What is L2L?

L2L was a two year project funded by the National Forum's Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund. It looked at *the Professional Development Framework for all Staff who Teach in Higher Education* (PDF) through the lens of library staff to see how it supported our professional development needs. The project involved three Libraries from the Technological Higher Education sector in Ireland – namely Institute of Technology Carlow, Dundalk Institute of Technology and the Dublin Institute of Technology (now Technological University Dublin).

Facilitating learning is inherent to the work of Library staff. This happens formally when we teach and through all of our informal learning activities, such as space curation and information retrieval applications. Although our institutions are constantly striving to support our professional development, the diversity of the roles we perform and our unique role as 'third space professionals' in library education means we are dealing with complex, evolving and complicated needs. We sought a Professional Development Framework that addressed these circumstances. While many approaches focus on development of library staff the PDF is the first to address library staff development in the context of our role in teaching and learning.

Introduction

Quite simply, we have started a new conversation about professional development that asks questions such as: What does professional development mean to us and how can we embed and sustain good professional development practices? How are our roles as library professionals evolving? What do we need to do to meet these new challenges? How can we explore and unpick our identity? What is the value of the Self in professional development? How can we capture informal and non-accredited learning? Are we "teachers" and/or library staff? Does identity matter? And, most importantly, what can we do to ensure that our users get the most value out of our services.

What is the Professional Development Framework (PDF)?

The National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Ireland developed an inclusive professional development framework for all staff who teach in higher education. It aims to be career-long, self-managed, value-based and to include all types of learning activities. The framework promotes reflection and learning, it also prompts inquiry into interrelated aspects of practitioner's activities. The Domains or main themes of the PDF are: (1) The Self in Teaching and Learning, (2) Professional Identity, Values and Development in Teaching and Learning, (3) Professional Communication and Dialogue in Teaching and Learning, (4) Professional Knowledge and Skills in Teaching and Learning, (5) Personal and Professional Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning. The PDF can be downloaded here: https://tinyurl.com/y7oefszh.

How and why the PDF supports the development of library staff.

The PDF positions libraries and library staff in the wider environment of Teaching and Learning in higher education. It lets us explore our identity and our collaborative and complementary role to those employed as lecturers, researchers

or in professional support roles. It helps us situate our practice in the broader educational context. The PDF invites practices of reflection and inquiry. These are qualities all staff need given our role and the on-going changes we meet. It also prompts us to articulate our approaches and philosophies of library practice and teaching.

The PDF lets us find the ways we "belong to" and positions us as part of academic and scholarly practices. Student experience and the impact of PD on students are central values in our explorations of the PDF. In this way the student is central to professional development in novel ways.

Our work as library staff

The L2L project engaged with the PDF through the lens of library staff. In the course of this we developed tools to help us, including ones on creating library and teaching philosophies, reflective practice and prompts to help us explore identity. Examples of these and other resources are on our website www.L2L.ie.

Recognition

L2L has additionally developed guidelines on Creating Portfolios, Action Research and Learning with Peers. Our website shows how engagement with the PDF can be used to gain professional recognition from the Library Association of Ireland and other bodies.

Finally, L2L wants to create Digital Badges to acknowledge all engagement with the PDF using the tools we have developed.

Sustaining Practice

Our two year project gave us time to explore the PDF. But we do not see this as the end. We hope to cultivate Communities of Practice and Mentorship to support ongoing engagement with the PDF. The PDF and the tools and resources created by L2L are available for use. We are also continuing to use the PDF and are interested in working and creating a community of library staff who use the PDF. Please feel welcome to engage with us and to be in contact.

Find out more at:

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An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
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