Session title: Managing the balancing act of process and people in programme design

Session type: Lightening Talk

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Co-presenter(s): Rob Lowney, Dublin City University (DCU)

Session summary:
Despite the proliferation of learning design frameworks and processes, little account seems to be taken of the more human aspects of programme design. This lightning talk will outline DCU's approach, derived from the Henderson model in Stefani (2009) and augmented by the 'EDTL Approach' from the Irish Universities Association (2020). It will explore 'people' related scenarios that sometimes arise and efforts made by DCU academic developers to tailor the process to different contexts.

Session outline:
"This is really easy," said no one ever about designing a programme or curriculum in higher education. Many universities have implemented learning design frameworks and processes to support the design process (MacNeill & Beetham, 2022) . Yet few off-the-shelf approaches take account of the people involved and the human tensions that may emerge through the (re)design process. Some of the scenarios include:

- Staff don't always know what they want from a programme design process

- Teams don't (initially) share a common vision of the programme

- Staff have difficulties devising appropriate Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs)

- Team members may not want to relinquish or overhaul certain modules (i.e. those they 'own' or have taught for some time)

- Programme Leaders may not feel adequately empowered to bring about change

The speakers will describe how they have adapted the Henderson model described in Stefani (2009, p.51) to address common 'people-related' scenarios, and how they have augmented it with the 'EDTL Approach', a suite of practical guidance prompts for effective online and blended teaching produced for the Irish higher education sector. They will share initial reflections on the impact of this approach and invite feedback from the SEDA community so as to refine it. Other educational developers facing similar 'people-related' challenges in programme design may find merit in the DCU approach. Drawing on Van Note Chism's (1998) point about the need for enabling conditions to exist within the institution to effect change, this talk will aim to acknowledge and support the role of educational developers in balancing the challenges of programme design.

References:
Irish Universities Association (2020). The EDTL Approach for Effective Remote Teaching. Enhancing Digital Teaching and Learning (EDTL) Project. Available at: https://edtl.blog/the-edtl-approach/

MacNeill, S. and Beetham, H. (2022). Approaches to curriculum and learning design across UK higher education. Available at: https://beta.jisc.ac.uk/reports/approaches-to-curriculum-and-learning-design-across-uk-higher-education

Stefani, L. (2009). Planning Teaching and Learning: Curriculum Design and Development. In H. Fry, S. Ketteridge, & S. Marshall, S. Eds. A handbook for teaching and learning in higher education: Enhancing academic practice. London: Routledge.

Van Note Chism, N. (1998). 'The Role of Educational Developers in Institutional Change: From the Basement Office to the Front Office', To Improve the Academy, 17(1), pp. 141–153. doi: 10.1002/j.2334-4822.1998.tb00347.x.