Centre for Teaching and Learning - Spring 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to the Spring CTL Newsletter

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Centre for Teaching and Learning team, I'm delighted to share with you our Spring 2025 Newsletter.

In this issue, we look back at Teaching and Learning activities from Semester One and highlight upcoming professional learning opportunities and events for Semester Two.

In particular, we invite colleagues to **Save the date** for the **Maynooth University Teaching and Learning Showcase** on **Wednesday May 14th, 2025.** This annual event is a valuable opportunity for us to collectively recognise and celebrate all those who teach, and support learning and teaching at Maynooth University.

With best wishes for the semester ahead,

Lisa O'Regan, Head of Centre for Teaching and Learning

Professional Learning Events for Staff

CTL are pleased to share details of our Spring 2025 professional learning workshops and events series for staff. This semester we include a range of educational development and digital learning topics including the MU UDL & U Campaign, LEAF Initiative, Education for Sustainable development (ESD), TEL Promoting Engagement Series, and GenAI in Teaching, Learning and Assessment. Many of the workshops and events are in collaboration with Maynooth University colleagues, and are open to all staff.

Full information and registration links are available **here.**

Save the Date! Wednesday May 14th: Maynooth University Teaching and Learning Showcase 2025

We invite colleagues to save the date for the **Maynooth University Teaching and Learning Showcase**, which will take place on **Wednesday May 14th**.

The Teaching and Learning Showcase is a valuable opportunity for us to collectively recognise and celebrate all those who teach, and support learning and teaching at Maynooth University. It also offers an opportunity to connect with colleagues and facilitates the sharing of teaching practice, scholarship, and innovation.

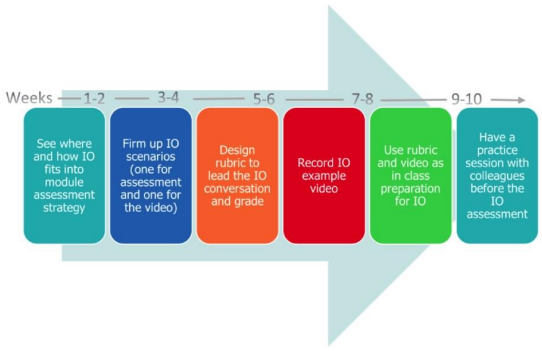
- **When:** 09.00-16.30 Wednesday 14th May, 2025
- **Where:** Maynooth University Campus
- **Who:** All staff involved in teaching and supporting student learning at Maynooth University

Register here to add a Save the date to your calendar!

Looking Back on Semester One

Over **350** staff participated in CTL professional learning workshops and events in Semester one with the largest attendance being at our 'GenAI Guidelines for Staff and Students', and 'Universal Design for Learning UDL – good practice and implementation' sessions.

In Semester one, we were delighted to collaborate with our colleagues from the Department of Adult and Community Education, **Dr David McCormack and Dr Mary Ryan**, who facilitated a workshop on the 'Towards a Relational Pedagogy of Kindness'.



1 - Image from 'Interactive Oral Assessment: User Guide', (O'Riordan et al., 2023) which was shared at the CTL Interactive Oral Assessment event held at the beginning of October 2024.

GenAI Teaching and Learning Updates

GenAI Guidelines and Workshops

Following a research-informed and consultative process, working guidelines for the use of Generative AI (GenAI) in Teaching, Learning and Assessment for staff and students have been drafted and shared with the University community.

In addition, a series of companion resources and workshops are currently being finalised and will be made available shortly to complement the GenAI working guidelines.

Maynooth University GenAI Community of Practice - Lunchtime Meetups!

As part of our GenAI project, we are delighted to initiate a GenAI Community of Practice, which will run on the **second Thursday of every month from 1-2pm!** Beginning February 13th, the GenAI project team will facilitate an informal community of practice meetup where staff can discuss approaches, and share ideas and resources, regarding GenAI in teaching, learning and assessment. The meetups will be in-person in **SE229 in the School of Education** and lunch will be provided. No registration required.

- Thursday February 13th, 2025
- Thursday March 13th, 2025
- Thursday April 10th, 2025
- Thursday May 8th, 2025

The project is funded by the Strategic Alignment of Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund in Higher Education (SATLE). If you would like to learn more about our work in this area, please check out our project web page.

Open Publication Launch: 'Using GenAI in Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Irish Universities'

On Thursday 23rd of January, the **Open Publication 'Using GenAI in Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Irish Universities'** was launched at Trinity College Dublin. The publication was co-edited by representatives from each University, including Lisa O'Regan, Head of the Centre for Teaching and Learning at Maynooth University.

This publication aims to promote AI literacy, inspire new teaching, learning and assessment approaches, and spark innovation across disciplines. It includes **over 30 use cases** from across seven Irish Universities, which provide a valuable insight into how educators are responding to the challenges and taking advantage of the affordances of GenAI across a wide range of disciplines.

Four Maynooth University educators, including two recipients of GenAI T&L Fellowships, contributed to this open publication:

- Dr Shane McLoughlin, School of Business, 'Navigating Paths of Resistance: Tight-roping GenAI's role in Continuous Assessment Design'
- Dr Simon Hewitt, Media Studies, 'Improving Visual Engagement Through Generative AI in Media Studies'
- Dr Adrian Kirwan, Critical Skills, 'GenAI Dispositions and Literacies: Podcasting as praxis Writing in Media'
- Prof Rebecca Chiyoko King-O'Riain, Sociology, 'Is GenAI Reproducing or Helping to Solve Social Inequality?'

The full publication is available at: https://ucclibrary.pressbooks.pub/genai/

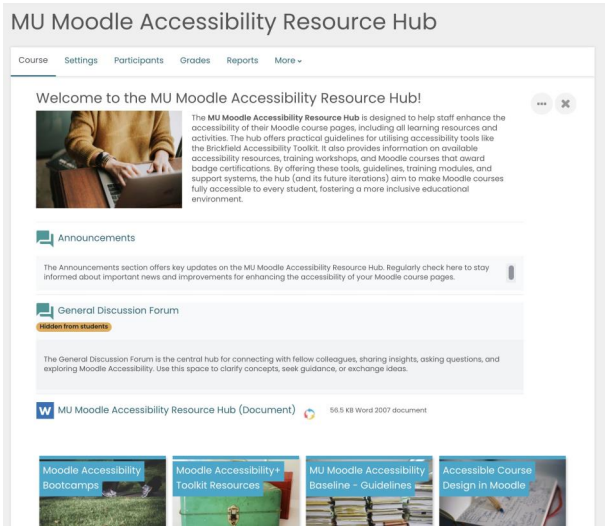
TEL NEWS

The Brickfield Accessibility Toolkit in Moodle

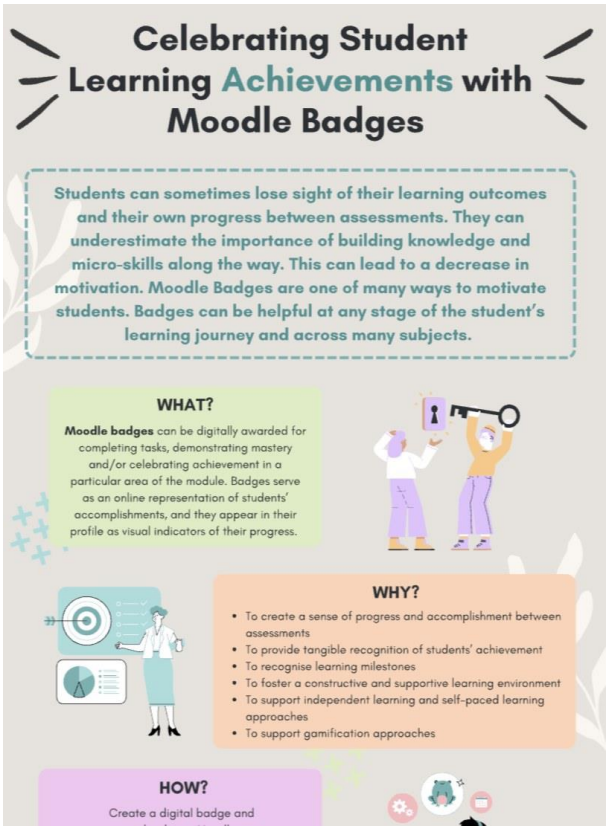
The **Brickfield Accessibility Toolkit** is an accessibility checker that can help staff in identifying and fixing accessibility issues to enhance Moodle course pages and content accessibility. The toolkit also enables students to convert files into alternative and accessible formats.

To learn more about the toolkit, you can access guides in the MU Moodle Accessibility Resource Hub, and/or you can attend one of the **30-minute** introductory Brickfield Accessibility Toolkit workshops which take place **every Monday in February and March 2025 at 4pm.** Registration information here

Digital Accessibility workshops are also available **every Wednesday in February and March 2025 at 4pm**. These workshops, which are facilitated by Brickfield Education Labs, cover four core accessibility topics on a rotational basis including: Accessibility Foundations, Web Accessibility, Media Accessibility, and Document Accessibility. Registration details will be posted by CTL as soon as they are confirmed.



TEL Infographics Series – Promoting Engagement



In Semester One, we launched our **'Promoting Engagement' TEL Infographics Series**. This suite of Open Creative Commons licenced infographics focuses on Moodle tools you can use to boost engagement on your Moodle pages. The **interactive** infographics include quick guides, short videos and tips, and cover topics such as creating a module handbook, using weekly narratives, activity tracking, exploring conditional access and checklists, and celebrating success with Moodle badges.

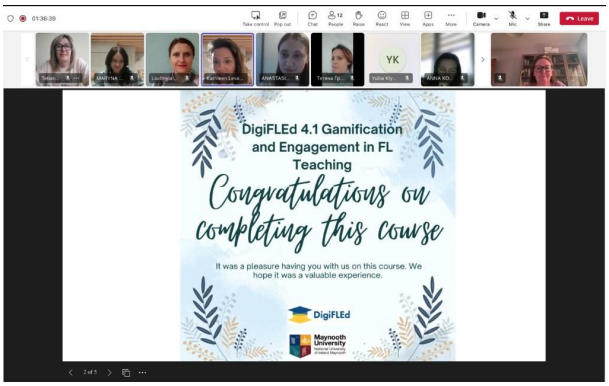
Staff who have used these materials particularly enjoyed the simplified approach the interactive infographic guides offered. They commented positively on their '**manageable and easily communicated size**', on gaining '**insights into good practice**' and on getting the **essence** of the information '**in short bursts**'.

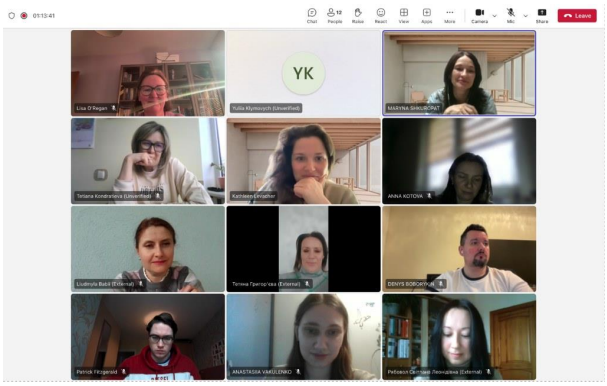
This semester, we will be facilitating the **TEL Engagement Series** again and including 30 minute webinars to guide you through each infographic topic. You can register through our professional learning Workshop Schedule.

You can also access all infographics on our Moodle Staff Help page. We welcome your feedback on the resources.

In November 2025, the CTL TEL team launched two online courses for DigiFLEd project participants. DigiFLEd, is a **collaborative EU funded project** with Higher Education partners from the Ukraine, Greece, Finland and Ireland. The project considers the 'Modernisation of university education programmes in foreign languages (FL) by integrating information technologies' and is supporting digital transformation through a range of development opportunities for Ukrainian academic staff.

The courses were designed and facilitated by Kathleen Levacher, Graham Keane and Lisa O'Regan, and entitled '**Moodle Course Design Essentials**' and '**Gamification Essentials in Moodle**'.





The courses reunited a total of 43 highly enthusiastic participants who commented extremely positively about their experience with us at Maynooth:

"It is quite simply the best course I've enjoyed in the past couple of years"

"This experience has transformed the way I approach course design, making it more student-centred and user-friendly."

"The course has been incredibly beneficial. The practical applications have provided me with the knowledge and tools to improve my course design and ensure a better experience for my students."

"Along the way, I unearthed a treasure - a treasure of knowledge that has transformed my approach to teaching foreign languages, making my classroom more engaging and interactive."

HEA Teaching & Learning Conference 2024

The HEA Teaching and Learning Conference, on Thursday December 12, 202 - 'Driving Changes in Teaching and Learning through Policy, featured strong representation from Maynooth University colleagues, who showcased just some of the innovative research and teaching development initiatives underway on campus.

Professor Denise Rooney, Department of Chemistry delivered a Spotlight Presentation on the **Virtual Laboratory Teaching & Learning: A Blended Approach** initiative.

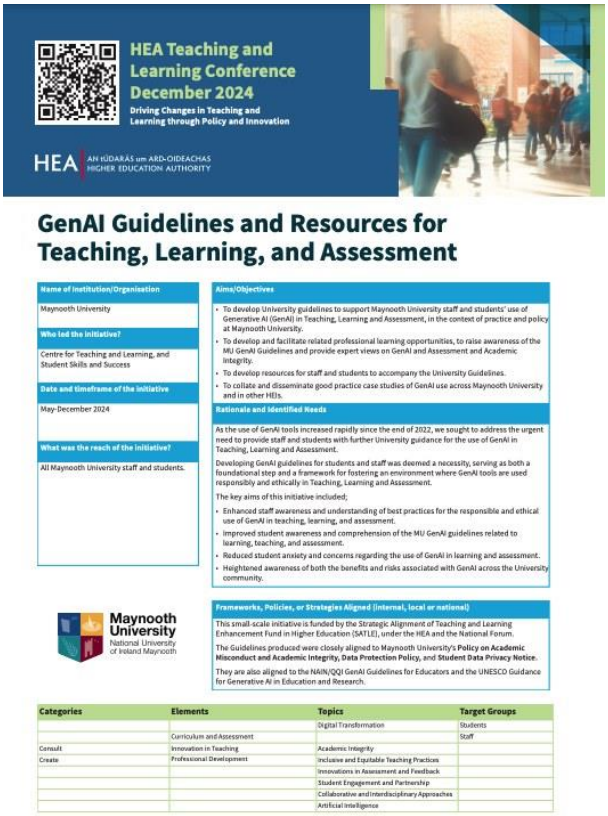
Dr Aisling Fynn and Eddie Corr from Student Skills and Success showcased their poster case study **'My Maynooth on Moodle' – Maynooth University Online Orientation Programme'** .

The Maynooth University GenAI Guidelines Project team involving colleagues from CTL, Student Skills and Success, and Critical Skills showcased their case study on **the GenAI Guidelines and Resources for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment initiative.**

Lisa O'Regan and Dr Alison Farrell (CTL), and MU UDL Fellows Dr Margaret Flood (Education), Dr Marian Crowley Henry (Business), Prof Denise Rooney (Chemistry), and Prof Moynagh O' Sullivan (English) showcased their case study on the **MU: UDL & U. Building a Culture of Inclusion on Campus initiative.**

Conference presentations and case studies are available at:
https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/conference/

2 - Professor Denise Rooney



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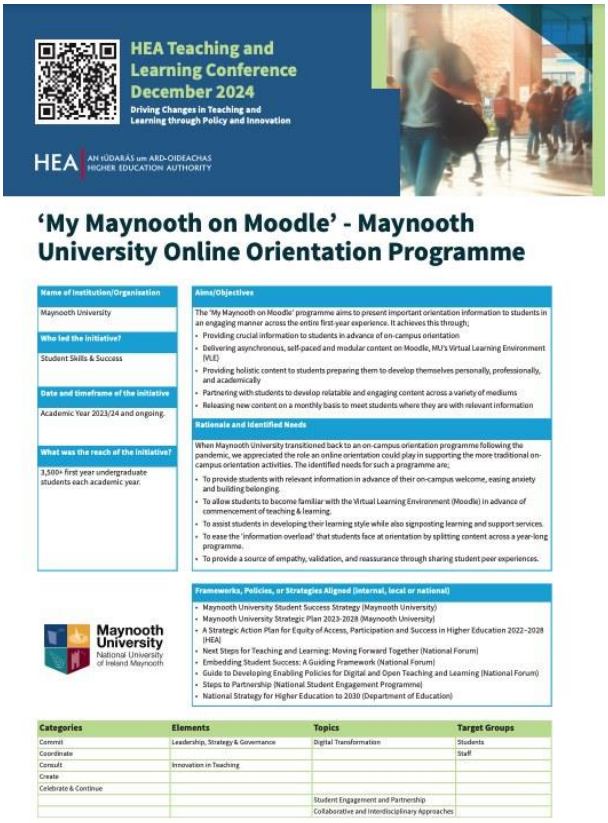
3 - Access "'My Maynooth on Moodle' - Maynooth University Online Orientation Programme" poster

4 - Access "MU: UDL & U. Building a Culture of Inclusion on Campus" poster

Access MU: UDL & U. Building a Culture of Inclusion on Campus initiative



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5 - Access "My Maynooth on Moodle' – Maynooth University Online Orientation Programme' initiative" poster

CTL Postgraduate Programmes – Conferring and Celebration

The Centre for Teaching and Learning congratulates our latest cohort of participants to graduate from the **Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment (PDHETL)**, the **Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education Teaching, Learning and Assessment (PCHETL)** and the **Professional Certificate in Teaching and Learning**.

The programme graduates are

- Professor Ian Speller, Centre for Military History and Strategic Studies, Department of History (Diploma)
- Dr Ting Bi, Maynooth International Engineering College / Hamilton Institute (Diploma)
- Dr Amir Azadnia, School of Business (Certificate)
- Ms Orla Granville, School of Business (Certificate)
- Dr Lucia Vazquez-Mendoza, Faculty of Social Sciences (Certificate)
- Dr Siyuan Zhan, Centre for Ocean Energy Research (Certificate)

- Mr Thomas Lysaght, Computer Science (Certificate)

CTL also extends our warmest congratulations to the **forty-one** postgraduate researchers who completed the **Professional Certificate in Teaching and Learning** in Semesters 1 and 2, 2023-24.

CTL held an event to celebrate our awardees where Head of Department Lisa O'Regan and Programme Lead Dr Orla Hanratty welcomed and congratulated the participants.

Full details of our programmes are available on the CTL website within the Accredited Programmes section. Any queries, please contact us at ctlprogrammes@mu.ie.

Inclusive Education

MU: UDL & U Campaign 2025

Following the success of last year's 'MU: UDL & U Campaign' CTL is delighted to partner with the Faculty UDL T&L Fellows to present this year's campaign which will run for five weeks over **February and March 2025**. This 2025 campaign builds from last year's focus on Plus Ones and making small, incremental changes towards more inclusive practice, and concentrates on the three UDL principles of **Engagement**, **Representation**, and **Action and Expression**. The campaign comprises five half-hour online sessions which you can attend as stand-alone events or as part of the series. You can register for the campaign sessions through the CTL Semester 2 Event programme.

What the research tells us about UDL and models of good practice

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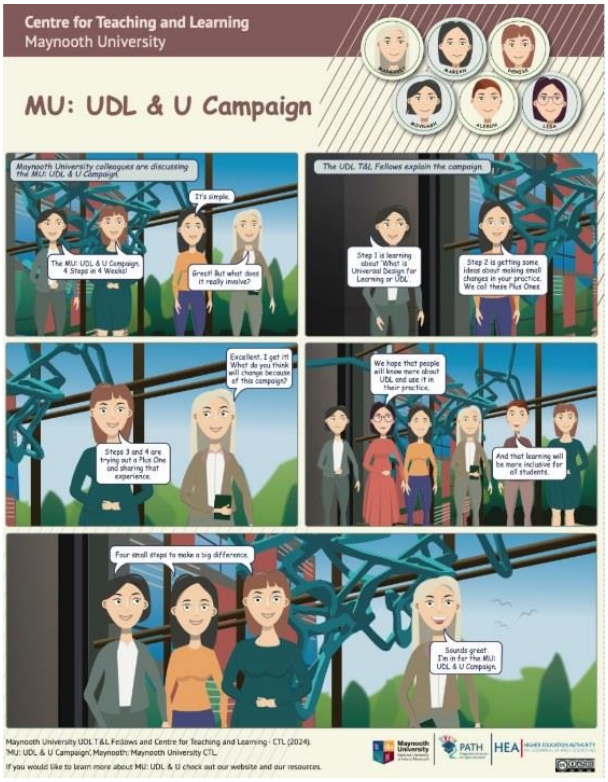
As part of the PATH4 '**MU: UDL & U. Building a Culture of Inclusion in Maynooth University**' initiative, towards the end of Semester 1 Dr Ciara O'Farrell shared with Maynooth University colleagues the outcomes of her CTL supported research. Dr O'Farrell's findings addressed what the research says about UDL under the following headings: (1) the evidence base for UDL, "**What evidence is there to suggest the effectiveness of UDL as an approach to creating more inclusive higher education practice?**", and (2) institutional models of good practice regarding the implementation of UDL. This research complemented other aspects of the '**MU: UDL & U**' initiative which included an awareness raising campaign and the development of suite of resources. Colleagues interested in learning more about making their practice more inclusive may find the Plus One and other Open Education Resources (OER) in the Inclusive Education: UDL & U Resource Hub useful.



Arqus Alliance

As the Maynooth University representatives for **Arqus Working Group 5**, Lisa O'Regan, Head of Centre for Teaching and Learning and Dr Alison Farrell met with Alliance colleagues in November as part of an event hosted by Maynooth University.

The key objectives for Working Group 5 are as follows:

- To promote a culture of **innovative student-centred learning**, **teaching and assessment**
- To promote **excellence** in teaching

- To bridge **research and education** to prepare young Europeans for existing and emerging grand societal challenges

CTL will continue to contribute to ARQUS Alliance work in a visit from **University of Minho** colleagues this February 2025 which is being organised in collaboration with colleagues from the **Faculty of Science and Engineering**, and that **Faculty's Associate Dean of Teaching and Learning Dr John Keating**.

The Arqus European University Alliance brings together the universities of **Granada, Graz, Leipzig, Lyon 1, Maynooth, Minho, Padua, Vilnius and Wroclaw**. Further details can be found here.