

Challenges that lay ahead in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Assessment and Quality Assurance



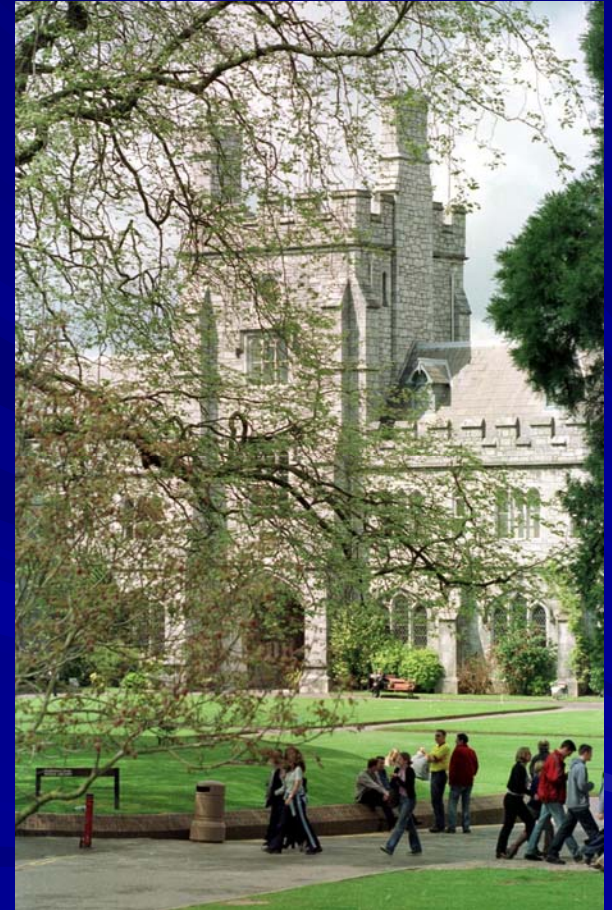
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The Teaching and Learning Centre

Ionad Bairre

- Set up in October 2006 – Dr Bettie Higgs and Marian McCarthy in collaboration with the Quality Promotion Unit.
- Has provided a continuous series of lunchtime seminars on Teaching and Learning throughout each academic year.
- “Taking a Learning Outcomes approach to Teaching and Learning”
- “Learning Outcomes-how can we be sure they have been achieved?”
- “Getting to Grips with Assessing Creative and Original Student work - Unpredictable Learning Outcomes”
- Drop-in workshops on Learning Outcomes.



Staff Training Areas

Theory of Multiple Intelligences

- Paris, 1900, La Belle Epoque: Families were flocking to the city from the provinces; many were having difficulty with school work.
- Alfred Binet was approached to devise a measure that would predict which youngsters would succeed and which would fail in the primary grades of Paris schools
- Binet's discovery came to be called the "intelligence test", his measure, the IQ, for "intelligence quotient" (mental age divided by chronological age and multiplied by 100).
- Like other Parisian fashions, the IQ soon made its way to the US, where it enjoyed modest success until World War 1, when it was used to test over a million military recruits.

- Intelligence seemed to be quantifiable.
- Just as you could measure someone's height, you could measure someone's actual or potential intelligence.
- There was one dimension of mental ability along which we could arrange everyone.
- Gardner presents a radically different view of the mind, recognising different and discrete facets of cognition, acknowledging that people have different cognitive strengths and contrasting cognitive styles

Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences

- In the past few decades, the traditional view of Intelligence has been challenged by a number of researchers, including Howard Gardner. His theory of Multiple Intelligences challenges the traditional “dipstick” view of intelligence as a unitary and fixed capacity that can be adequately measured by IQ tests.

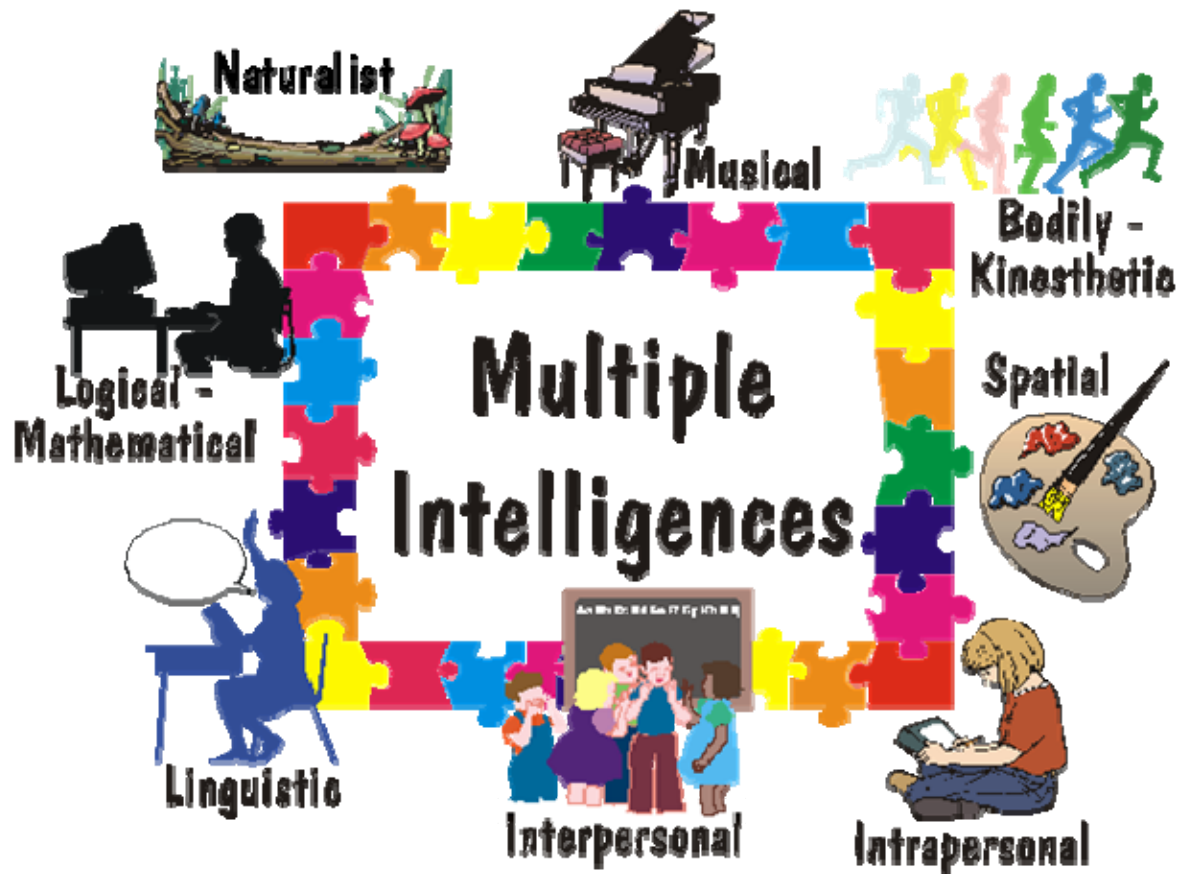
MI challenges IQ as follows: (Kornhaber, Fierros & Veenema, 2004)

- MI maintains that several intelligences are at work, not just one
- Intelligence is expressed in our performances, products and ideas; not through a test score
- Implications of MI Theory for Innovative Forms of Assessment.

Gardner's conclusion

- “The human mind is better thought of as a series of relatively separate faculties, with only loose and non-predictable relations with one another, than a single, all purpose machine that performs steadily at a certain horsepower, independent of content and context” (1999, 32).

Multiple Intelligences



M. McCarthy and Dr. A. Ridgway
Ionad Bairre, TLC

Linguistic



- z Capacity to use words effectively, both orally and in written form.
- z Ability to manipulate the structure, phonology semantics and pragmatic dimensions of language.
- z Journalists, poets, playwrights, public speakers.....

Logical Mathematical

- z Capacity with numbers, logical patterns and relationships.
- z Use of categorisation, classification, calculation and hypothesis testing.
- z Mathematicians, accountants, statisticians, scientists...



Spatial



- z Ability to perceive the visual spatial world accurately.
- z Sensitivity to colour, line, shape, form and space.
- z Ability to orient oneself in a spatial matrix.
- z Architects, artists, inventors, designers...

Bodily Kinaesthetic



- z Show expertise in using one's body to express ideas and feelings.
- z Ability to use one's hands to produce or transform things as a sculptor, mechanic or surgeon.
- z Co-ordination, dexterity, flexibility.
- z Proprioceptive, tactile and haptic capacities.

Musical

- z ***Perceive*** musical forms as a music aficionado.
- z ***Discriminate*** as a music critic.
- z ***Transform*** as a composer.
- z Express as a performer.
- z *Have one's life enriched by music.*



Interpersonal

- z Ability to perceive and make distinctions in the *moods, intentions motivations and feelings* of other people.



Intrapersonal



- z Having an accurate picture of one's strengths and limitations.
- z An awareness of one's inner *moods, intentions, motivations and desires*.
- z High degree of self-knowledge .
- z Ability to act adaptively on the basis on one's self-knowledge.

Naturalist

- z Ability to function well in the natural environment.
- z The recognition and categorisation of natural objects.



Implications of MI Theory for Innovative Forms of Teaching, Learning and Assessment

“If we truly accept and value the theory of MI, then we are obliged as teachers to be far more inventive in our teaching. We must search for and develop methodologies that will allow all intelligences to shine in the learning experience.we must grasp the notion of constructivism with both hands and give the students the freedom to explore and construct knowledge and understanding, beginning with their own strengths” . (Hyland (ed.) *Final Report MI Project*, 2000, p. 126)



- One of the big challenges is to move away from assessment based solely on terminal exams – not intelligence fair, forcing all kinds of learning to fit into the paper and pencil test straight jacket.
- Purposes of Assessment: feedback, diagnosis, motivation, guidance, learning support, selection, grading, certification, progression, professional recognition, gate-keeping.....



What are the Key Challenges?

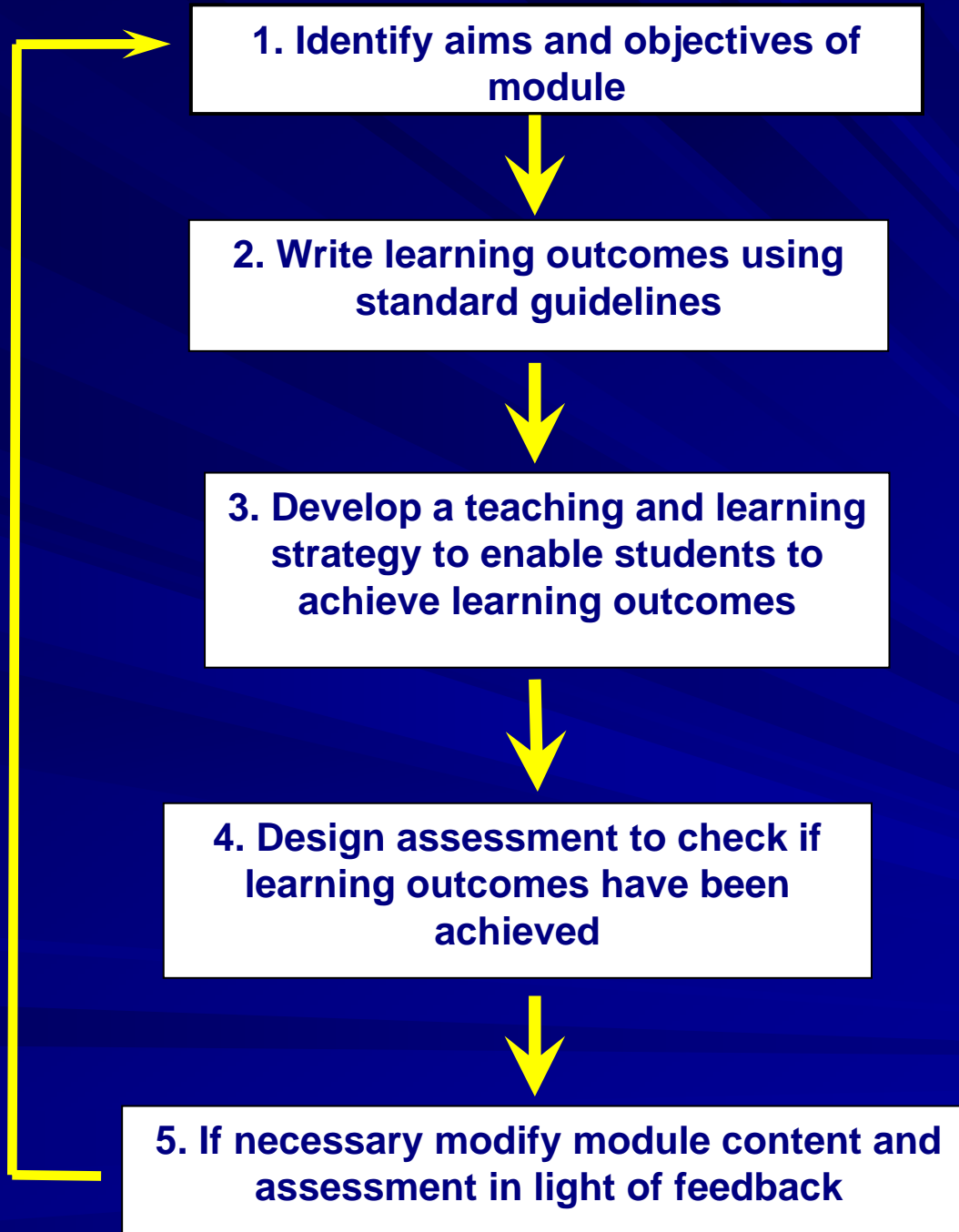
- Everything driven by Quality Promotion.
- Staff Training in Bologna Process
 - Staff Handbook “Everything you need to know” to write Learning Outcomes.
 - Workshop on Bologna, ECTS, Modularisation, etc.
- Focussed Staff Training in Teaching and Learning.
 - Quality Promotion Unit
 - Teaching and Learning Centre.
 - Possible formal qualifications system in Teaching and Learning for staff who are interested in this area.

Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and MA in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education

- Initiated in October 2004.
- To date 3 cycles of the Postgraduate Certificate course have been completed involving 170 staff.
- A total of 90 staff members have completed the Postgraduate Diploma course.
- The MA in Teaching and Learning at Higher Education has been completed by 20 staff members.
- Has provided a great resource throughout the university – seminars based in individual Departments.



First Steps in Introducing Learning Outcomes



“Implementing
Bologna is a
Process not an
Event”



The present situation in UCC

- All undergraduate modules written in Learning Outcomes in 2006 – 2007 academic year. Postgraduate modules completed 2009 - 2010.
- Sub-committee set up (Quality Promotion Unit, Teaching and Learning Centre, Registrar's Office and Educationalist) to study Learning Outcomes submitted.
- Programme co-ordinators completed programme Learning Outcomes by 2010.

“Learning outcomes had fundamentally changed the Scottish sector’s approach to learning since the 1990s and had resulted in enhanced coherence of the learning experience, greater transparency, increased dialogue with stakeholders, more opportunity for students to manage their own learning and better support for transitions into and out of learning programmes at points that suited the needs of the student”

- Judith Vincent, Univ of West of Scotland
(Seminar 21 – 22 February 2008)

Issues with Introduction of Learning Outcomes

- Learning Outcomes are only part of a massive reform package, e.g. Qualification Frameworks, Lifelong Learning, ECTS, Mutual Recognition, Quality Assurance.
- How best to introduce Learning Outcomes (“top down” or “bottom up”? Best left to local and National autonomy.
- How best to deal with sceptical attitude of some staff members – “dumbing down”, “restricting academic freedom”? Hence, important to introduce Learning Outcomes in a proper fashion using sources of good practice and advice.
- Lack of clarity and lack of shared understanding on key terminology, e.g. learning outcomes and competences.

Implications of a Learning Outcomes Approach to Teaching and Learning

- The learning outcomes are not just seen as happening at the end, but are built in from the very start in the ongoing feedback and discussion and in the working out of the problem and discussing it with the students along the way – making the learning visible as we go along.



Issues raised when introducing Learning Outcomes

- **Opposition to Bloom's Taxonomy.** This should not present a problem to the writing of Learning Outcomes AS mentioned already, Bloom's Taxonomy is simply a very useful toolkit to assist us in writing learning outcomes. If staff members do not wish to use Bloom's Taxonomy, they can use other taxonomies or use their own system to write learning outcomes. As long as staff members write learning outcomes that are correctly written, that is all that is important.
- **Preference to write competences.** It is not a problem if people like to describe their courses in terms of competences. However, the Bologna Agreement specifies that modules and programmes must be written in Learning Outcomes. If staff members wish to write competences as well as Learning Outcomes, that is not a problem. Learning outcomes bring clarity to competences.

Some Advice

- Introducing learning outcomes at institutional level requires a carefully tailored strategy, whose primary goal should be quality enhancement rather than compliance with external directives;
- Learning outcomes must be capable of assessment and at the module level should be linked to assessment criteria, also expressed in terms of learning outcomes;
- The best learning outcomes are the product of sincere reflection about realistic and attainable combinations of knowledge and understanding, practical and cognitive skills, levels of autonomy, learning skills etc.
- Learning Outcomes are challenging but it is impossible to have a meaningful European Higher Education area without their widespread and consistent use

(Stephen Adams, 2008)

Some Recommendations from Porto Conference (19 – 20 June 2008)

- Develop and disseminate user-friendly documentation to explain to all stakeholders the benefits of learning outcomes and credits.
- Implement a holistic approach, developing learning outcomes as an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment methods within an aligned curriculum.
- Offer incentives to encourage staff to engage in new approaches to teaching, learning and assessment.

Concluding Points

- Momentum generated by
 - European University Association project.
 - International Bologna conferences.
 - Setting up of Teaching and Learning Centre (Ionad Bairre).
 - Lunchtime seminars for staff.
 - Postgraduate Cert/Diploma and MA in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
 - Keep it simple.
- Provide support to staff.
- Staff training is the key.
- Setting up of expertise within each Department – Postgraduate Cert/Diploma course.
- The UCC Quality Promotion Unit - the driving force.
- A team effort.



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