

Deploying a Transformative Learning Model in Technological University Dublin to Assess Transversal Skills

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Abstract : Ireland's first Technological University (TU Dublin) was established on 1st January 2019, and its creation is an exciting new milestone in Irish Higher Education. TU Dublin is now Ireland's biggest University supporting 29,000 students across three campuses with 3,500 staff. The University aspires to create work-ready graduates who are socially responsible, open-minded global thinkers who are ambitious to change the world for the better. As graduates, they will be enterprising and daring in all their endeavors, ready to play their part in transforming the future. Feedback from Irish employers and students coupled with evidence from other authoritative sources such as the World Economic Forum points to a need for greater focus on the development of students' employability skills as they prepare for today's work environment. Moreover, with an increased focus on Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and inclusiveness, there is recognition that students are more than a numeric grade value. Robust grading systems have been developed to track a student's performance around discipline knowledge but there is little or no global consensus on a definition of transversal skills nor on a unified framework to assess transversal skills. Education and industry sectors are often assessing one or two skills, and some are developing their own frameworks to capture the learner's achievement in this area. Technological University Dublin (TU Dublin) have discovered and implemented a framework to allow students to develop, assess and record their transversal skills using transformative learning theory. The model implemented is an adaptation of Student Transformative Learning Record - STLR which originated in the University of Central Oklahoma (UCO). The purpose of this paper therefore, is to examine the views of students, staff and employers in the context of deploying a Transformative Learning model within the University to assess transversal skills. It will examine the initial impact the transformative learning model is having socially, personally and on the University as an organization. Crucially also, to identify lessons learned from the deployment in order to assist other Universities and Higher Education Institutes who may be considering a focused adoption of Transformative Learning to meet the challenge of preparing students for today's work environment.

Keywords : assessing transversal skills, higher education, transformative learning, students

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