

Title: Fostering a healthy remote learning environment for students and educators

**Presenter: Ruairi O’Gallchoir, plus members of the EDTL Student Intern team
Irish Universities Association**

Summary: To explore the shared responsibility of both students and educators in creating an online learning environment that both fosters a sense of community wellbeing and optimism.

Theme : Ensuring that staff/ student morale is kept at the forefront of education.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Know how to effectively utilise their Virtual Learning Environment and other educational tools to ensure students are not overwhelmed and confused by online learning.
- Recognise how to integrate wellbeing into other aspects of learning, such as during exam time.
- How the EDTL team uses social media to promote student wellbeing.
- The advantages of creating a learning environment that is both positive and inspiring.

Outline

The Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning (EDTL) project is a 3 year project aimed at enhancing the digital attributes and educational experiences of Irish university students through enabling the mainstreamed and integrated use of digital technologies across the teaching and learning process. Since August 2020, the EDTL Student Intern team, comprising at least one student in each partner university, has collaborated on a series of events and resources for students and academics with the aim of making the transition to online learning as stress-free and beneficial as possible. The resources include infographics containing information relating to online assessment and general advice for remote learning, as well as webinars designed to convey the student experience of online learning to academic staff.

One of the threads throughout all the resources we have created so far is wellbeing, and the role it plays in ensuring that online teaching can be conducted effectively. For example, in our “EDTL Approach for Students: Online Exams” infographic, there is a section dedicated to providing advice for students on wellbeing – including topics such as preparation and taking regular breaks.

We also address the topic of wellness in our webinars for academic staff. Student interns have provided feedback to many educators on their approach to online learning in these sessions, and we also describe how the Virtual Learning Environment plays such a major role in allowing both students and academics to make online learning as stress-free as possible.

Another platform for promoting student morale is the EDTL Instagram account, run by a subgroup of Interns but featuring contributions from all. This account promotes both physical and mental wellness in the context of study, and the account is largely aimed at students. Content includes Question and Answer sessions, tips from student interns drawing from their own experience and bite-size resources created specifically for Instagram by the team.

Activities and Approximate Timings

In this student-led session, the IUA EDTL Student Intern will go through briefly the formation of the Student Intern team and how they have learned to work together virtually. He and the student interns will show how the EDTL Student Intern team has utilised the EDTL Blog, Webinar Series and Social Media in order to convey the importance of promoting staff and student morale to all university stakeholders.

References and sources

Irish Universities Association 2019, *Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning in Irish Universities*, viewed 29 January 2021, <https://www.iua.ie/ourwork/learning-teaching/digital-learning/>

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Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning 2020, *EDTL Approach: For Students by Students*, viewed 29 January 2021, <https://edtl.blog/the-edtl-approach/the-edtl-approach-for-students-by-students/>

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