

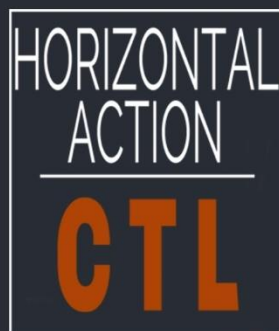


Teaching Transformation in Higher Education

Success Stories from Learning and Teaching Centers

EDITOR

ZOE GAVRIILIDOU

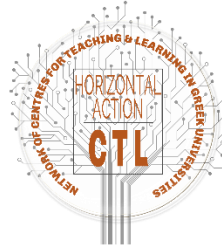


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August 2023

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1. AUTHORS




Marese Bermingham
B Comm, HDE, HDGC, MA, Head of AnSEO - The Student Engagement Office and Head, Teaching and Learning Unit at Munster Technological University, Ireland

Since 2013, Marese has led and built the Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Engagement (TLASE) functions at MTU, gaining both national and international recognition for enabling distributed leadership in TLASE enhancement by initiating and advocating for discipline and interdisciplinary learning communities and by resourcing (funding and mentoring) learning enhancement projects across all of our campuses and academic units. Marese has championed staff/student partnership and led the development of a coaching and mentoring culture at MTU that is both student and staff facing.

Marese has presented at various fora on her work and has been responsible for the initiation and main scheming of many innovative TLASE programmes at MTU while actively contributing to TLASE developments both nationally and internationally. Marese is a Founding Member, Global Forum on Student Success.

She was an invited member of the National Advisory Group for National Forum Extra words to be used if helpful on Teaching and Learning on Professional Development Framework (2019 – 2022) and the National Advisory Group on Student Success (2018 – 2021).



Linda Castañeda
Associated professor in the Department of Didactics and School of Education at the University of Murcia, Spain

PhD in Educational Technology (Universitat de les Illes Balears). Associated professor in the Department of Didactics and School of Education at the Universidad de Murcia. A participant in international research projects on the implementation and impact of technology in both formal and non-formal learning contexts, including leading the Spanish teams of the projects CUTIE and DALI and leading the research contract ARS-SELFIE: Digital Competences in Spanish Education: Strategic Regional Approaches of the Joint Research Center of the European Union.

She has been a visiting researcher at the Knowledge Media Institute of the Open University in the United Kingdom, a visitor at the Department of Education of the University of Oxford, working with the E-learning Group, visiting professor at the Centre for Education and New Technologies of the University Jaume I of Castellón, as well as in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California Berkeley. She has also been a guest speaker at numerous national and international scientific events.

She has worked in the design, elaboration and implementation of networked didactic materials, guidance and advice to teachers for implementing ICT in formal teaching processes and several studies on the state of ICT in different educational environments.

Her current research portfolio currently includes critical perspectives on educational technology, competencies for the digital era (definition, development and assessment), strategic approaches to teachers' professional development, digital transformation in educational institutions, socio-material perspectives of emergent pedagogies, and personal learning environments. More info at www.lindacastaneda.com



Manuel Joao Costa
Associate Professor at the School of Medicine.
Pro-Rector for Educational Innovation and Student
Affairs at the University of Minho, Portugal

Manuel João Costa is Associate Professor at the School of Medicine. Pro-Rector for Educational Innovation and Student Affairs at the University of Minho and coordinator of the University of Minho's center for innovation and development to teaching and learning (IDEA-UMinho).

He is appointed member to the Learning and Teaching Steering Committee of the European University Association, the education committees of the Federation of European Biochemical Societies and delegate at the faculty development committee of the Association for Medical Education in Europe. Recently appointed as Institutional Coordinator for the University of Minho at Arqus European University Alliance.

Manuel develops research in student development in higher education and learning and teaching with a focus on medical and biomolecular sciences. Manuel's teaching areas are biochemistry and molecular biology, and education in the health sciences. Researcher ID: C-3900-2009; ORCID: 0000-0001-5255-4257.



Pio Fenton
Senior Lecturer (II) Teaching and Learning Unit, Munster
Technological University, Ireland

Dr Pio Fenton is the University Lead at Munster Technological University (MTU) for Leadership Development in support of the University's staff. Working as part of a Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded project, he is currently implementing a range of leadership supports including masterclasses, coaching, mentoring, peer support and psychometric evaluations. Previously he was Head of Department of Marketing and International Business at MTU where he has overseen the development of university's extensive suite of Marketing, Digital Marketing, Sales and International Business programmes. During his leadership of this department, the marketing discipline attained the prestigious DELTA award from the National Forum for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as well as Best Business Collaboration at the Education Awards for the department's work on authentic assessment.

In recent times, Dr Fenton and the team at MTU have developed a Bachelor's degree aimed exclusively at commercial pilots which can be completed over two years online and which also formally recognised the formal training a student has undertaken.

Dr Fenton specialises in Marketing and Marketing education as a research area, having co-authored a book in 2022 on Experiential Marketing. He is a Senior Fellow of Advance HE UK and is a Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute.



A profile card for Zoe Gavriilidou. It features a circular portrait of her on the left. To the right of the portrait, her name 'Zoe Gavriilidou' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below her name, her professional titles are listed in a smaller, grey font: 'Professor of Linguistics, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece', 'Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago, USA', and 'Coordinator of the Network for Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek Universities'. The card has a light beige background with a dark teal vertical bar on the right side and thin orange horizontal lines.

Zoe Gavriilidou
Professor of Linguistics, Democritus University of Thrace, Greece
Visiting Professor at the University of Chicago, USA
Coordinator of the Network for Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek Universities

Zoe Gavriilidou has served as Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and Student Welfare at Democritus University of Thrace, Dean of the School of Classics and Humanities and Chair of the Department of Philology at the same University. She is currently the Coordinator of the National Network of Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek Universities. She was the supervising coordinator of the THALES Project on Language Learning Strategies (total grant 600.000 euros) and of the Project on Heritage Greek (budget 100.000 euros) and she has been member of the experts' committees for the revision of curricula in Greece and Cyprus in primary and secondary education. Her main areas of research interests include language learning strategies, heritage languages, language teaching and language policies, Higher Education Policies.



A profile card for Terry Maguire. It features a circular portrait of her on the left. To the right of the portrait, her name 'Terry Maguire' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below her name, her professional title is listed in a smaller, grey font: 'Further and Higher Education Specialist, Ireland'. The card has a light beige background with a dark teal vertical bar on the right side and thin orange horizontal lines.

Terry Maguire
Further and Higher Education Specialist, Ireland

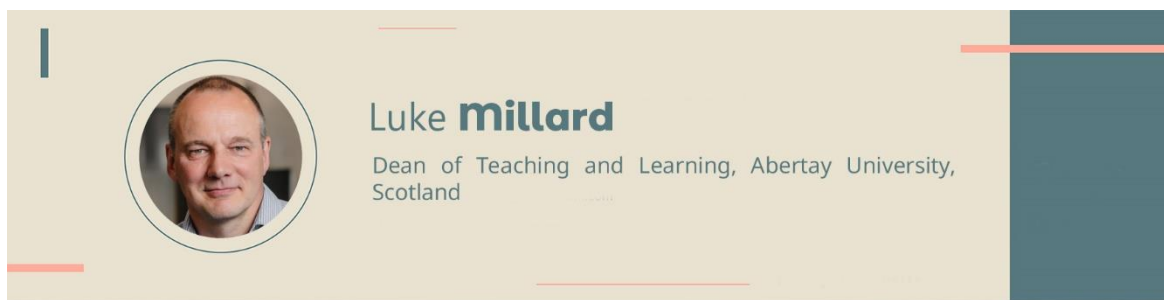
Dr Terry Maguire is a Higher and Further Education Specialist. Former Director of the Irish National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning, leading the development of the Forum for 8 years since its establishment (www.teachingandlearning.ie). Terry was co-chair of the Bologna Follow-up Group on Learning and Teaching and is currently a director of Ahead (ahead.ie).



A profile card for Eileen McEvoy. It features a circular portrait of her on the left. To the right of the portrait, her name 'Eileen McEvoy' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below her name, her professional titles are listed in a smaller, grey font: 'University of Jyväskylä, Finland' and 'Department of Education, Ireland'. The card has a light beige background with a dark teal vertical bar on the right side and thin orange horizontal lines.

Eileen McEvoy
University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Department of Education, Ireland

Dr Eileen McEvoy graduated with a PhD from the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, in 2019 and currently works at the Department of Education in Ireland. She has worked across educational research and policy for close to 20 years and was a member of the team at the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Ireland from 2016 until 2021.

A profile card for Luke Millard. On the left is a circular portrait of a man with short hair and a light beard. To the right of the portrait, the name "Luke Millard" is written in a bold, dark blue font. Below the name, his title "Dean of Teaching and Learning, Abertay University, Scotland" is written in a smaller, grey font. The card has a light beige background with a dark teal vertical bar on the right side and thin orange horizontal lines.

Luke Millard is Dean of Teaching and Learning and Head of the AbLE Academy at Abertay University in Scotland. Prior to this role, Luke was Director of Educational Development at Birmingham City University in England.

He is a Principal Fellow of the UK's Higher Education Academy which recognised his work on improving the student experience through collaborative working with staff and students in the areas of student engagement and co-creation, student employment, transitions and the first-year experience. Luke has been invited to deliver keynotes at a large number of UK and Irish universities.

He has also chaired the European First Year Experience conference; provided a presentation to the OECD in Paris on Learning Gain, chaired national conferences on student retention and presented on student engagement and quality enhancement at the University of Tsukuba and the Japanese Association of Higher Education Research.

2. Editor's note by Zoe Gavriilidou

In an era defined by rapid advancements in technology, evolving pedagogical approaches, and a growing emphasis on inclusive education, the role of Learning and Teaching Centers has never been more pivotal. These centers, often situated at the heart of educational institutions, serve as the nexus for fostering innovative teaching practices, nurturing effective learning experiences, and championing the continuous improvement of education.

Furthermore, in the ever-evolving landscape of higher education, collaboration and innovation have become paramount to ensure the delivery of quality education to students. Recognizing this imperative, in 2022, Greek universities have taken a significant step forward by establishing a [National Network of Learning and Teaching Centers](#). This collaborative initiative signals a transformative shift in the way Greek academia approaches teaching and learning, and it underscores the powerful idea that together is indeed better.

This newly established National Network of Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek universities holds immense importance since its establishment brings together diverse perspectives, experiences, and expertise from universities across Greece. This collective wisdom serves as a valuable resource for sharing best practices, tackling common challenges, and fostering a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

As a Collaborative network it enables Greek universities to pool their resources, both financial and intellectual. By sharing resources such as teaching materials, research findings, and technological infrastructure, member institutions can optimize their investments and enhance the overall quality of education.

Considering that Learning and Teaching Centers serve as hubs for innovation in pedagogy, when universities collaborate within the national network, they can collectively experiment with and implement cutting-edge teaching methodologies and technologies, staying at the forefront of educational advancements. This united effort to improve teaching and learning directly benefits students. By working together, Greek universities develop and implement strategies that better address the diverse needs of their student populations, resulting in improved student engagement, retention, and success.

Additionally, the national network of Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek Universities amplifies the collective voice of Greek universities in advocating for policies and practices that support quality education. By participating in the Greek Rector's Convention, this collaborative advocacy significantly influences decision-makers at the national level to prioritize education.

The Network has also facilitated so far research collaborations and data-sharing among universities. A nationwide research on *Academic staff development needs assessment at Greek Universities* published in the [proceedings of the 1st Conference of the Network of Learning and Teaching Centers in Greece](#) aimed to assess the training needs of the academic staff working at Greek Universities, with the purpose of utilizing the collected data to design appropriate professional development programs that address their specific needs. Furthermore, a [toolkit](#) with good practice for University Professors was compiled in the frame of the Network. Initiatives like that enable more comprehensive research into teaching and learning effectiveness, leading to evidence-based improvements in education.

In an era of globalization, the national network also served as a bridge for international partnerships, knowledge exchange, and participation in global education initiatives.

Above all, by fostering a sense of community and shared purpose, the national network promotes the long-term sustainability of Learning and Teaching Centers. This ensures that efforts to enhance education quality persist and evolve over time.

The establishment of a National Network of Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek universities signifies a profound commitment to the improvement of higher education. By working together, Greek universities tap into a wealth of knowledge and resources, driving transformative change in teaching and learning practices. Together, they can provide an enriched educational experience for students and contribute to the overall advancement of Greek higher education on the global stage. Finally, together they can face effectively challenges that may impede their success, such as limited resources, resistance to change, faculty involvement, or changing the technological landscape.

"*Teaching Transformation in Higher Education: Success Stories from Learning and Teaching Centers*" includes the keynote speeches presented at the 1st International Conference of the Network of Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek Universities, held in Alexandroupolis, Greece from 6-7 July 2023. The authors are part of a distinguished panel of experts who participated in the research project titled "Horizontal Action of the Network of Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek Universities" funded by the European Union and national funds. Their collective insights, experiences, and research findings have been instrumental in shaping the content of this book, making it a comprehensive resource for the advancement of Learning and Teaching Centers in the higher education landscape. Their dedication to improving education through innovative practices and collaborative efforts underscores the significance of this book's mission which is designed for educators, administrators, and anyone passionate about enhancing the quality of education, providing them with a roadmap to navigate the challenges and seize the opportunities that lie within these dynamic centers. This comprehensive guide explores the multifaceted landscape of Learning and Teaching Centers and delves deep into the intricacies of their operations, unveiling a compendium of best practices, insights, and research findings.

In the pages of this book, we are invited to explore five insightful case studies that epitomize the diversity of LTC experiences. Each case study provides a unique lens through which we can gain valuable insights into the best practices and innovations driving excellence in higher education.

Case Study 1: Integrating the Student Voice (University of Abertay, Scotland)

Author: Luke Millard

At the University of Abertay, Scotland, the student voice takes center stage in a concerted effort to enhance the quality of academic provision. This case study illuminates how involving students in the co-creation of micro-credentials has proven to be a powerful tool for driving continual quality improvement, emphasizing the profound impact that student input can have on institutional decisions and culture.

Case Study 2: The Key Ingredients for Teaching and Learning Center Success (University of Minho, Portugal)

Author: Manuel João Costa

In Portugal's University of Minho, the IDEA-UMinho teaching and learning center offers invaluable insights into overcoming the challenges often faced by such centers in higher education. This case study identifies seven key ingredients that foster success, emphasizing the importance of community collaboration, networking initiatives, and scholarship in teaching and learning.

Case Study 3: Key Elements for Digital Implementation (University of Murcia, Spain)

Author: Linda Castañeda

The University of Murcia, Spain, dives into the complex realm of digital integration in higher education institutions. Grounded in a comprehensive literature review, this case study identifies crucial factors that facilitate the successful implementation of digital tools and processes, offering strategic guidance for Greek centers of teaching and learning.

Case Study 4: Distributed Leadership in Teaching and Learning (Munster Technological University, Ireland)

Authors: Marese Bermingham and Pio Fenton

Munster Technological University (MTU), Ireland, presents a compelling case for distributed leadership in the context of teaching, learning, and student engagement. This case study highlights how MTU leverages a philosophy of distributed leadership to enrich the educational experience, offering a suite of initiatives that redefine leadership in academia.

Case Study 5: The Power of Collaboration (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Ireland)

Authors: Terry Maguire and Eileen McEvoy

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education serves as an exemplar of effective collaboration among teaching and learning centers. This case study shares the journey of the National Forum, outlining the challenges and opportunities encountered while creating a robust teaching and learning ecosystem, offering valuable insights for Greek centers seeking to emulate this model.

Together, these narratives form a tapestry of best practices, demonstrating the vital role LTCs play in shaping the future of education. By immersing ourselves in these case studies, we embark on a quest to uncover the most effective strategies and practices employed by Learning and Teaching Centers worldwide. The collective wisdom shared within these pages offers a roadmap for ensuring that every learner, regardless of their background or abilities, can access a high-quality education and thrive in the ever-evolving landscape of the 21st century.

At the last part of this book, readers will find a collection of recommendations derived from the collective wisdom of the authors, who are esteemed experts and practitioners in the field. These recommendations serve as invaluable guideposts, offering insights and strategies to enhance the impact and effectiveness of Learning and Teaching Centers (LTCs) not only locally but also on a global scale.

3. Authors' note

The establishment of the national network of teaching and learning centres in Greece provides a remarkable opportunity to develop a shared vision and map the future enhancement of teaching and learning in higher education nationwide. The network has real potential to shape policies across the sector and to ensure that decisions are grounded in evidence. Together, the stakeholders involved in the network can work towards consolidating pre-existing enhancement initiatives which may be currently dispersed across institutions, departments and those who teach. Through concerted efforts, the network can firmly establish the paramount importance of teaching and learning in higher education into the future.

This book unveils a series of five exemplary case studies drawn from diverse European contexts. These case studies are intended to offer valuable insights, support, and inspiration for those engaged in establishing a learning and teaching centre within their own institutions, as well as for those contributing to the development of the national network. The book culminates in a set of recommendations and key learnings, derived from the wealth of experience gained in implementing the initiatives discussed in the case studies.

The international advisory panel congratulates all the individuals engaged in the establishment of such a national network. Further, it commends those with the foresight to envision and spearhead this collaborative initiative, aimed at fostering the growth of teaching and learning throughout Greece. As the national network of teaching and learning centres begins to take shape, the panel expresses its full support and commitment to assisting in its growth and evolution.

CASE STUDY 1

Integrating the student voice to improve the quality of the academy (University of Abertay, Scotland)

Luke Millard

Abstract

The student voice is key to enhancing the quality of academic provision. At its core is the belief that the student voice should be at the heart of institutional decisions and culture to drive continual quality improvement of academic programmes and institutional services. The case study outlines initiatives set up at Abertay University, in particular how the development and delivery of micro-credentials, co-designed with students, can support student success.

A Collaborative Approach to Enhancement¹

The Scottish Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) asked universities to generate plans that “*focused on meeting the changing needs and values of an increasingly diverse student community and a rapidly changing external environment*” (QAAS 2023). Any university seeking to engage with such a challenge cannot do so through isolated activities and would need to heavily rely upon the student voice in seeking to understand the issues.

To make progress in such a space there is clearly a need to also engage with a variety of institutional partners, from academics to students to professional services. McIntosh and Nutt (2022) speak of the generation of a group of change leaders and academic developers that they term as third space professionals. These are people who recognise the challenges of working across institutional boundaries, ‘*exploring the hinterland between academic and professional spheres*’ within the institution and identifying the need to ‘*exercise this fluidity of agency by having more than one identity*’ (2022: 3).

¹ The supporting chapter in the proceedings offers an insight into the drivers for change whether policy, process or voluntary, as engaged students, academics, professional services and student organisations work together to enhance the quality of our programmes.

A Model for Partnership

AdvanceHE, an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing and supporting higher education across the UK, has published a series of frameworks for enhancing student success (Advance HE, 2016). The framework for student engagement (figure 1) identified that the process of working collaboratively was almost as beneficial as any output it generated. This was further highlighted by the *Framework for Partnerships in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (Healey et al, 2014: 7) which proposed the need to work with students as partners:

“partnership is understood as a relationship in which all involved are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together to foster engaged student learning and engaging learning and teaching enhancement. Partnership is essentially a way of doing things, rather than an outcome.”

This level of partnership is not about a one off activity, but more about a cultural shift within a university to genuinely engage with the student voice. This is crucial as the relationship needs to be all encompassing and embrace as many elements of institutional operation as possible.

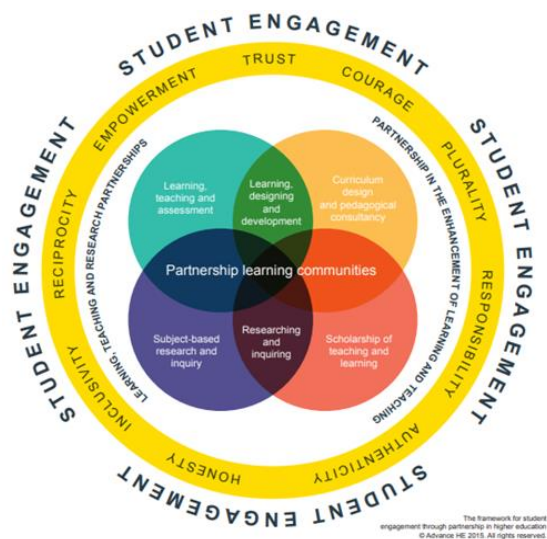


Figure 1 - Framework for student engagement

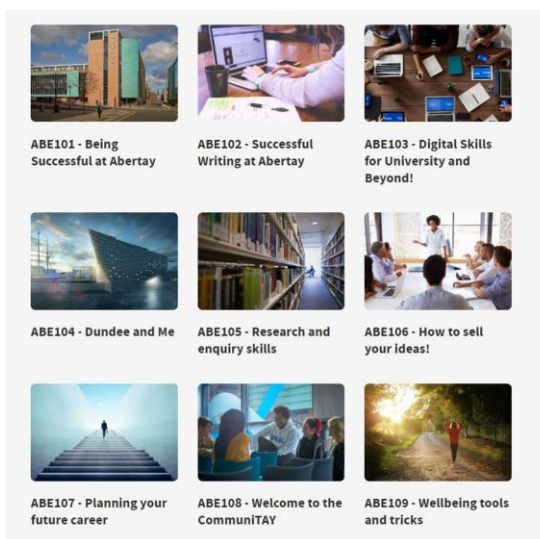


Figure 2 - Abertay Year 1 Microcredentials

Engaging with the Student Voice

All Universities in the UK are required to have formal student feedback mechanisms. In Scotland, the QAA's Quality Enhancement Framework (QAA 2023: 1) states that *“we encourage students to take an active role in shaping the quality of their education”*. This means that when universities are inspected as part of the quality review process, such consultation with students is expected to be demonstrated and to be evident within the standard processes of the university. Traditionally, this would see students offering feedback through module or programme evaluation surveys; attending programme level boards of studies to offer

feedback to programme teams; sitting on committees or engaging as advisers on programme approval panels. These formal feedback mechanisms are valuable, but offer fixed points of feedback.

To create truly integrated student feedback requires a move from a reactive model to one in which students and staff are involved in an ongoing conversation around the quality of the programme. Such a change, where the conversations in corridors and after teaching sessions, presents a positive environment in which any issues are not saved up for a big event or meeting, but are intercepted and dealt with as and when they arise. Through such a conversational approach there is the opportunity for all students to engage and offer their perspectives and for quality to be enhanced.

Embedding Student Voice in Academic Development (Microcredentials at Abertay)

Internal drivers for academic development can often occur through the need to align with institutional priorities. At Abertay, a social inclusion university, a key institutional driver was student retention and attainment. In this regard the AbLE Academy, Abertay's academic development unit, was tasked with the challenge to work across the institution with academic programme teams and professional services to seek to address the issue.

The Microcredentials, in Figure 2, were identified as a solution in which the AbLE Academy could work with partners to construct a coherent series of first year credit bearing units that helped students build the foundations to be academically and socially successful at Abertay. These microcredentials brought together both the academy, professional services and the Students' Association in a collaborative effort to support our students' development. Students were identified as co-creators in advising on design as we sought to identify the social and academic needs of our new students.

The level of trust that was developed with students is best exemplified by the fact that the microcredential which focuses on 'managing your student life' and the 'Abertay community' is actually run by the Students' Association. The students have been brought into the academic community and are now delivering credit bearing microcredentials to help support student success. The wider impact of the microcredential approach is likely to grow as we learn about how students engage with them and the microcredentials evolve as a result. In the two years of operation, Abertay has seen a 97% pass rate across these microcredentials and now we seek to understand if this can have a wider impact on student progression and success within their programmes. If you want to know more about the microcredential development process, further details have just been published in [Designing Personalized Student Development Through Microcredentials: An Institutional Approach | IGI Global \(igi-global.com\)](#)

This short paper started with the statement that the student voice is key to enhancing the quality of academic provision. This may be formal and structural and it may evolve into more fluid models that ultimately develop the trust and alignment to collaborate in developing student learning. Whatever approach you seek to take, it will take time and persistence as partners across the academy, professional services and the students come on board and start to share your belief in the value of the student voice.

CASE STUDY 2

The key ingredients for the successful development of teaching and learning centres in higher education: insights from the IDEA-UMINHO centre (University of Minho, Portugal)

Manuel João Costa

Abstract

The establishment of teaching and learning centres in higher education institutions faces several challenges, including resistance to change within the academic community, undervaluing teaching for career progression, difficulty securing funding, and the need for sustained institutional support. This case study outlines some approaches to overcome these obstacles suggesting that centres should go beyond conventional faculty development programs and focus on building a collaborative community, supporting networking initiatives, and fostering scholarship in teaching and learning. This case study of the University of Minho's teaching and learning centre, IDEA-UMinho, identifies seven key ingredients that may provide valuable insights and guidance to Greek teaching and learning centres in their efforts.

Initiating a teaching and learning centre in a higher education institution

Establishing teaching and learning centres in higher education institutions presents a unique set of challenges. Relevant obstacles are the resistance to change within the academic community and the fact that teaching is often less esteemed by institutions for purposes of career progression. Additionally, securing adequate funding for the establishment and maintenance of these centres can be challenging. Higher education institutions often face financial constraints, and allocating resources to teaching and learning centres may compete with other priorities. Moreover, implementing effective faculty development programs and providing comprehensive training can be a logistical challenge. Faculty members have diverse backgrounds and expertise, requiring tailored support and professional development opportunities. Lastly, sustaining institutional support and commitment over time can be demanding. Maintaining the momentum and enthusiasm for teaching and learning initiatives requires continuous advocacy, evaluation of outcomes, and adaptation to evolving educational trends. Addressing these challenges requires a collaborative and holistic

approach, involving faculty, administrators, student leaders and other stakeholders to foster a culture of teaching excellence and student success.

The missions and actions of teaching and learning centres in higher education are diverse and are influenced by both institutional and national contexts. These centres are not standardized across institutions, as their goals and activities vary based on the specific needs of the institution and the broader educational landscape. While some centres focus on faculty development or student support, others prioritize research on teaching and learning outcomes or the implementation of national educational initiatives. This diversity is a testament to the complex interplay between institutional priorities, cultural norms, and educational policies. Recognizing and embracing this diversity is necessary to enable teaching and learning centres to effectively support faculty and students in their pursuit of excellence.

It is of utmost importance for all teaching and learning centres have a clearly defined mission. Mission statements should provide a guiding framework that allows for the development of policies and actions targeting all levels of influence within the educational ecosystem. Reaching beyond the traditional training of academics to enhance teaching and learning, the mission should consider additional actions aligned with their specific institutional and national contexts. This may include:

- the development programs focused on building a community of teaching to foster collaboration;
- shared learning among educators within a collaborative environment supporting and networking academics by connecting with colleagues who share teaching interests or face similar challenges;
- helping to establish a consistent educational experience for students, ensuring that faculty members are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality education to address contemporary challenges to educational design;
- the cultivation of scholarship in teaching and learning through the provision of opportunities for educators to engage in research and scholarship related to teaching and learning, conducting pedagogical research, publishing educational articles, or presenting at conferences.

The “4M model”² -micro, meso, macro, and mega - provides a useful framework for translating a teaching and learning mission statement into actionable plans. The 4M model recognizes the importance of targeting various levels of influence to create comprehensive and impactful initiatives. At the micro level, individual academics are engaged through faculty development programs, workshops, and mentoring, focusing on enhancing their teaching practices and pedagogical skills. The meso level addresses the departmental context, where collaborations and interventions can be implemented to promote effective teaching and learning practices within specific disciplines or programs. Individual course staff, such as teaching assistants, benefit from meso-level interventions tailored to their instructional needs. The macro level involves the entire institution, where teaching and learning centres collaborate with administrators and stakeholders to create supportive policies, infrastructure, and resources. Finally, the mega level considers the national and international context, where teaching and

² Simmons, Nicola. 2020. “The 4M Framework As Analytic Lens for SoTL’s Impact: A Study of Seven Scholars.” *Teaching & Learning Inquiry* 8 (1): 76–90.

learning centres engage in research, network with other institutions, and participate in the broader discourse on educational policies and practices.

Key features about the IDEA-UMinho centre

The IDEA-UMinho Centre was created in 2016 to promote and enhance Innovation in teaching and learning at the University of Minho. The mission of the centre is the enhancement of student learning experiences through the educational development and support of all those who teach. Since its inception, the centre strategically prioritized the development of interactions with the academic community to create conditions that facilitate the dissemination of good practices of innovations in teaching and learning practices across the institution. Collaboration and shared learning permeates the centre's activity. Activities are designed with the ultimate goal of building a community that values shared learning among academics. By creating opportunities for faculty members to engage in collaborative projects, workshops, and discussions, the activities encourage the exchange of ideas, pedagogical approaches, and best practices. This collaborative environment promotes a culture of continuous improvement, where faculty members learn from one another and collectively enhance their teaching skills.

A distinctive feature of IDEA-UMinho is that the centre is a multidisciplinary team of academics and co-construction with staff and students. This team incorporates diverse perspectives from experts in different disciplines when planning the centre's actions and initiatives. By embracing a multidisciplinary approach, IDEA-UMinho conveys a powerful message to the academic community: the improvement of teaching and learning is applicable and valuable across all disciplines. Moreover, this collaborative team has played a crucial role in designing initiatives that promote the exchange of teaching and learning ideas and practices among academics, fostering interdisciplinary cooperation regardless of their original disciplinary backgrounds. Working collaboratively with the support staff has been instrumental in implementing digital advancements that enrich the learning experience. On the other hand, involving students in the co-design process ensures that their perspectives and needs are integrated into the planning of the centre's activities, fostering a more inclusive and student-centric approach to education.

Using the 4M framework, the IDEA-UMinho centre actions can be described as follows. At the micro-level, the centre focuses on individuals, offering a comprehensive array of initiatives to enhance their educational practices. These initiatives include programs, which equip faculty and staff with cutting-edge pedagogical approaches and instructional methodologies. Interactive sharing sessions and debates provide platforms for knowledge exchange and critical discussions, fostering a culture of continuous learning and improvement. Asynchronous resources, such as online tutorials and educational materials, enable self-directed learning, accommodating diverse learning preferences. Effective communication channels ensure timely dissemination of relevant information, promoting collaboration and engagement among the academic community.

At the meso-level, the teaching and learning centre engages with departments and informal communities within the institution. Annual project calls encourage academics to initiate multidisciplinary communities to propose educational projects, promoting a culture of creativity and innovation in education. Communities of practice are nurtured to facilitate collaboration among educators with shared interests, allowing for the co-creation of effective

teaching practices and sharing of experiences. Specialized training for degree directors empowers them with the leadership skills and knowledge necessary to drive educational advancements and institutional improvement.

Moving to the macro-level, the teaching and learning centre extends its actions to the university's schools, engaging with educational deans and the student body through informal meetings. These discussions provide valuable insights into specific educational needs and aspirations, helping shape the centre's initiatives to cater to the diverse requirements of different schools. Furthermore, formal inter-sector task forces are established to address broader educational challenges, fostering cooperation and systemic improvements through enhanced collaboration between academics and staff.

At the mega-level, the teaching and learning centre broadens its impact to a national and global scale. It hosts interinstitutional national seminars, bringing together educators from various institutions to share successful educational practices and research outcomes. The centre actively participates in international alliances, such as the Arqus Alliance. These collaborations facilitate cross-cultural exchange, enabling the centre to find international peer support and bring good practices to the advancement of teaching and learning at the university of Minho.

7 key ingredients

Several key ingredients contribute to the success of teaching and learning centres in higher education:

1. First and foremost, central or high-level political advocacy is crucial, particularly in the early days of the creation and establishment of the centre. When the centre receives support and endorsement from senior leaders in the institution or at a broader political level, it can gain the necessary visibility, resources, and influence to be regarded as important by the community and make a meaningful impact.
2. The centre's self-concept regarding its ultimate goals and roles is also important. A clear understanding of its purpose and the value it brings to the institution fosters a sense of direction and focus. The centre should continuously reflect on its mission and adapt its strategies accordingly.
3. Having a diverse and collegial team within the centre is also vital. The team should include members who are academic and no-academic staff, and students. interesting also to consider home to bring in and sector expertise, bringing a range of perspectives and knowledge to support the centre's initiatives. Collaboration and a positive working environment are essential to tailor the best ideas to the reality of each context, foster innovation and effective implementation of programs.
4. Collective resilience is another important ingredient. The centre's team must be adaptable and resilient in the face of challenges and setbacks. This resilience enables the centre to navigate changes and continuously improve its practices to meet evolving needs.
5. The positioning of the centre within the structure of the higher education institution is a crucial factor. It should have a clear and recognized place within the organizational hierarchy, enabling collaboration with other departments and units. This positioning facilitates the integration of teaching and learning initiatives across the institution.

6. The ability to effectively communicate and sense the needs of the academic community is crucial. The centre must actively listen, interpret feedback, and respond to the evolving needs of faculty and students. By understanding the community's concerns and aspirations, the centre can design relevant and impactful programs and services.
7. Flexibility and informality are key factors for success. Teaching and learning centres should be adaptable to changing educational landscapes, pedagogical trends, and emerging technologies. A less formal structure can encourage innovation, experimentation, and collaboration, creating an environment conducive to fostering effective teaching and learning practices.

By incorporating these key ingredients, teaching and learning centres can enhance their impact and contribute significantly to the success of higher education institutions.

In conclusion

The IDEA-UMinho centre vision for the development of faculty development is that of accelerating and supporting the development of an institutional community around teaching and learning through supporting individual academics. Having implemented development programs with a vision of developing an institutional community of teaching has resulted in significant benefits, including enhanced collaboration, improved teaching practices, a supportive network, institutional alignment, and the cultivation of teaching scholarship. IDEA-UMinho thus contributes to the overall quality of education, faculty satisfaction, and student academic experiences within the institution.

CASE STUDY 3

Key elements for successfully implementing the digital in higher educational institutions (University of Murcia, Spain)

Linda Castañeda

Abstract

This case study delves into the implementation of digital tools and processes in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). It stems from a study that explores the dynamics of this emergent activity, relying on the intricate sociomaterial relationships among institutional factors. The case study is grounded in a systematic literature review, identifying crucial factors influencing successful integration. These factors, initially viewed as conditions or characteristics, are subsequently translated into a strategic list of elements that HEI leadership teams in Greek centres of teaching and learning can foster to enhance the implementation process.

Years of extensive experience and research on the implementation of digital technologies in higher education institutions (HEIs) worldwide, has given valuable insights (Esteve, Postigo-Fuentes & Castañeda, 2023³) on how best to approach implementation. Certain key elements that we have learned should be regarded as crucial components of the strategy we employ to spearhead these transformative changes within our HEIs (Figure 3). In the case of centres of teaching and learning some of these elements ought to constitute an integral part of our endeavours and guide our actions:

Aim for a holistic approach

When implementing digital transformation processes in universities, take a holistic and relational perspective. Consider the interrelated nature of various factors and their impact on the overall transformation. The transformation is not a final point but a path and must be considered as an horizon and from whenever we are, we can pursue it. It is important to recognize that each institution has its unique context and challenges, and customization of strategies is necessary; the same as every field of knowledge and centre (faculty, department) needs its own approach to the changes to feel as a part of it.

³ Esteve-Mon, F. M., Postigo-Fuentes, A. Y., & Castañeda, L. (2023). A strategic approach of the crucial elements for the implementation of digital tools and processes in higher education. *Higher Education Quarterly*, 77(3), 558–573. <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12411>

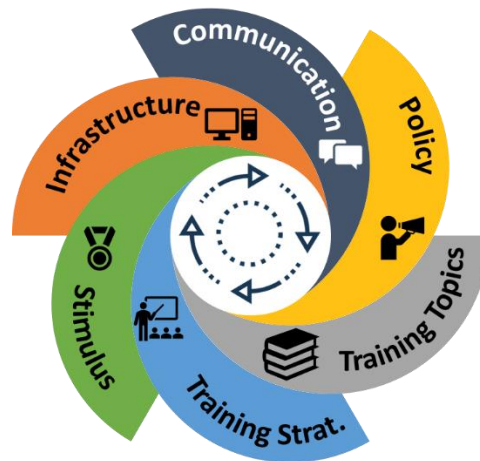


Figure 3 - Crucial elements of implementation of digital tools and processes (Esteve, Postigo-Fuentes & Castañeda, 2023)

Infrastructure

One of the crucial factors for successful digital implementation is the availability of appropriate infrastructure, not just good devices, but personnel greatly connected to the context (as shown in figure 4). HEIs need to invest in the necessary technological resources and ensure they are adequately maintained. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct a thorough analysis of the current infrastructure and identify any gaps or deficiencies. Ensure that there is a specific infrastructure in place to support the digital transformation efforts. This includes technological provisions, installations, and off-campus access considerations. Additionally, considering the specific context and needs of different stakeholders, including teachers and students (at their homes, and the community infrastructures), is important for effective infrastructure planning.

Create a supportive environment that reduces barriers to adoption. This includes ensuring the availability of resources and support, both technical and administrative. Establish communities of support to foster collaboration and sharing of best practices.

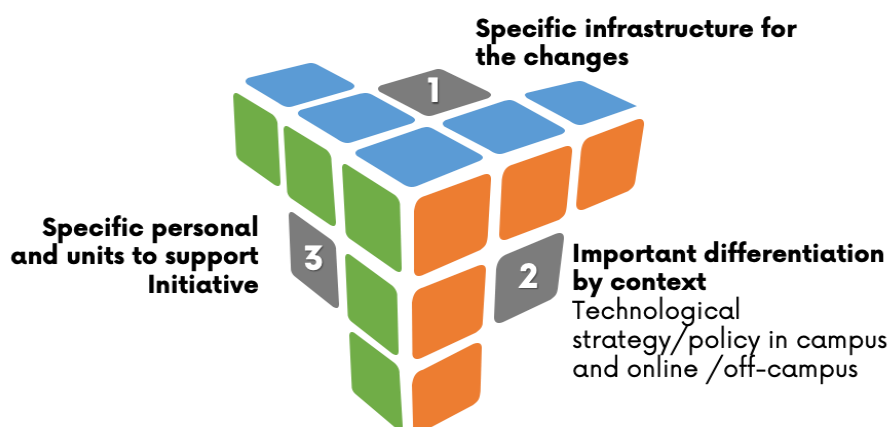


Figure 4 - Key Challenges in Implementing Digital Tools and Processes for Infrastructure Development

Policy

Developing clear policies and strategies is vital for digital transformation in HEIs. As it can be seen in Figure 5, there are many important policies to develop for this purpose. It involves analyzing the institution's needs, setting goals, and integrating digital strategies into wider institutional strategies for educational innovation. Strong institutional leadership, coordination, and planning are essential for successful policy implementation. Effective time management strategies, external collaboration, and engagement of students and other stakeholders are also important factors to consider. Establish a leadership team to drive the implementation process and coordinate the efforts effectively.

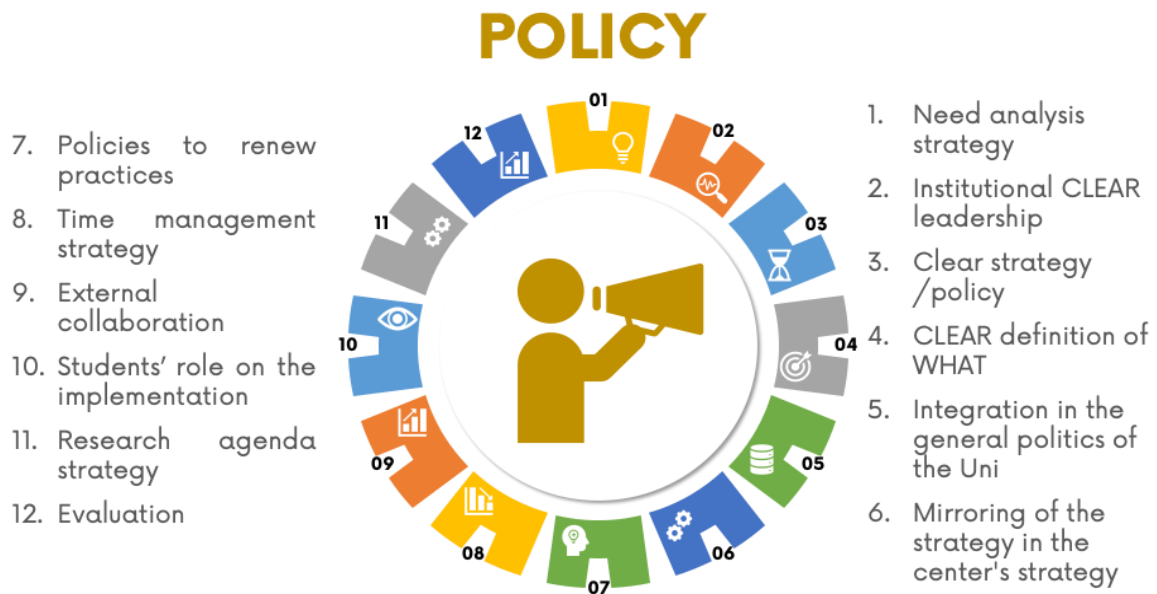


Figure 5 - Critical policies for Implementing Digital Tools and Processes

Training

Training plays a critical role in digital transformation. Faculty skill development, both technical and pedagogical, is crucial for successful implementation. Training should go beyond basic workshops and include other professional development modalities (Figure 6), such as mentoring programs, peer-to-peer support, one-to-one assistance, and identification of faculty champions. Training should align with faculty needs and proficiency levels and focus on enhancing familiarity, confidence, and understanding of the implementation process. Students and administrative staff should also receive training to ensure their effective participation.



Figure 6 - Professional Development training modalities

Tailor the training programs to address the specific needs and proficiency levels of participants (Figure 7), beyond the traditional approaches that focus only on skills regarding the digital process or tool to implement. Emphasize training programs to enhance understanding and competence related to the implementation of digital tools and processes. Provide training on key concepts, basic skills, and pedagogy, but do not forget to also remark the training regarding the relevance of the idea that is being implemented, the easiness of it –it is affordable to the participants, the usefulness of the idea for those that are participating on its implementation and for all the stakeholders, as well as on how to continue learning about this idea –metacognition.

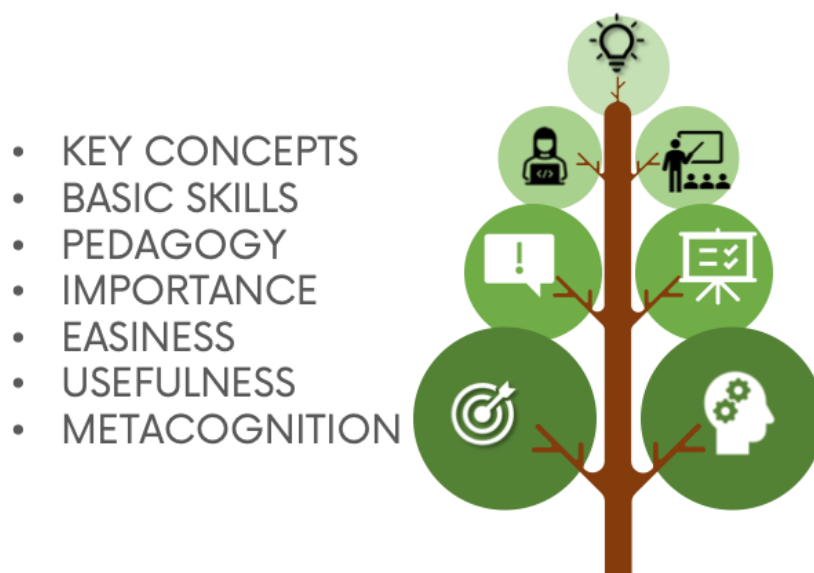


Figure 7 - Key Professional Development Topics for Implementing Digital Tools and Processes

Stimulus Strategies

Motivation and incentives are significant factors in driving digital implementation. Providing rewards, recognition, financial incentives, tenure and promotion plans, and time release for faculty can contribute to their motivation. Creating a supportive and enthusiastic environment within the institution can foster motivation among faculty and students. Additionally, managing resources effectively and considering time management, reusable resources, and research-focused practices contribute to successful implementation. Designating faculty champions and fostering leadership can also promote digital transformation.

Communication

Effective communication is key to the success of digital implementation and an effective communication strategy includes many actions, as those presented in Figure 8, that support the collective objective. Clearly defining the concept, framework, and strategy to be adopted ensures a shared understanding among the institution's stakeholders. It is important to involve the entire community in decision-making processes and disseminate good practices. Informing and engaging stakeholders, including faculty, students, and administrators, helps create a supportive environment and encourages collaboration. Disseminate good practices and success stories to inspire and inform others.

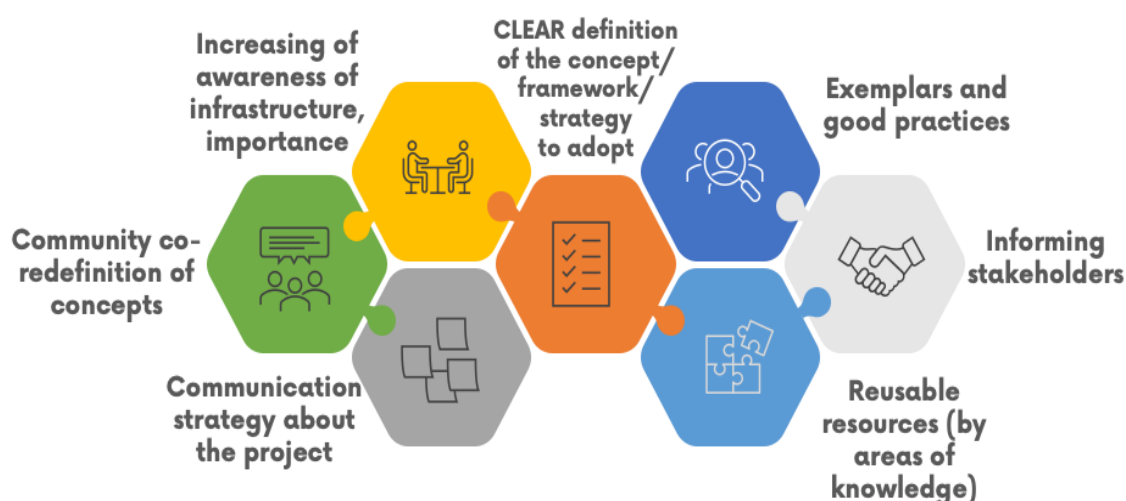


Figure 8 - Critical actions on Institutional communication for Implementing Digital Tools and Processes

Pedagogical Considerations

Taking a learner-centered approach and considering students' participation, satisfaction, and demographic context are important for successful implementation. Emphasize student-centered approaches and prioritize students' participation and satisfaction. Involve students in the implementation process and consider their perspectives and expectations. Enhance students' ICT skills and provide a supportive learning environment that meets their needs.

In conclusion

Overall, these factors are interconnected and should be viewed holistically to guide the digital transformation process in HEIs. Recognize that digital transformation is an ongoing process. Embrace a mindset of continuous improvement and development. By considering the identified topics and crucial factors, institutional leaders can design effective implementation plans and overcome barriers to digital transformation.

CASE STUDY 4

Teaching, Learning and Student Engagement: The Possibilities Created Through Distributed Leadership (Munster Technological University (MTU), Ireland)

Marese Bermingham and Pio Fenton

Abstract

Munster Technological University presents its approach to distributed leadership and outlines why universities may benefit from this approach. Through the lens of learning & teaching and student engagement the case study presents a number of initiatives - from a comprehensive suite of activities - that leverages a philosophy of distributed leadership.

Introduction

There is a growing acceptance of the opportunities afforded through a distributed leadership mindset supported by a range of student and staff facing initiatives geared at furthering teaching and learning excellence and enhancing student engagement. There is a strong rationale behind adopting this mindset and its effectiveness can be illustrated with reference to a number of initiatives offered within MTU. Finally, we outline the value of linking teaching, learning, assessment and student engagement (TLASE) supports to a reference point that may be used to assess their value and impact.

MTU and Ireland Context

The Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU) at Munster Technological University was established in MTU and is paralleled ever since by a Student Engagement Office (AnSEO). Both are under the leadership of Marese Bermingham with 19 staff supporting a wide range of activity that is both staff and student facing. Philosophically, operationally, and 'externally' the TLU and AnSEO are closely aligned, recognizing that student engagement and teaching and learning activities are 'separate doors' that lead to the 'same room'. Since their establishment, the TLU and AnSEO have led, aligned with or supported a range of national initiatives. Thus, both the TLU and AnSEO recognize the value – in the Irish context – of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (NF) and the National Student Engagement Programme (NSTEP). These bodies are nationally funded bodies reflective of the respective importance of teaching and learning excellence and student engagement in

Higher Education as reflected in Government level policy by respective Irish administrations. Interactions between MTU (through the TLU and AnSEO) and both the National Forum and NSTEP contributed to a very positive sense of purpose within MTU and a meaningful shaping of national policy as influenced by MTU's activities.

Distributed Leadership

Traditional forms of leadership often 'centre' the leadership capability and responsibility in one person or a small team, usually placed at the apex of the organisation or unit. This can be very useful being quite clearly structured and familiar. However, other approaches to leadership exist. One such example is distributed leadership. Outcomes in systems using distributed leadership often find increased innovation, enhanced engagement, and better resilience and adaptability. However, distributed leadership remains a poorly defined but well understood concept. Effective distributed leadership is a tendency to focus on the practice of leadership (rather than the 'people' of leadership while being primarily concerned with the co-performance of leadership and the reciprocal interdependencies that shape that leadership practice (Spillane, 2006⁴). Significant work by Harris (2013⁵) identifies that "Distributed leadership means actively brokering, facilitating and supporting the leadership of others. It does not mean, as some would suggest, that everyone leads or that everyone is a leader." Typically, it is recognized that distributed leadership is built upon trust, support and empowerment and is not a more acceptable version of delegation.

Distributed Leadership and Higher Education

While distributed leadership may be effective in a variety of settings, there are aspects of Higher education – and particularly certain inherent characteristics - that make them particularly amenable to distributed leadership:

- Distributed leadership recognizes and leverages the diversity of higher education settings, allowing for a broader range of expertise to be used in operationalizing innovation.
- The tradition of shared governance in higher education accords with the principles of distributed leadership, as it recognizes the value of collaborative decision-making in shaping the direction of the institution.
- Higher education institutions often foster a culture of collegiality and collaboration. This collaborative culture provides a fertile ground for distributed leadership to thrive, as individuals are already familiar with working together and sharing responsibilities.
- Higher education institutions place a high value on intellectual autonomy and academic freedom. Distributed leadership aligns with these principles by recognizing and respecting the autonomy and expertise of individuals within the institution.

⁴ Spillane, James. (2005). Distributed Leadership. *The Educational Forum*, 69, 143-150. 10.1080/00131720508984678.

⁵ Harris, A. (2013). Distributed Leadership: Friend or Foe? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 41(5), 545–554. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213497635>

Exemplars – MTU

Here we present some examples that outline the potentiality of distributed leadership.

1. **Transitions at MTU:** This programme is an initiative of the AnSEO office at MTU. While most projects under this scheme address particular concerns of individual departments with regard to enhancing the first-year transition, projects with a focus on other key student transition points in other places within the system are also supported (e.g. from undergraduate to postgraduate study). Applications are sought from lecturers or other staff members and these are assessed by a panel of experts. The presentation outlined that seed funding acted as an encouragement to staff members to apply but was often left unused at the end of the project. The seed funding is seen as an acknowledgment of the staff member's initiative but is not otherwise integral to the success of the initiative. The number of applications under this scheme has increased each year.
2. **Learning Communities:** These are “powerful educational practice, associated with enhanced academic performance, integration of academic and social experiences; gains in multiple areas of skill, competence, and knowledge and overall satisfaction with the college experience⁶.” In MTU 50+ learning communities have been established. During the presentation we outlined the impact of two such communities focusing on disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning communities. This form of distributed leadership allows for student-facing staff members to enact their own solutions and initiatives while supporting peers and enhancing the student experience without the ‘heavy hand’ of multiple layers of academic management.
3. **Leadership Development Programmes:** The audience heard how leadership development supports were put in place which recognise the active role that individuals and teams play in implementing TLASE initiatives. These programmes were conscious of the fact that many of our leaders may not be managers (by title). The conference heard how LEAD@MTU was an initiative funded by Ireland's Higher Education Authority (HEA).

⁶ Zhao, C.-M., & Kuh, G. D. (2004). Adding value: Learning communities and student engagement. *Research in Higher Education*, 45(2), 115–138.

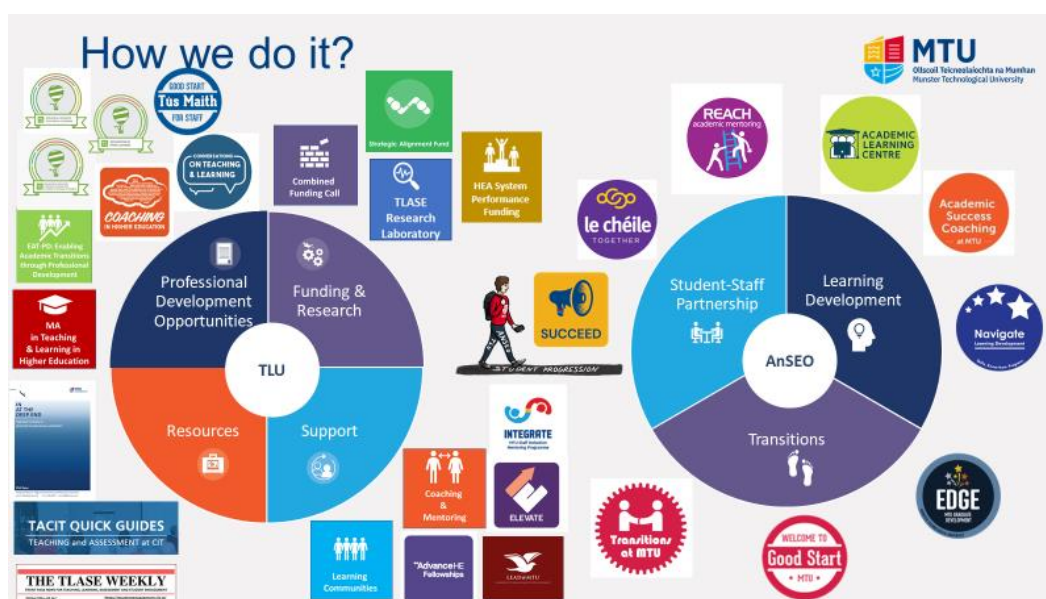


Figure 9 - An overview of initiatives and supports at MTU's TLU and AnSeo

Conclusions

All initiatives of the TLU and AnSeo are mapped to the Student Success indicators as laid down in the National Student Survey in the Irish context. This allows the TLU and AnSeo to assess the success of various departments within MTU against the uptake on initiatives offered by the TLU and AnSeo. In the absence of a national programme comparable to the national student survey, we encourage individual or groups of universities to assess their own initiatives against some predefined priorities. Ideally, those priorities are measurable in some way. There does not need to be an exhaustive set of priorities, but perhaps something that can be translated from existing operational practices.

Distributed Leadership is not a cynical exercise. Rather it is a reflection of the unique setting that a University is which acknowledges the impact of activity of interactions between students and staff. It acknowledges that innovation and collaboration can be fostered without requiring the expending of enormous resources. It acknowledges that empowering people is better for our colleagues and the organisation. To implement this type of leadership mentality we propose the following:

- Create training opportunities in the leadership development space by providing in-house or intra-university programmes to help staff develop their leadership capacity.
- Address the distinction between leadership and managerialism within the organisation. Allow those without manager titles to recognise their actions as being leadership oriented.
- Implement coaching and mentoring programmes that support colleagues as they navigate new challenges within the organisation.
- Recognise and reward initiative. Consider an in house recognition scheme.

Broader recognition for success is also required. Where your university is practising excellence in an area seek external validation of same. This might be through in industry body, a national body or a European forum of some sort.

CASE STUDY 5

We are 'STRONGER' and 'SMARTER' if we work together (National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, Ireland)

Terry Maguire and Eileen McEvoy

Abstract

⁷This case study discusses the development of the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education (www.teachingandlearning.ie) (National Forum) as an exemplar of how the network of teaching and learning centres in Greece could develop. The teaching and learning ecosystem established by the National Forum since 2013 has contributed to the structure, coherence, alignment, connectedness, informed decision-making, and efficiency that now characterise teaching and learning in Irish higher education. The case study outlines both the challenges and opportunities inherent in setting up the National Forum and shares insights and key learnings to consider in the Greek context.

Introduction

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) completed a review of Irish in higher education in 2004. The OECD identified a number of strategic priorities including the enhancement of teaching and learning and a 'quantum leap' in investment in higher education (OECD, 2004). The Irish government responded with a multimillion strategic innovation fund (SIF) that was allocated on a competitive basis but was time consuming for institutions to administer. A key aspect of the SIF fund was the need for inter-institutional collaboration. The fund supported the development of the National Digital Learning Repository (NDLR) to enhance the sharing of digital learning content and teaching experience across Universities, Institutes of Technology and associated Colleges funded by the Higher Education Authority (HEA)' (McAvinia and Maguire, 2011)⁸. The wide range of collaborative projects aimed at developing and disseminating innovation in teaching and learning, contributed to greatly

⁷ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, Review of Higher Education in Ireland (Paris: OECD, 2004), 18.

⁸ McAvinia C and Maguire T (2011) Evaluating the National Digital Learning Repository (NDLR): new models of communities of practice, AISHE-J, Volume 3, Number 1 Spring 2011.

enhanced teaching quality and capability across the sector. Building on this initial investment, following a National sectoral consultation in 2012 the National Forum was established. The National Forum was allocated an annual budget of circa 2.25 million from which 1.3 million euros was distributed to [support enhancement initiatives](#) across the higher education sector.

Partnership with those who learn, teach and shape policy and practice in Irish higher education has been crucial to the National Forum's progress towards ensuring teaching and learning is at the centre of sectoral enhancement and innovation. Since its establishment, the National Forum has fostered a strong relationship with students, staff, senior managers, and partner organisations. The Union of Students in Ireland (USI), and the body of students it represents, have been active, engaged partners in all National Forum work. Staff across the sector have been represented and engaged through the [National Forum Associates](#) who are teaching and learning experts and middle managers representing each Irish higher education institution. Senior managers across the sector have also been essential partners, sharing their leadership perspectives and insights. The work of the National Forum is further supported and informed by close collaboration with policy partners, bodies representing higher education institutions, and other key partner organisations e.g., [Quality Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\)](#) across all levels of education e.g., [SOLAS](#).

Ireland's [National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030](#) had outlined the importance of ensuring the centrality of teaching and learning in Irish higher education and the National Forum became the national body responsible for leading and advising on the enhancement of teaching and learning across the sector. Its original remit included the following: develop a national professional development framework; support open access to teaching and learning resources and research outputs within the context of building digital capacity in Irish higher education; support collaborative projects in teaching and learning that advance the key strategic priorities; develop a national awards scheme; and establish and maintain a strong evidence base for the advancement of national strategic priorities in teaching and learning.

The challenges faced by the National Forum in the early stages included the need to remain impartial. The National Forum was not situated within a higher institution but in its own dedicated office space. Extending its reach beyond the teaching and learning advocates was also difficult. Once institutions started to work together, facilitated by the National Forum, it was clear that the higher education sector lacked a common language. Senior managers in particular were sceptical of the need for a dedicated national teaching and learning enhancement funding. The National Forum had funding to distribute. This for the first time was allocated in a very open and transparent way, supported by international panels with built in accountability and a requirement that all resources were open and shared. This was initially very challenging for the sector to accept. It was also difficult to demonstrate impact. A review of the National Forum in 2017 highlighted the need to take a more strategic approach to future development but highlighted that the National Forum *'is not a project but rather an essential component of the national-level infrastructure for higher education. Therefore, the mission of the National Forum is essential for the continuous development of higher education and teaching and learning in Ireland.'* ([External review of the National Forum, 2017](#)).

Following the review of the National Forum further funding was allocated for an additional four-year period. A national consultation conducted in 2018 provided an opportunity for the vision, mission and key strategic priorities of the National Forum to be articulated, through its [2019-21 Strategy](#). The National Forum was working with the sector for the sector and the clear articulation of agreed priorities around [professional development](#), [teaching and learning in a](#)

[digital world, teaching and learning within and across disciplines](#) and [student success](#) clearly articulated with identified success indicators helped to communicate the role the National Forum had in supporting teaching and learning enhancement across the sector.

The National Forum has gained considerable traction internationally, with the European Commission and OECD regularly taking notice of the work of the Forum and seeking it's input in international policy and enhancement developments. On a practical level, the existence of the National Forum adds value to the system in a number of ways:

- **The National Forum has credibility with the sector** - It acts as a link between national and local policy and practice – ensures that national developments are understood by the wider higher education community and that national decision-making is informed by the experiences and views of those who teach, learn and lead.
- **The National Forum keeps the sector informed and up to date** - It gathers evidence related to teaching and learning that informs important decision-making.
- **It optimises use of funding** - It ensures funding is directed in ways that make it most impactful and that funding structures and processes are endorsed by those who will engage with them.
- **It is crucial to ambitions re digital transformation** - It has been at the forefront of all developments with respect to digital in higher education since 2013, building evidence, collaboration and expertise.
- **It has well-established, effective approaches to mainstreaming** - Through strategic alignment, evidence building, fostering understanding, and building capacity and capability, massive strides have been made in areas such as student success, assessment, building digital capacity and enhancing professional development of those who teach.
- **It leverages efficiencies and economies of scale** - It facilitates collaborative work across institutions, and the sharing of its outputs, thus maximising the value of human and capital investments in the sector...it is the rising tide that raises all boats with respect to teaching and learning.
- **It works effectively in partnership with students** (Partnership with USI, Student Intern, Student Associate Assembly)

The National Forum approach can be summarised as follows;

- Evidence-based
- Knowing what works and why
- Informing and being informed by policy
- Working with the entire higher education community
- Working with the sector for the sector
- Learning from and being connected to what is happening internationally.

A review of the [National Forum website](#) provides good insight into the work that was completed in collaboration with the sector. Since January 2022 the National Forum has been put on a sustainable basis under the aegis of the Higher Education Authority. It remains to be seen how

the more structured approach of a public body influences the work, impact and perception of the National Forum by the higher education sector into the future.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the report outlines some key recommendations from the international advisory panel based on the key topic of the case study they have presented. These recommendations capture the key learnings from their personal experience.

The panel hopes that the recommendations presented will provide some useful guidance to those involved in the enhancement of teaching and learning within the Greek higher education sector.

The panel are happy to answer any queries and provide further guidance on any of the recommendations detailed, if required.

The recommendations are structured as follows:

- Integration the student voice (Case Study 1)
- The development of an institutional teaching and learning centre. (Case study 2)
- Working towards Digital Transformation within a higher education institution (Case study 3)
- Building capacity for teaching and learning enhancement through developing distributed leadership, learning communities and initiatives that support teaching, learning, assessment and student engagement (Case study 4)
- Recommendations to support the future development of the network of teaching and learning centres in Greece (Case study 5)

CASE STUDY 1

Recommendations for integrating the student voice

- Consider the place of the student voice in your institution and how it might support the impact of your teaching and learning centre. Create a statement that explains the purpose for bringing the student voice to your work. Promote that ambition through institutional committees.
- Review examples of formal and informal structures that enable the student voice to influence institutional decision making and decide which ones best align with your institution. Implement some pilot activities at your institution. Start small and build the case for wider implementation.
- Identify a small group of students to inform your work in the centre and show case the benefit of student engagement within your own team. Once success has been demonstrated this example of co-creation can spread across your university.
- If possible, promote (and fund) some co-creation projects that bring students and staff together to exemplify the new approach adopted by your centre.
- Your teaching and learning centre needs to be the champion for this work and therefore must live the values of student engagement and co-creation. The TLC team must therefore always (obviously) show how student voice was involved in decision making processes.

CASE STUDY 2

Recommendations for developing an institutional teaching and learning centre

- Craft a mission statement with goals that are relevant and clear to your academic community.
- The mission should be recognized as crucial by leadership and all sectors within the academia – academics, staff, students.
- The mission of a TLC should encompass multiple dimensions, not solely focusing on providing development and training opportunities.
- Align the mission with good international practices, especially those from regions closely related to Greece.
- Strongly consider prioritizing the development of institutional communities dedicated to enhancing education.
- Be intentional in terms of the design of the centre's actions at the level of individuals, departments, schools and external stakeholders.
- Consider how the diversity of your academic community can be represented in the centre staff and/or initiatives – enhancing teaching and learning need to happen across all disciplines.
- Work in partnership with educational technology support staff.
- Co-design initiatives and co-create sessions with staff and students.
- Actions should be designed to target individual members of the academic community, as well as more complex organizational levels, such as departments and the entire institution itself.
- Actions should be developed in partnership with other stakeholders of the institution, ensuring that TLC initiatives do not compete with actions from individual units (e.g., schools, departments, etc.).
- TLCs are service-oriented units, providing institutions with services and, therefore, should be attentive to and responsive to the institution's needs.
- Staff, in particular educational technology support staff, and students should be actively engaged in the design, delivery, and evaluation of actions as much as possible.
- Consider how to use institutional communication channels and social media strategically to establish and maintain credibility and reputation.

CASE STUDY 3 ^(a)

Recommendations for embedding digital transformation within a higher education institution

- Digital transformation is not an arrival point, it is a path, please consider the diverse range of approaches and situations across institutions, and decide yours.

- Prioritize creating specific digital transformation plans or integrating digital transformation into general strategic plans, based on your university's unique needs and goals.

Glocalize your solutions. The national strategy gives you support, but the translation of it to the institutional strategy, and from it to centres and even to departments or groups will make it more feasible.

- Digital transformation is much more than the provision of modern digital infrastructure on our campuses. While investing in infrastructure is essential, also consider contextual and community-oriented aspects of digital transformation.

Open your eyes to the off-campus conditions of your students—and teachers—when planning teaching and learning scenarios. You don't just learn/teach at university, you don't just learn on university apps.

- Digital transformation is a system-wide strategy for the whole institution, not just for teachers. Align your digital transformation efforts with your university's mission to ensure a cohesive and purpose-driven approach.

If teachers –or students– are the only ones forced to change in a process, resistance to change will be greater.

- While embracing technical clarity and efficiency in digital governance, be cautious not to overlook broader aspects of digital transformation that may impact your institution.

Be clear on what are the goals (observable, educational) and engage the whole community with them.

CASE STUDY 3 ^(b)

Recommendations for embedding digital transformation within a higher education institution

- While targeting faculty and administrative staff in your digital transformation plans, don't forget to involve and address the needs of students for a comprehensive approach.

Convince students of the importance of transformations, engage them and get them to help. They can make materials for other students, they can help teachers, they can encourage teachers, etc.

- Engage in transformative debates within your institution to explore and redefine the mission and digitalization strategies that align with your long-term vision. It is crucial to debate about education, about what to teach, how to do it, and why.

Design Thinking Dynamics to start talking about pedagogy are crucial. Use some hands-on materials (as the ACAD toolkit or similar, CUTE CANVAS, etc.) to create safe spaces to debate.

CASE STUDY 4 ^(a)

Recommendations for building capacity for teaching and learning enhancement through developing distributed leadership capacity, learning communities and initiatives that support teaching, learning, assessment and student engagement

Leadership & Distributed Leadership

- Invest, generally, in understanding leadership development in the context of your university. Seek to ensure that leadership development supports are in place to support those working in the coalface of Teaching, Learning, Assessment and Student Engagement (TLASE).
- Mentoring programmes are an easy way to start such leadership development activities. A mentoring programme fosters knowledge exchange, collaboration, communication and a sense of belonging.
- Use the language of leadership within your learning and teaching units. Leadership is required for it to be a success so it is best to name it as such.
- Specifically, relating to distributed leadership, first recognise any existing activities that require 'local leadership' (e.g. any interesting initiatives within departments or programmes) and try to give it prominence if it has been successful. Hold it up as an exemplar of good practice and recognise those that drove the initiative as leaders.
- Put in place supports that support distributed leadership. This may be at a very practical level. How does your learning and teaching centre support an individual (or group) who has decided that they want to implement a new practice (for example)?
- Provide nominal but useful funding to initiatives that may support TLASE activities. We recommend an annual or bi-annual funding call, externally reviewed potentially.
- Allow people who are leading within their spaces, to share best practice through various informal networks.

Recommendations for building capacity for teaching and learning enhancement through developing distributed leadership capacity, learning communities and initiatives that support teaching, learning, assessment and student engagement

Learning Communities

- Learning Communities allow for a bottom-up approach to innovation and excellence. In providing a little seed-funding, there is huge potential to allow interested groups of colleagues to implement improvements and experiments within their disciplines. Harness the potential for interdisciplinarity in learning communities is substantial.
- Structure the learning communities so that the emphasis is on reward. Recognise any accomplishments. Do not bed the work of learning communities into formal departmental structures such that it might become a reporting mechanism.
- Ensure that learning communities have a named support beyond their normal reporting manager(s). This support should focus on advice and guidance and help to disseminate good practice.

Teaching, Learning, Assessment, Student Engagement (TLASE)

- We strongly encourage that all TLASE initiatives are branded. This helps with internal visibility and ensures that good practice becomes bedded-in. It also helps to ensure that the initiatives of your learning and teaching centres appear cogent and purposeful.
- Review all TLASE support activities on an ongoing basis. Be willing to experiment and change as needed. Listen to staff and students and demonstrate your listening by responding to their suggestions and ideas.
- Look at activities in universities across the globe. There is a wealth of good practice out there and sometimes, with some modification for cultural, funding or political differences, it can act as an easily implementable initiative for your university.
- Student Engagement and Learning & Teaching activities are two sides of the same coin. We like to think of them as separate doors to the same room. Key to our success to date has been ensuring that both these activities are aligned. An ideal approach, in our view, is to aspire to a centre that is both staff and student facing.

CASE STUDY 5

Recommendations to support the future development of the network of teaching and learning centres in Greece

- Together you are smarter, together you can do more.
- A successful network thinks at a national level rather than an institutional level. In order to work effectively the network needs to be nimble, consultative, responsive and have processes in place to ensure an ever-changing team to support innovation. It needs to listen, persist, and believe and sometimes it needs to be able to resist.
- A clear and agreed vision/strategy is required to guide a collaborative approach.
- Be open and transparent in all your activities.
- Be representative and neutral.
- Be connected at system level help to inform and be informed by policy
- Believe that the potential to enhance teaching and learning already exists within those in the higher education sector in Greece and that your role is to respect, nurture and support it.
- Remember that nothing is worth anything if the value of teaching and learning is not understood and recognised.
- An inclusive and partnership approach with staff and students needs to be embedded from the outset.
- Use the expertise of those in the sector and their commitment and motivation to support development and to drive innovation.
- Building trust and working relationships takes time.
- Evidence-based decision making is essential.
- Challenge but do not overwhelm the sector, changing embedded practices and approaches takes time and lots of conversation and consensus building.!
- Reach beyond the teaching and learning champions. You need to ensure you have 'a thousand people take one step, rather than a few people taking a thousand steps'.
- As a network remember to remain future looking to ensure you help build capacity in the sector to respond to upcoming developments.
- Some projects/evidence gathering is better suited to a national approach rather than an institutional approach. The terms of reference for these projects need to be agreed collaboratively. Having a neutral chair in the process of developing the ToR helps.
- Funding is needed to support teaching and learning enhancement at a sectoral level. The funding needs to be multiannual to allow for strategic development, it needs to be specifically for teaching and learning enhancement and it needs to be accountable.

5. CONCLUSION

As we come to the end of this book, we find ourselves at the crossroads of innovation and possibility. Through insightful case studies and expert recommendations, we have unveiled the key to shaping the future of teaching and learning. From empowering the student voice to embracing digital innovations, from fostering collaborative leadership to championing inclusive practices, the array of strategies and insights presented here forms a rich tapestry of best practices.

The five case studies presented in this book offered a wealth of insights and experiences that can significantly influence higher education. However, the question arises: How can we leverage the value of these case studies to bring about meaningful change in teaching and learning environments? The success stories and recommendations included in the book can be used as *evidence* to support initiatives that promote innovative teaching practices, faculty development, and student engagement. Policy makers may rely on them to make informed decisions about educational initiatives which encourage and incentivize the adoption of technology in education, promote equity and inclusion and support ongoing training and development for educators.

However, it is important to keep in mind that each case study showcases unique approaches that have succeeded in specific institutional settings. Therefore, it's essential to recognize that these approaches may need adaptation to fit local contexts. Institutions should study these cases and consider how elements of their success can be incorporated into their own teaching and learning practices.

In closing, this book marks not just an end but the beginning of an exciting new chapter in the evolution of the Network of Learning and Teaching Centers in Greek Universities. As we reflect on the wealth of knowledge and experiences shared within these pages, we are compelled to look forward with unwavering optimism and determination. The path ahead is illuminated by our shared vision:

- to broaden horizons through international collaborations, enriching teaching and learning practices on a global scale;
- to champion research and innovation as the guiding beacons, shaping the very future of education;
- to advocate tirelessly for policies that nurture excellence in teaching and learning, influencing the national and international educational setting;
- to foster a vibrant and supportive community among LTCs, where the exchange of ideas fuels continuous growth and shared learning;
- to place students at the forefront, empowering them to actively shape their educational journey for more meaningful and impactful experiences;
- to ensure the sustainability of LTCs, securing the long-term resources and support needed to maintain their momentum and enduring impact.

Thus, the conclusion of this book is not the end; it is a call to action. Together, we embark on a journey of transformation, innovation, and excellence in education. The future is bright, and it's ours to shape.

In the ever-evolving landscape of education, excellence begins at the heart of innovation – the Learning and Teaching Centers (LTCs). " Teaching Transformation in Higher Education: Success Stories from Learning and Teaching Centers" invites you on a transformative journey through the dynamic world of these centers, where the future of teaching and learning is being shaped.

This comprehensive guide, enriched by recommendations and insightful case studies On harnessing the power of student voices, embracing digital innovations and fostering distributed leadership is a key to unlocking the potential of education and a testament to the collaborative spirit that drives progress in academia.

Join us in embracing innovation, enhancing collaboration, and championing excellence. The future of education starts here – together.



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