrounds attend our university. The aim of the Intercultural Awareness workshops for staff is to provide opportunities for TUS colleagues who work with our international students to come together to discuss with and learn from each other how best to support them, and to acknowledge how embracing diversity can enrich our interactions with all colleagues and students.

#### Brief Rationale

Sometimes colleagues who want to offer help and support to our international students would like some help and support themselves, or even just the opportunity to share and discuss their experiences and any challenges they face. These workshops provide a forum in which they can do this comfortably and without judgement.

#### Strategy / Approach

These workshops avoid presenting lists of cultural or national characteristics which may serve to reinforce stereotypes, and instead focus largely on awareness of one's own cultural norms and how these may influence the way we communicate with those from other cultures. While they are designed to cater for the respective circumstances that arise in lecturing or administrative environments, the core objectives and themes that are common to both are listed below.

For lecturing colleagues, we also include:

- Module design,
- Inclusive learning, teaching and assessment strategies.

#### Observations / Reflections

Colleagues who have participated in these workshops have been very engaged and receptive. Many of the insights come from the participants themselves, who have generously shared their own experiences and expertise in this area and learn as much from each other as from the facilitators of the workshops. Having the opportunity to meet each other to discuss and suggest solutions to any challenges that may arise when addressing the needs of international students is useful.

The workshops have taken place both in person and online via Zoom, and both scenarios work well.

#### Recommendations / practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

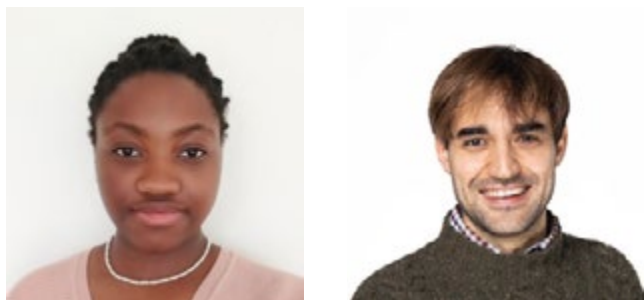
Currently, we offer workshops as required to lecturing and administrative colleagues on the TUS Midlands campus, but they are available to colleagues across all campuses on request.

One primary benefit of offering in-house workshops facilitated by in-house lecturers is that we all work in the same environment, with the same students. This shared understanding helps ensure that colleagues feel free to express any issues or concerns without judgement.

<p><b>Core Objectives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To analyse the role of perception in how we connect with others;</li> <li>• To discuss the effect of stereotypes and ethnocentricity on one's relationships with others;</li> <li>• To consider the impact of diversity and inclusivity on interactions with students and colleagues;</li> <li>• To consider ways of incorporating / increasing interculturally inclusive approaches into one's practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Core Themes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception;</li> <li>• Ethnocentrism, including unconscious bias and stereotypes;</li> <li>• Diversity and inclusion;</li> <li>• Challenges faced by international students, including culture shock;</li> <li>• Accommodating practice.</li> </ul>

## 4. The Student Perspective: In Conversation with Massimiliano Zanotto and Dami Akinsola, International Officers in TUS Students' Union

**Dami Akinsola (DA)**, TUS Midwest, **Massimiliano (Massi) Zanotto (MZ)**, TUS Midlands, **Mary Simpson (MS)** International Office, TUS Midlands, and **Eimear Kelly (EK)**, CPID



TUS is home to a vibrant body of international students, representing over 100 countries from across Africa, North and South America, Asia and Europe. The International Societies in TUS Midlands and TUS Midwest are often the first port of call for these students, organising a range of activities, both on campus and within the wider community, from weekend trips and internationally themed parties to Christmas food collections for the SVP. We spoke on Zoom with the Student Union International Officers Dami Akinsola (Midwest campus) and Massi Zanotto (Midlands campus) to learn more about the welcome and support they provide, and the contribution they and their members make to university life.

**Eimear Kelly:** Thank you both for agreeing to chat to us about the work you do. Perhaps I could start by asking what countries are represented in the International Society?

**Dami Akinsola:** Okay, I'll say a lot of our students are Asian. We have a very big Asian demographic in Limerick, but this year we have a lot more American students, like Canadian, Mexican, American generally. And quite a few French and African students as well, so it's evenly distributed, which I was very happy about.

**EK:** And do you have any Irish students joining the International Society?

**DA:** Oh yes, we do. That's one of the things we're pushing for, because they'll come to us and be like 'Oh I'm sure we can't join, because we're Irish students. And we're like 'No, you're international to us!' So yeah, we have a lot more Irish students in the society and we're very happy about that.

**EK:** And how is it in Athlone?

**Massi Zanotto:** Yes, in Athlone there are a lot of countries in the International Society. I think there's more than 70 or 80 countries represented. So, there are a lot of Europeans, from pretty much every country in Europe.

There are a lot of Italians, obviously French, German, Spanish, Portuguese. There's a lot of Brazilians and South Americans, Mexicans. Obviously, there's a lot of Asian students, Chinese, and Malaysians. And there's a lot of Africans as well - there's a lot of Nigerians students that I know personally.

**EK:** And how about Irish students in Athlone? Do they join in?

**MZ:** We try to include them as much as we can. We have one or two representatives on the committee from the 'Irish' population of the college. We try to include them, but we find it hard. Sometimes the Irish students have just got different channels. They do different things. And another thing is, most of the international events are during the weekend, at least in Athlone. Many Irish students go back home at the weekend. Their main night out is Wednesday night. So they go back to wherever they live, to Mayo or Clare. But we try to include them as much as we can. And we publish our events on the Student Union Instagram Page as well.



**EK:** And how long do those students typically stay in TUS?

**MZ:** It depends on where they come from and what kind of courses they are doing. If you're talking about Erasmus, obviously they're here for just one year. There are a lot of international students doing Masters, especially from India this year, so they generally stay for two years. And then a lot of PhD students come from all over the place, Brazil, Asia, South America, so they would stay here typically for at least four years.

**DA:** In Limerick, I'd say a big chunk of them would be undergraduates. But we do have a lot of African students here as well doing Masters, and Erasmus students as well.

**EK: In terms of recruitment, how do you get them to join? How do you make yourselves known?**

**DA:** I'm the International Officer in the Students Union, and I work very closely with the International Office as well. Throughout the summer, they notify me about the situation of the students. They put me into group chats with the incoming students. I kind of figure out when they're coming, who's coming. I help them organise airport pick-ups to get them to their accommodation and stuff. I kind of use that to plan our recruiting and I guess that would be either the whole of September or the first 3 weeks in September.

**MZ:** I'd say, in Athlone, we need to differentiate between the International Society if you want and the International Committee. The international society is basically all the international students in Athlone, so everyone who would be joining our events. And then there is the International Committee, which is a smaller group which organises the events throughout the year. I get all international students involved by creating a WhatsApp group early enough, between the end of August and the beginning of September. We have more than 400 people on the group at the moment. A few weeks into September I send out an application form for the International Committee, so then, whoever wants can apply for the different positions on the committee. And then we recruit the committee through an application process, and we have about 13 people in the committee.

**EK: What activities do you have on campus. And are there any off-campus activities that you organize?**

**DA:** A lot of our events are kind of planned out in the previous year, so there isn't really a delay in events from when the new year starts. We do a lot of quiz nights. And we see if there are any festivals in other countries that the international students can celebrate in Ireland, like the Day of the Dead, the Moonlight festival, Nigerian Independence Day. These are days that are holidays and festivals in their countries, but in Ireland it's just another school day and it's kind of depressing. We try our best to do something for them, organise a small activity, or maybe a big activity, or a big festival, or a very big party, just to help them feel included and really just safe, to help them make more friends and integrate with everyone. Even Irish students come to those activities. They kind of prefer activities that are off campus, so we try our best to just book the best venues for the events.

**EK: So you don't have those activities on campus?**

**DA:** We have a few pubs that are contracted with us, so we try to use them as much as possible. But we try to put a lot of events on campus as well, because they're usually in the evenings when students are just finished or finishing up classes, or they want to go home. They don't really want to start pushing themselves to go to pubs or hotels or other clubs, so we try to do it on campus. Once they're done with their classes, they can just pop into a classroom or pop into a hall or something. Just have fun.

**EK: And in Athlone, Massi?**

**MZ:** I can relate a lot to what Dami says. I'd say the only difference is that for the kind of celebrations we have, for example Chinese New Year or Brazilian carnival, we normally do them on campus, and that goes on mostly in the afternoon. The events on campus at night don't really work well in Athlone so we try to do it off campus in some of the pubs in town. To give you an example, this is a busy weekend for us, so we will be having a theme party tonight in one of the pubs next to the college. Every international or Irish student is very welcome to join. And then tomorrow morning we're off to Sligo. We're going to the waterfall around Sligo called Glencar Waterfall, and then we'll be going to Strand Hill to the beach, and there's a hike. This year we have a trip nearly every weekend.



**EK: Do any Irish students go on those trips, or are they mostly international students? The reason I ask is that I'm interested in the impact the international students have on campus, and their interactions with the Irish students. Do you think there's a good visibility of international students, or do you sense that there's an exchange of cultural views and experiences?**

**MZ:** I'd say sport is a big contributor to that because there are a lot of clubs, obviously on campus here, and there's a lot of mixing in those clubs. Say, basketball or volleyball, there's a lot of internationals and a lot of Irish, and they're mixing quite a lot. And then obviously sometimes they go off to Cork for a match and they bond a lot on the bus during the trip, and they talk to each other, and they make friends. I'd say, for the union between Irish and International students, that's a big, big part of it.

**DA:** I agree with Massi, because we find that the events that we have that include some kind of sporting activity just draw in the Irish students. So, for example, we're having a 3-day surfing trip to Lahinch in November, and honestly, one of the first students that came up to us were like, 'Oh, my gosh! You're going to Lahinch. Can I join?' These are our Irish students. They're like 'Is it for international students? Can I come as well?' And I'm like 'Of course you can. Great!'. I think that's that really is the thing about sports. It is a unifying force, even if you're not

particularly sporty, even if it's just supporting sport, but particularly if you play.

**EK: Do you think that the International Society has a big part to play in the international students feeling at home and welcome in Ireland?**

**DA:** Oh, yes, of course, because the International Society, besides the International Office, is really their first point of contact, the first kind of platform in which they get to ask their questions. They get to make friends. If they have any issues or problems like with accommodation, they can just ask and be like, 'Oh, my gosh! Does anyone have any free room? Or does anyone know if there's any spot available in any accommodations right now, or does anyone know where to get this particular kind of food?', you know? This is just the first place where they can really help each other, and where we can help them as well.

**EK: And I presume that's the same in in Athlone, Massi?**

**MZ:** Oh, yeah, very much so. We connect with them earlier on, and we make it clear that everything, whatever problem they have, they can always come, and, you know, ask questions or feel free to talk to us. You know it's not always easy to be abroad, but we try our best to make them feel at home as much as possible. It's always great to see as well how people come out of themselves during the year. Some of the students might be, you know, a little a little bit shy at the beginning of the year, and then you meet them again throughout the year, and they're completely different people. And then it's great to see the friendships that are being created during the year.



**EK: And in Limerick, Dami, would you say that the international students have an impact, that the university community benefits from the presence of the international students?**

**DA:** Oh, very much. Yes, just a fun fact: a lot of the societies in Limerick are started up by international students, like about 90% of them. So yeah, the social life in Limerick is really based on the international students.

**EK: That's great. Are international students keener to get involved because they don't have a network of family and friends already there, and they're creating their own network?**

**DA:** Oh, yes, that's definitely a part of it. And it's also just that Limerick isn't really a bustling place. It's not as big as Athlone. It's really academic focused. And that can be very depressing to a lot of international students. I think a lot of them just think, 'Oh, my gosh! I'm interested in this thing, but it's not available right now. So why don't I just make it available? Even if it's just me? And like four other people, we'll still have fun'. And I think that just spiralled as a lot of students were like, 'Yeah, I'll make my own society. Yeah, it's gonna be fun'. A lot of that is really just how they bring life into the campus.



**EK: Is there anything else that could be done by us on the organisational side, or is there anything needed, to have more interaction between international students and domestic students or home students, or do you think that's just happening naturally?**

**DA:** Hmm! I wouldn't say it happens naturally, because there is so much effort put in by the International Office to integrate the students. They put in so much. They bring out so much that sometimes the students are a bit overwhelmed. And that's just because that a lot of the other departments on campus aren't really focused on international students. There isn't really a lot of resources available to them, so we have to do our best to make sure that they're well included. I'll say a thing that the campus or the institution can do is really just give a helping hand in that regard because right now it's very one-sided. There isn't a lot of collaboration with the college.

**EK: That's really interesting. So you'd like maybe more of a concerted effort to create opportunities for integration and student interaction? What about you, Massi? Would you agree?**

**MZ:** Yeah, I would agree with that. And I'd say, maybe I'll just add that on the Irish side, there's not many Irish students willing to go abroad or not as many, so maybe



something more could be done to push them. You know, by integrating more obviously with the international community of the college, they might be more willing to travel abroad themselves. We're going to have a stand next week at the open day talking to the high school students coming in about the opportunities of going abroad when they're in college.

**Mary Simpson:** You know the open days are coming up for the 5th and 6th year students coming from secondary school. We feel we need to start connecting earlier. This is part of our internationalisation at home, reaching out to the communities in which we engage. And some of the other international students have kindly agreed to support that. If we reach out early enough to students in secondary school and communicate with them about the role of the International Society, maybe we can get the students who are coming here to think about going abroad as part of their study.



**EK:** Is there anything that I didn't ask, or that you expected I would ask, or that you'd like to add?

**MZ:** It's just came to my mind now regarding Irish students being more involved in the whole internationalisation concept. I think RUN-EU plays a very important role as well. I was at the Clubs and Societies Day with the stand for RUN-EU and there were quite a lot of Irish students coming and asking questions. You know, you can go abroad for a week. Everything is paid for, and you're gonna learn about different things. And I've been to many of the programmes myself in some of the partner universities and there were always a lot of Irish students taking part in the programmes.

**DA:** I did want to add a point. This is a bit specific to us, but I mean, it's really just advice in general for most universities. One thing I would like to see really when I bring up inclusion for international students is in terms of accommodation. It would be a lot easier and really more accommodating for the students if there was some kind of accommodation built in the name of the college because right now, finding accommodation is difficult. We recruit international students into the college, but we don't really take into account the accommodation. We help them as much as we can, but a lot of them just say, 'Oh, I'll come to college, and I'll sort out the accommodation later', and then they get here, and they're like, 'Oh, my gosh! I'm homeless! I don't know what to do. Somebody, please help me'. You know, it's very tough, because I've had about 5 students tell me that they're homeless, and there's nothing I can really do.

**MS:** And you can see it obviously in the University of Limerick on your doorstep. But we do have a plan. It's what we want to do, and we just need to get the legislation and the permission from our government. But they are moving in the right direction, so I'm a lot more confident than I would have been even 3 years ago. But it does need to happen sooner rather than later. It's something everybody wants. This has actually been very informative, and it's good for us to be more aware of all the various work that you and your colleagues in the International Society do, so well done.

**EK:** Thank you both so much, and well done on what you and your societies do. You're making a huge contribution to the university and university life for both international and Irish students.



## 5. Intercultural Awareness Workshops for Students

Eimear Kelly and Catherine O'Donoghue

*Centre for Pedagogical Innovation and Development*

### Summary of Learning and Teaching Context

TUS currently has students from over 100 countries. We endeavour to make them feel welcome and at home by supporting them with a range of services and resources. We offer a number of tailored workshops for students, including preparatory sessions for students undertaking placements or study trips abroad. However, the workshop we are invited to present most frequently is our Intercultural Awareness workshop.

### Brief Rationale

The goal of our Intercultural Awareness workshops for students is to provide opportunities for all TUS students to come together to discuss how they can work with and learn from each other, whether on campus or when representing TUS abroad. Frequently we are invited by lecturers who believe that their students will benefit from participation in such a workshop, either because of the diversity within the class group itself, or because upon completion of the programme, graduates will more than likely be working in situations in which intercultural competence will be an asset, if not a requirement.

### Strategy / Approach

Our aim is for these workshops to represent the start of an ongoing, reflective process. Similarly to the approach we take when facilitating workshops with colleagues, we avoid presenting lists of cultural or national characteristics which may serve to reinforce stereotypes, and instead focus largely on students' awareness of their own cultural norms and how these may influence the way in which they communicate with those from other cultures. Students are invited to consider why cultural competence may be relevant for them, both as students and in their future careers, and to explore the core themes of perception, ethnocentrism, diversity and inclusion.

Our workshops are designed to be as interactive as possible. Discussion is encouraged, and where applicable, we try to ensure that when activities involve pair-work or groupwork, any diversity within the group is mirrored in the sub-group formation, to encourage as much sharing of diverse experiences and insights as possible.

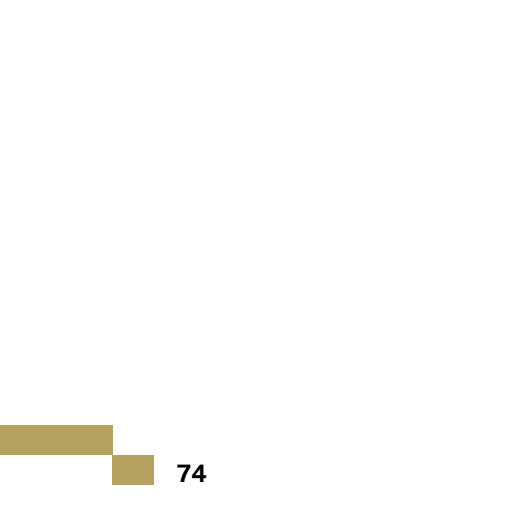
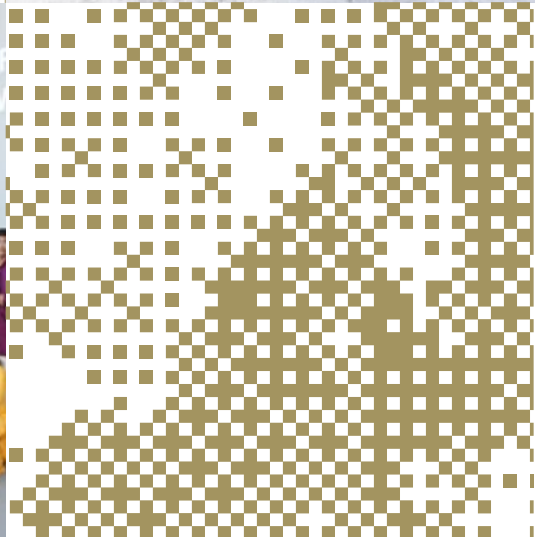
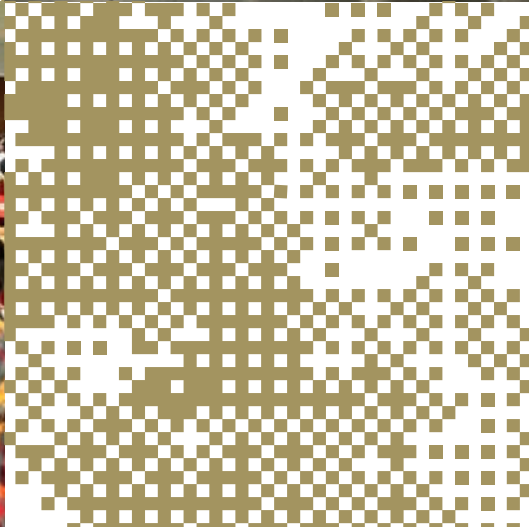
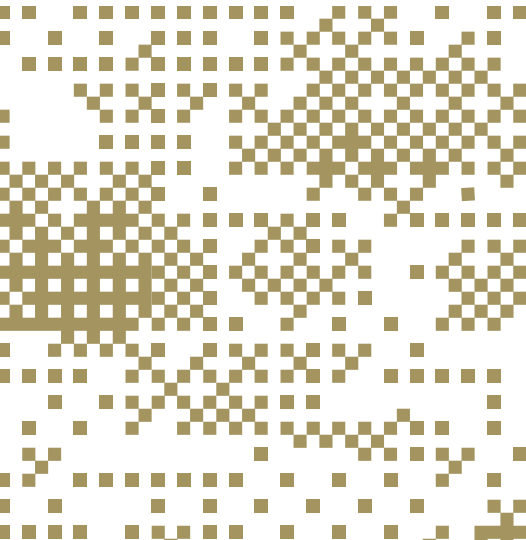
### Observations / Reflections

These workshops are generally very good-humoured, and students who have participated have been engaged and receptive. They are very willing to share their experiences and any challenges they have encountered when faced with different values, beliefs or communication and team-working styles. While there may be some initial surprise at the news that they will not be leaving the workshops with a ready-made set of rules for successful intercultural communication and teamwork, they seem to recognise the validity of the approach of starting by questioning themselves and their own cultural assumptions.

### Recommendations / Practical hints or advice that might be useful to colleagues wishing to implement a similar approach

Currently, we offer workshops for students upon request by lecturers on the TUS Midlands campus, but we would be very happy to discuss our format and approach with colleagues who would like to offer similar workshops on other campuses themselves.





# Creativity Across Borders



*To Pour for your Empty Heart, To be able to Pour for Another*

A collaborative communal poem created in 2020 by the Year 2 Social Care Students (Interactional Approaches to Drama) from TUS Technological University of the Shannon Midlands and the Child and Youth Care students, MacEwan University Child and Youth Care (CYC), Edmonton, Canada.

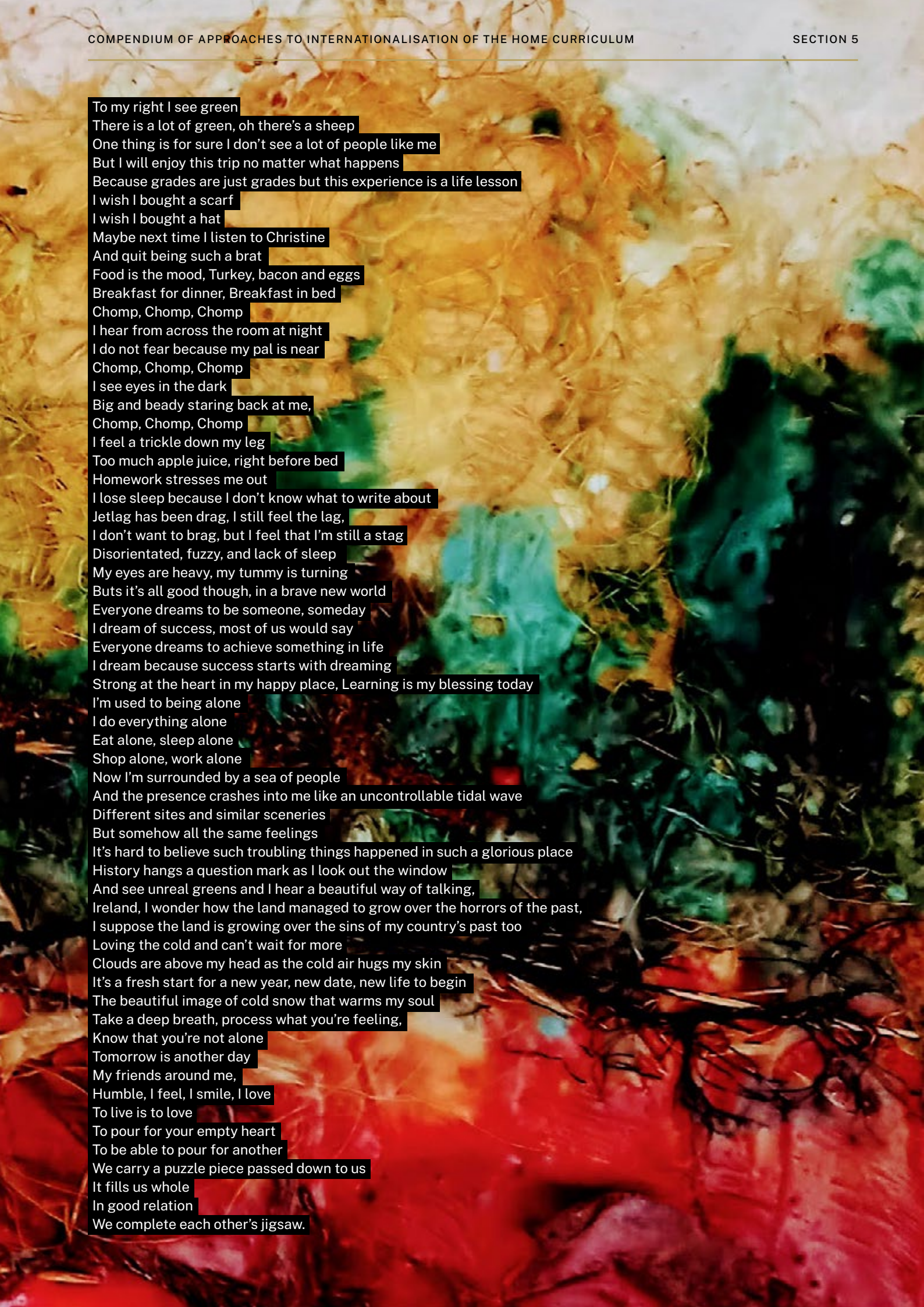
This Canadian/Irish collaborative poem 'To Pour for your Empty Heart, To be able to Pour for Another' later featured in the 'Through Our Eyes' TUS Art exhibition, a joint collaboration across TUS Midlands Design Department, the Student Resource Centre and the Limerick School of Art and Design; in the Atrium of the Engineering building in TUS Athlone and later in the Athlone Civic Centre ThroughOurEyes Catalogue (Digital).pdf p.58

## To Pour for your Empty Heart, To be able to Pour for Another

Co-created by Dr Caroline Coyle with students from TUS Midlands and  
McEwan University, Canada  
Department of Social Studies, TUS Midlands

### To Pour for your Empty Heart, To be able to Pour for Another

Winter makes me cold,  
Sitting here waiting, I feel cold  
Nothing more, nothing less  
Tired, weary, confused and lost,  
Sitting here waiting for the cold to pass  
And calm the anxiety that builds within me  
Waiting for those moments to pass  
Torn between two worlds battling with myself  
While pretending to be fine,  
The anguish of knowing what is inside me,  
The disappointment of knowing what I can be  
Fear of the unknown has made me nervous  
Hopefully this time it will be different  
What will happen next?  
Wondering what it's like to walk around not hiding behind a mask,  
Afraid to show my real face  
A real face of pain and emotion.  
My mask has cracks,  
Cracks that I'm always taping up  
Everyone thinks those cracks make me broken,  
But those cracks make me who I am  
Vivid memories flashback in my mind  
A frightening dream I had last night about my brother,  
Our dreams represent our relationships we have with one another  
Freak you, I said,  
But please tuck me into bed  
I just wanna be able to sleep, while thinking about mum and dad  
Please spare me some,  
I am just seven,  
I don't know what I thinking,  
I just speak the words I heard,  
Love and Belonging  
I didn't know it's what I needed,  
But is it what I deserve?  
Please tell me, I'm just a kid  
But they found me  
Hiding for one year  
Now living a peaceful life  
Being happy, free, in control, they found me  
My Angel called the Child Protective Services  
At last the wings are up,  
My feet have flown off the ground  
The sounds around have filled my cup,  
I was Ireland bound  
So excited to set sail on a new adventure  
Far away from my Canadian home,  
I'm so happy to be in the Emerald Isle  
For the first time on my own  
So many new experiences with numerous thoughts and feelings  
The things we see and the things we do have an impact on me and you  
When we start to learn  
We start to yearn for more knowledge and adventures  
To my left I see green,



To my right I see green  
There is a lot of green, oh there's a sheep  
One thing is for sure I don't see a lot of people like me  
But I will enjoy this trip no matter what happens  
Because grades are just grades but this experience is a life lesson  
I wish I bought a scarf  
I wish I bought a hat  
Maybe next time I listen to Christine  
And quit being such a brat  
Food is the mood, Turkey, bacon and eggs  
Breakfast for dinner, Breakfast in bed  
Chomp, Chomp, Chomp  
I hear from across the room at night  
I do not fear because my pal is near  
Chomp, Chomp, Chomp  
I see eyes in the dark  
Big and beady staring back at me,  
Chomp, Chomp, Chomp  
I feel a trickle down my leg  
Too much apple juice, right before bed  
Homework stresses me out  
I lose sleep because I don't know what to write about  
Jetlag has been drag, I still feel the lag,  
I don't want to brag, but I feel that I'm still a stag  
Disorientated, fuzzy, and lack of sleep  
My eyes are heavy, my tummy is turning  
Buts it's all good though, in a brave new world  
Everyone dreams to be someone, someday  
I dream of success, most of us would say  
Everyone dreams to achieve something in life  
I dream because success starts with dreaming  
Strong at the heart in my happy place, Learning is my blessing today  
I'm used to being alone  
I do everything alone  
Eat alone, sleep alone  
Shop alone, work alone  
Now I'm surrounded by a sea of people  
And the presence crashes into me like an uncontrollable tidal wave  
Different sites and similar sceneries  
But somehow all the same feelings  
It's hard to believe such troubling things happened in such a glorious place  
History hangs a question mark as I look out the window  
And see unreal greens and I hear a beautiful way of talking,  
Ireland, I wonder how the land managed to grow over the horrors of the past,  
I suppose the land is growing over the sins of my country's past too  
Loving the cold and can't wait for more  
Clouds are above my head as the cold air hugs my skin  
It's a fresh start for a new year, new date, new life to begin  
The beautiful image of cold snow that warms my soul  
Take a deep breath, process what you're feeling,  
Know that you're not alone  
Tomorrow is another day  
My friends around me,  
Humble, I feel, I smile, I love  
To live is to love  
To pour for your empty heart  
To be able to pour for another  
We carry a puzzle piece passed down to us  
It fills us whole  
In good relation  
We complete each other's jigsaw.









**TUS**

Ollscoil Teicneolaíochta na Sionainne:  
Lár Tíre, An tIarthar Láir  
Technological University of the Shannon:  
Midlands Midwest



**CPID**

Centre for Pedagogical  
Innovation and Development