Student Empowerment

The Role of the Students’ Union in UDL

- Advocacy
- Awareness

- Feedback and Evaluation

- Awareness and Education

- Representation of Diverse Learning Needs

- Collaboration and Partnership

- Modelling UDL Principles
Student Empowerment

Modelling UDL Principles

ATU Sligo Students’ Union Constitution

ATU Sligo Students’ Union Elections
Underpinning Genuine Student Partnerships; Starting the conversation of engagement, representation and action.

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Dr. Shelley Brady, Hcert TLA, MSc, BCBA-D, PhD

Equitable Learning  Student Empowerment  Sustainability
Our **burning** questions

What did we need to learn?  
Why did we need to learn it?  
How are we going to approach it?  
What was the response?  
What does it tell us?  
Where do we go from here?
Equitable Learning
"Equity in education means ensuring that every student has an equal opportunity to achieve their potential and that any social or economic constraints that might prevent a student from having equal opportunities are mitigated." (HEA, 2022)
“Decolonising curriculum in academia requires meaningful recognition of alternative perspectives embedded in analysis of power relations, including those of race, class and gender.” (Begum & Saini, 2019 p.200)
FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPOWERMENT
Consider varied perspectives

Negotiate with others

Think independently

Make their own decisions

Act on knowledge
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Compliance  Engagement  Empowerment

Student Agency
• Equitable power use by teachers

• Positive teacher-student relationships

• Sense of community in the classroom
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- Better grades
- Fewer behavioural incidents
- Increased extra-curricular participation
- Higher educational aspirations
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Advancing economic, social and environmental sustainability through education, innovation, and engagement, producing graduates who are innovative, confident and capable of leading the development of the region and beyond.
This Isn’t Easy
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Daire Martin
SU President
Student Empowerment

What if you could:

- Take ownership of your learning process
- Make decisions about your education
- Develop the confidence and agency to advocate for yourself

Win an ATU Hoodie!
Complete the following brief survey!
(Approx. 3-5 minutes to complete)

The following is a voluntary survey. Those who submit a response by the 15th of May 2023 will be entered into the draw.
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71% ON CAMPUS
29% ONLINE

81% Undergraduate
16% Postgraduate
4% Apprentices
EQUITABLE LEARNING

81 % HAD NEVER HEARD OF EQUITABLE LEARNING

“Yes, distributing support and academic resources on the basis of need as opposed to blanket equality”

“Yes; giving everyone resources a student needs that provide a fair chance for the same learning experience”
**Student empowerment:** means giving students the power to make decisions and take action in their education. This includes things like learning, teaching, and being leaders in the classroom. When students feel empowered, they have the confidence and ability to take charge of their own education and make positive changes in their education. Empowerment happens when students are given the authority and support to take action and make a difference. 

Please indicate the areas in the options below where you feel empowered in your student learning experience. Do you feel empowered in these areas? (Select all statements that apply to you.)

- Academically (I feel that I can make decisions and am part of actions in the classroom.)

- Physically (I feel that I can meet the physical demands of my course and that the campus is accessible to me)

- Socially (I engage in University social activities or I have a college peer group that I connect with socially.)

- Well being/ Mental Health (I feel that I can balance how I care for my well being/ mental health and my studies.)

- Culturally (I feel students from diverse cultural backgrounds—particularly recently arrived immigrant or refugee students and their families—feel welcomed, accepted, safe, and valued)
Culturally I feel students from diverse cultural backgrounds—particularly recently arrived immigrant or refugee students and their families—feel welcomed, accepted, safe, and valued 65%

Academically I feel that I can make decisions and am part of actions in the classroom 77%

Physically I feel that I can meet the physical demands of my course and that the campus is accessible to me 70%

Well-being/ Mental Health I feel that I can balance how I care for my well-being/mental health and my studies 60%

Socially I engage in University social activities or I have a college peer group that I connect with socially 58%
"Online it's difficult to engage with other students on my course and geographically the campus and other facilities are not available to me."

"Online courses should have online exams, going to Sligo and Dublin travelling 3 hours each exam is a barrier. It is inconvenient and takes from the online experience."

"While I appreciate the benefits of online education, I find the pace to be at times overwhelming and would prefer more opportunities for interaction with my peers."

"Socially 51%.06%"

"No one has cameras on in online learning lectures. We don't get to see who we're learning with. Don't feel like we're building a student relationship."

"While there is good support for and between online student groups, we do still miss out on certain events that aren't streamed."
"Barriers to inclusion for students from diverse backgrounds, not due to prejudice, but due to lack of consideration for people from other cultures, backgrounds etc. and how they may be adversely affected by assuming a norm of an 'Irish' white male background."

"Lifts are often broken, canteen is hard to navigate, the library is difficult to navigate, wheelchair bathrooms are usually closed and certain areas are just overall inaccessible to physically disabled students including areas where social and sports societies meet."

"I hope in the future an exam hall could be made available in the midlands, a shorter trip to Athlone or Mullingar would be beneficial."

"Food in the canteen does not meet cultural needs."
"For my course a lot of assignments and performance tend to pile up sometimes and makes it difficult to balance at times."

"Academically, I feel that students that fall short in certain areas should have the ability to choose what to submit so that it suits them rather than the final submissions/exams only suiting some while others have a hard time passing."
"It would be helpful to have more counselling appointments available. It seems there is always a backlog for appointments. Or even if there were trained Mental Health First Aiders or Ambassadors."

"Balancing my studies and mental health is a barrier for me personally. It ends up leaving me less confident in my ability which in hand causes lower grades than my ability."

"The high cost of living is the main barrier to having good mental health."

"I feel that my mental health is being drained as I go to school weekdays, work weekends, and help manage a farm when I can. I don’t get much time to rest. I feel that if I go through a difficult period that I’m not comfortable missing classes or missing days of school for mental health as I wouldn’t be able to catch up afterwards."
Sustainability
Student Champions for Promoting Digital Skills, Education for Sustainability, Leadership & Employability Programme

The NTUTORR national project is an innovative collaboration across the Technological Higher Education sector to transform the student experience.

As part of this project, we are recruiting 100 Student Champions to learn and develop skills in one of the key priority areas in addition to developing leadership, collaboration and communication. This is a fixed term NTUTORR Student Champion role for the period June 2023 – May 2024. Each Student Champion will receive an award valued at €3,000.*

The role of the NTUTORR student champion is to develop student engagement and empowerment in their local university/institute. Student Champions will engage with the development of an initiative under one of the NTUTORR thematic areas:

- Academic Integrity
- Digital Transformation in Teaching and Learning
- Education for Sustainability
- Employability
- Equality Diversity & Inclusion (EDI)
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
About This Programme

About the programme:

- This is a self-directed, interactive course designed to develop academic writing skills at 3rd level.
- Flexible approach; choose relevant individual units or complete the whole programme to earn an Academic Writing digital badge.
- The programme is divided into 7 units. Each unit contains course content, examples, activities, quizzes & links to useful resources.

How to complete the programme:

Click on the Unit you wish to study.

Each unit contains:

- **Learning outcomes:** what you will know or be able to do after completing the Unit;
- **Unit Content:** click on this to begin the course; 
  Tap the **Side Blocks** at the top of the page to widen the screen for easier reading.
- **Unit Quiz:** click on this to complete the end of unit quiz.

Requirements: you must fully complete the Unit Content & achieve a pass rate of 80% in the Unit Quiz in order to be registered as having completed the Unit successfully and to be awarded your digital badge.

This programme was developed by the Academic Writing Centre and Instructional Design as part of the iLeans project.
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Sustainable Impact

Why schools need to embrace kids’ creativity

Sir Ken Robinson
It’s ok to get it wrong...educate into creative capacities.

“Seeing our students for the hope that they are.” (Sir Ken Robinson, 2006)
Exploring the Student Voice within UDL Work

Introduction and Context

Frederic Fovet

2018, The AHEAD Journal

One of the reasons that makes Universal Design for Learning (UDL) particularly appealing to the post-secondary sector is the fact that it is entirely focused on the design reflection of the instructor, and does not require diagnostic information about individual students (Gradel & Edson, 2009). Unlike differentiation which normally ...

Exploring the Student Voice within UDL Work, Frederic Fovet, University of Prince Edward Island

https://ahead.ie/journal/Exploring-the-Student-Voice-within-Universal-Design-for-Learning-Work
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Our role.....
Thank You!

For more information, you may contact Maureen.haran@atu.ie in the ATU - UDL Centre of Excellence or Shelley.brady@atu.ie in the Disability Support Service.

QUESTIONS?


