

Teaching and Learning Online

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Safe Practice Guidelines for
Online and Blended Learning
in Further Education and Training



Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna
LUIMNIGH & AN CHLÁIR
LIMERICK & CLARE
Education & Training Board



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Introduction

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board's* Further Education and Training Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) Action Plan (2017) prioritises 'building the confidence and capacity of FET Practitioners and learners in the use of technology to enhance their teaching and learning experience' (p. 6).

Online learning, which is any form of learning conducted partly or wholly over the Internet, requires of learning practitioners a different skillset than classroom or workshop based activities. Teaching online is fundamentally different to teaching offline and requires skills including the ability to use eLearning and video-conferencing platforms, set e-tivities, lead and moderate online activities and set and grade online assignments. Given this reality, the prospect of moving teaching and learning activities online can appear to be a daunting one for many Learning Practitioners. The good news is that it can and has been done.

During the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, 97.3 % of surveyed Learning Practitioners in the FET Division used technology to reach out to learners immediately following campus closures. Many used tools and resources for the first time, and in the process commenced a journey of professional development in relation to online learning.

This guide aims to provide guidance and support for all, particularly those who are new to teaching and learning online. It was designed to provide useful, clear and concise guidance. The consistent message throughout the guide is to be brave and open to the use of technology but to do so in a manner which is safe and secure. Online learning presents many challenges for Learning Practitioners including safely managing the process. In particular, managing learner data safely in compliance with GDPR requirements is a critical requirement. Your approach from the outset needs to be one of '**start safe, stay safe**'.

Throughout this guide we emphasise the necessity to ensure your practices and the platforms used are safe. Our advice is to take small incremental steps to develop your online activity and to ensure that you comply with these guidelines, the ETB's Data Protection, ICT Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and other relevant policies.

Resources

ETB Policies: Data Protection Policy and ICT Acceptable Use Policy are particularly relevant:

<https://lcetb.ie/policies/>

Be Safe Online – Governments Official Online Safety Website:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/>

Teaching Council of Ireland: Draft Social Media Guidelines for registered teachers:

<https://www.teachingcouncil.ie/Website/en/Fitness-to-Teach/Consultation-Draft-Social-Media-Guidelines/Draft-Guidelines-for-Registered-Teachers-Social-Media.pdf>

*Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board will be abbreviated to the ETB throughout these guidelines

First Steps

Practical Advice for those new to Online Teaching

For many Learning Practitioners*, teaching online can seem like a daunting prospect. Those working in Further Education and Training are justifiably proud of the relationships we build with learners in classrooms and workshops, and may be worried that the social element of teaching and learning might be lost in the online environment. They may also be concerned that they don't have the skills or resources to work online or that some learners could get left behind in an online environment. Whilst these concerns are valid and justified, the good news is that there is now over twenty five years of experience in online teaching globally. By following a few simple established and proven** guidelines, Learning Practitioners can integrate online teaching into their current practice in a step-by-step manner which is safe and improves the experience for all.

1 Don't over-reach - Start with the safe technologies you know how to use.

Start with the technologies you know how to use safely. This may be as simple as the use of email to send an assignment to learners. Do not rush to use a technology platform or resource you are unfamiliar with, particularly if you are not certain you can use the technology confident in the knowledge that learner data is safe and secure. Before you start to use any online tool or resource read these guidelines and satisfy yourself that your use of the resource is safe.

2 Use the platforms and resources recommended and supported by the FET Division

By using the platforms and resources supported by the FET Division you can work comfortably in the knowledge that these platforms are secure and safe. Professional Development in the use of these resources will be offered regularly and you can avail of ongoing support for the use of these platforms.

3 Be positive and communicateIt's been done before

Online learning is not new. It is also likely that you already have a strong relationship with your learners. Online does not replace the classroom or workshop activities, it supplements them. The key to successful teaching online is communication. Learners expect you to communicate regularly and purposefully, individually and as a group.

*The term Learning Practitioner is used throughout these guidelines and refers to all those is teaching or training roles in FET including Teachers, Instructors, Tutors, Adult Educator etc.

**Source: Donald Clark (2020) <https://donaldclarkplanb.blogspot.com/>

4 Start with Asynchronous activities

Online teaching activities can be divided into synchronous and asynchronous activities. Synchronous activities are activities such as video conferencing or live chatrooms where Learning Practitioners and learners are online together live. Asynchronous activities are all other activities where interactions are not live. It is strongly advised to start with asynchronous activities and make asynchronous your default. Post resources online, set tasks, start discussions – Do not rush to synchronous activities, which require a more complex set of skills for Learning Practitioners and learners alike.

5 Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

Learners will take their lead from you. If you communicate regularly on-line they are far more likely to engage. Communicate with the class group but also where possible provide individual feedback. Praise learners appropriately and recognise their efforts. Provide prompt and detailed feedback – this provides clarity for learners and enables them to concentrate on areas they need to work on.

6 Assessment – Start with low-stakes assessment

When beginning with assessment, don't be too ambitious. Start with low-stakes formative assessment. Use the assignment activities in Teams or Moodle for ungraded activities to give feedback to learners. By starting with low-stakes assessment you and your learners will become familiar with the functionality before moving to higher stakes summative assessment.

7 Set a schedule and stick to it

Learners expect routine. Set deadlines for tasks and follow-up with learners who do not meet the deadlines. Be fair, but set expectations of engagement. Keep up momentum.

8 Set realistic expectations

One of the biggest turn-offs with technology is that it may not always work in the manner we intended. Things will go wrong – do not set unrealistic expectations of yourself particularly if you are new to teaching online. If something doesn't work, try something else, something simpler –there's always an alternative. Don't be too ambitious with the technology. Keep it simple and don't hesitate to ask for help from your learners – they may just be more online savvy than you think.

9 Seek help and support

There are great supports and communities of practice in the FET Division supporting the effective use of technology in teaching and learning. Many Learning Practitioners have embraced online teaching and have established highly effective practices with their learners. They are supported by digital champions in our campuses, programmes and services, who support best practice locally. The FET Division Technology Enhanced Learning Support Service deliver regular TEL professional development programmes and workshops to support online and blended delivery. Regularly check the Professional Development calendar of training events (managed by the Professional Development Officer) for details of upcoming events. The TEL Support Service also provides support for specific TEL related issues by emailing tel@lcebtb.ie. The ETB's IT Department with Formula Networks provide support for technical or account related issues through its helpdesk <https://helpdesk.formulanetworks.ie/>.

The TEL Learning Zone is a public team that is open to every member of staff and every learner in the ETB. We would encourage everyone to join. It is packed with resources to help you get started with online learning.

Further Education and Training Supported Platforms and Recommended Resources

The ETB's FET Division has established and supports a number of core platforms. These platforms, tools and resources are our recommended resources. They are safe and secure and we offer training and support to enable safe usage.

Office 365

Office 365 Education is a special version of Office designed for educational and training institutions, schools and colleges. The ETB's Office 365 offering includes OneDrive, SharePoint (The ETB's corporate SharePoint site is branded as StaffCONNECT), Teams, OneNote, Word Online, PowerPoint Online, Excel Online, Sway, Forms and numerous other applications which are useful for productivity, collaboration, teaching and learning. Office 365 applications can be accessed at <https://www.office.com> using the MS Edge browser.

Teams

Microsoft Teams enables Learning Practitioners to create collaborative classrooms. It brings together classroom chat, a files area where resources can be shared and edited, a Classroom Notebook for collaboration and individual learner work and as an assignment area where learners can post completed assignments for feedback and grading. The meeting function can also be used to run a live (synchronous) class where learners participate in classes from home. Teams can be accessed by downloading the Teams App or at <https://teams.microsoft.com> using the MS Edge browser.

Moodle

Moodle is the Learning Management System provided and supported by the FET Division. It is a comprehensive platform which enables Learning Practitioners to design and deliver fully online or blended courses including access to learning resources (such as documents, presentations, videos, links etc.) and learning activities (such as assignments, quizzes, forums, chatrooms, video conferencing, interactive videos etc.). Our Moodle site which is hosted and supported with the help of SOLAS eCollege and Enovation Solutions can be accessed at <https://lcetbfet.etbonline.ie>.

Other Supported Tools and Resources

The FET Division promotes and supports numerous other technology tools, resources and platforms for teaching and learning. These resources span a diverse range of offerings in terms of functionality and target groups. This includes applications which offer specific functionality such as the video discussions and sharing platform Flipgrid, the online bulletin board Padlet and the online quizzing tool Kahoot. They also include resources which target specific target groups or course cohorts such as the Literacy tools BKSB, Reading Horizons, Spelling City etc. The list of supported tools is growing all the time and, to access the full list, visit the TEL Learning Zone which is a public team accessible to all FET Staff.

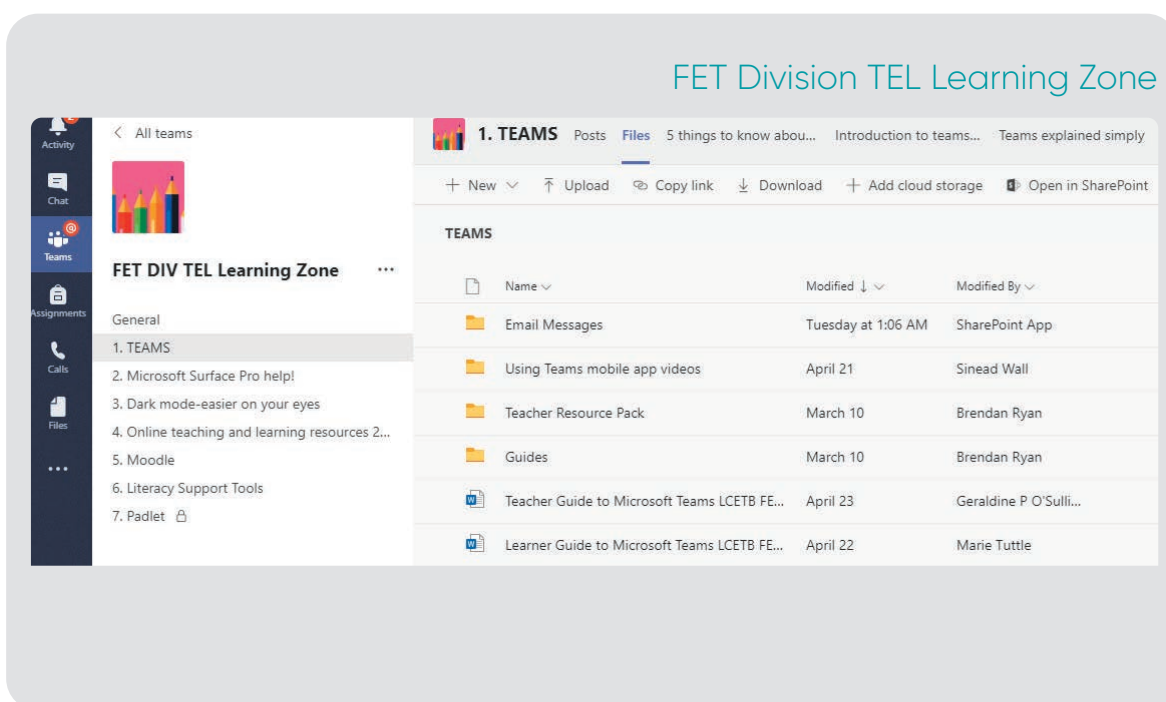
Learning to use Supported Tools and Resources

The TEL Support Service offers regular Professional Development Opportunities for all supported platforms and resources. Regularly check the Professional Development calendar of training events (managed by the Professional Development Officer) for details of upcoming events. Training resources and tutorials for our supported platforms are available in the TEL Learning Zone (Microsoft Teams). If you have a specific support query or requirement, please email tel@lcteb.ie. In addition to local

professional development opportunities, we also recommend and support staff to attend relevant PD offered by partner agencies. The SOLAS eCollege Moodle for Teachers Course (link below) is just one example of provision which compliments local PD delivery.

eCollege Moodle for Teachers:

<https://ecollege.etbonline.ie/enrol/index.php?id=342>



FET Division TEL Learning Zone

1. TEAMS Posts Files 5 things to know about... Introduction to teams... Teams explained simply

+ New Upload Copy link Download Add cloud storage Open in SharePoint

Name	Modified	Modified By
Email Messages	Tuesday at 1:06 AM	SharePoint App
Using Teams mobile app videos	April 21	Sinead Wall
Teacher Resource Pack	March 10	Brendan Ryan
Guides	March 10	Brendan Ryan
Teacher Guide to Microsoft Teams LCETB FE...	April 23	Geraldine P O'Sulli...
Learner Guide to Microsoft Teams LCETB FE...	April 22	Marie Tuttle

Using Unsupported Platforms and Resources

There is ongoing exponential growth in the development of use of technology in teaching and learning. This has opened up endless possibilities and choice for Learning Practitioners with regard to choosing and using technology in teaching and learning. However, the use of resources and platforms also presents a significant challenge, namely how to be fully confident that the use of a platform or resource is safe and secure and complies with GDPR and other relevant policies. **Learning Practitioners need to be aware that they are personally responsible for ensuring that usage of unapproved platforms is safe and secure.** If you do choose to use such a platform it is essential that you do so in a manner that ensures full compliance with relevant policies and procedures (See resources in Introduction section p.3).

Guidelines for choosing and using technology

1. Ask yourself – Is there a supported/approved alternative?

Is the functionality you require available in an approved alternative? Sometimes this may mean a compromise between safety and functionality. It is essential to think safety first. If you are unsure in relation to safety you should not use the technology.

2. Avoid social platforms which were not designed for education

If you are new to online teaching, it is tempting to begin by using platforms you are familiar with and those your learners may be using. Social platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp were designed for social use rather than for teaching and learning. Whilst one of the great strengths of Further Education and Training is its use of semi-formal and informal learning,

care needs to be taken to ensure that the professional relationships between educators and learners are maintained. The use of any platform needs to conform to and mirror the professional standards that apply within a classroom setting.

3. Choose platforms which were specifically designed for educational use

Platforms are much more likely to comply with best practice in teaching and learning if specifically designed for use in education. Platforms with controls to manage activity are safer and more likely to be safe and secure and comply with GDPR requirements.

4. Satisfy yourself that the platform is fully compliant with GDPR and other relevant policies

Before using a teaching resource, you should carefully read the privacy statement/settings and satisfy yourself that usage of the resource/platform conforms to ETB policies and procedures and to Teaching Council draft social media guidelines (2019).

5. Satisfy yourself that learners have given fully informed consent

Informed learner consent is essential before the use of any platform. This means you also have a responsibility to explain in plain language the privacy and other implications of use to learners before you begin to use any new online platform.

6. Manage access and activity on the platform

Access to platforms should preferably be by 'Invitation only' using learner ETB credentials (where possible). Ideally access should also be password protected and posts to the platform should be moderated/approved by you prior to posting. Platforms with safe practice functionality such as profanity filters are preferable.

Synchronous Teaching/ Videoconferencing tips & etiquette

Earlier in these guideline, we advised those new to online teaching to start with asynchronous activities and make asynchronous your default. Asynchronous activities are easier to plan and monitor and are low-risk in terms of managing learner data safely. Synchronous activities by their very nature require careful planning as live events are more demanding on technology and on the skillset of the Learning Practitioner. That said, the use of Video Conferencing is the single online activity that most closely mimics classroom teaching and brings learners together to interact socially and collaborate. As such, it is an invaluable resource and once Learning Practitioners are content that they understand how to safely use Video Conferencing, it can significantly enhance the learning experience of all learners.

The first time you Use Video Conferencing

1. Prepare well in advance. Test the application you are using (Teams) and ensure you are fully comfortable with the key functionality such as screen sharing, muting participants, monitoring chat etc.
2. Schedule your Teams class early in Outlook or Teams for your desired date/time and email the invitation link with clear specific instructions for learners in advance including advice on downloading the app.
3. Set reasonable expectations. It is important to appreciate the pressures that some learners may encounter when they are trying to learn from home. Some learners could be caring for children or vulnerable adults, be significantly distracted, have inadequate access to technology or be required to share a device with other family members etc.

4. In advance ensure that learners have and use their ETB login credentials.
5. Join your class at least 10 minutes early to ensure a proper connection and that you are there well in advance of learners.
6. Set aside some time to ensure that learners are able to connect their audio and video.
7. Spend some time to go through the applications functionality and how learners can contribute online to the class.
8. Outline online etiquette and expectations of the learners in your first virtual class and periodically revisit the topic – include space for discussion.
9. Learning Practitioners and learners must at all times respect the privacy of others, who may be in the homes of learners or Learning Practitioners during online classes. Show learners how to turn off their camera and microphone, and how to select a suitable background in Teams. Everybody has a right to privacy and Learning Practitioners should ensure that this right is respected and that learners ensure that those not involved in the class are not inadvertently visible or audible. This is particularly important when learners are caring for children or vulnerable adults in the home.

For all online classrooms/workshops

1. Give an agenda or plan for each class in advance.
2. Choose an appropriate quiet location, one where you will not be interrupted and you are comfortable and can present professionally.
3. Encourage learners to also find an appropriate quiet space in which to participate where they won't be interrupted.
4. Consider the use of headphones and also ask the learners to use headphones to reduce background noise and ensure clarity of voice.
5. Approach the class as you would an offline class. Dress and speak as if you're face-to-face with the class while ensuring you're at the appropriate distance from the microphone for the best audio experience.
6. Consider recording the class.

If you are recording

- Ensure that learners have given fully informed consent before commencing
- Inform learners of their right to turn off their camera and/or microphone if they do not want to be recorded. Learners who choose not to be recorded should be encouraged to use the chat functionality to participate.

7. Speak clearly and take a little bit longer than you normally would, explaining key concepts or ideas. You do not have the same opportunity online to read body language and gauge understanding from facial prompts.
8. Test your content in advance – Check how it looks on mobile devices (tablets & smartphones). Many of your learners may not be accessing the content on PCs or Laptops.
9. When delivering, give your learners a moment to open or take in what you've shared particularly when sharing videos or presentations.
10. In general, screen-sharing is better than talking heads. Have resources ready to share and use in your lessons.
11. Encourage maximum interaction and use of the chat function for questions, comments and reactions. Consider setting a target for learners (e.g. – minimum of 2 comments per learner in each lesson)
12. Generally, it is best, particularly for larger class groups, to get learners to write their questions in chat and you can unmute them to discuss rather than allowing learners to interrupt when they have a question.
13. Involve learners – In time consider asking them to present and share content or presentations with the class.

Other Options

Record your classes if you are worried about 'live' teaching

Learning Practitioners can decide to record a workshop or class (with just the Learning Practitioner himself/herself) on MS Teams and share it with learners if the Learning Practitioner is not comfortable delivering a live online class. This is also effective in situations where learners are unwell or are struggling with internet access and miss a live streamed class. Record videos instead and send them to your learners so that they can watch in their own time.

Record Short presentations

You can now easily record presentations in PowerPoint or simply record your voice using your phone or an online voice recorder (e.g. – <https://online-voice-recorder.com>). You can then share the presentation or audio file online in Teams.

Use Short Videos

These can be personal recordings or Video Content sourced online or shared by colleagues. If using content developed by others, you need to ensure that the content is free to use and share (e.g. – Creative Commons content) and use is compliant with copyright legislation. Videos should be short – ideally no more than 5 minutes. Videos longer than 15 minutes can cause issues of slow downloading and learner distraction. If you have more to say, record two or three short videos.

Respect and Safety

Staff should contact the FET Manager / Coordinator if the staff member is concerned about any incident or behaviour which they encounter during an on-line class or learner gathering via teleconferencing. The normal and agreed referral procedures should be followed.

Resources

Be Safe Online – www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/be-safe-online/ is the Government's campaign to highlight ways to help learning practitioners stay safe online. This webpage provides access to a wide range of Online Safety resources, to support online safety for all.

The NCSC offers detailed advice for securing virtual meetings: <https://www.ncsc.gov.ie/pdfs/WFH-Advisory.pdf>



Online net-tiquette

Type-tiquette guide

When you are not face-to-face with people, tone and intent can be misinterpreted very easily over email and in posts on Teams. There are some simple guidelines which may help you to avoid being misunderstood online

- Avoid one word answers like. "No", "fine" etc. It may come across as blunt. Even if you are pressed for time expand on your answer"... that looks absolutely fine, thank you", this conveys a warmer tone and keeps team working pleasant and productive.
- Use your status in Teams to let people know you have stepped away, are in a call or are on lunch and may be slow to respond to a query.
- Emojis and other pictures are an enhancement to communication but some may be misunderstood especially if you do not know the group or person you are using them with very well. If in doubt, don't use an emoji. Do bear in mind that face emoji's are statistically the most effective of all emoji's and are a great help when missing face to face interactions-so use with care.

Meetings and Conference calls etiquette

Some etiquette is carried over from real life to face to face meetings, e.g. arriving in time, taking turns to speak. Other etiquette is specific to meetings and conference calls online. We recommend you follow these as an attendee or as the organiser of an online meeting in Teams:

- Ideally and provided everybody feels comfortable camera use should be encouraged. If Wi-Fi is poor, stop your camera and stick to audio only to improve the quality.
- When you join a meeting, please mute your microphone after saying hello, this will eliminate a lot of background noise and make the speaker easier to hear.
- Use the chat function to respond to any questions that the speaker asks.
- Use the chat function to ask a question. You can unmute if you are asked to speak and mute your microphone again afterwards.
- If you are the presenter give some time at the end to Q&A or take short small breaks for questions immediately after each logical section of the meeting/training/teaching.

Further developing your online teaching skills

The FET Division will continue to provide Learning Practitioners with opportunities to develop their online teaching skills. A schedule of TEL professional development events will be planned in collaboration with FET Management, TEL and other FET Support Services offering access to a range of locally organised workshops and events. Staff will also be made aware of opportunities to apply for places on national TEL programmes as they occur (see below).

SOLAS National TEL Programmes: These are a suite of accredited programmes at Level 6, 7 and 8 that were developed by SOLAS on behalf of the sector. They are delivered by National College of Ireland (Level 6 and 7) and the National University of Galway (Level 8) and are focused on pedagogy, using technology in teaching and learning, and blended and online learning design and delivery. A number of places are funded for FET Division staff each year and recruitment is organised by the TEL and PD Support Services in conjunction with FET Managers.

Teaching and Learning Forum Digital Badges:

The FET Division delivered the Teaching and Learning Forum's Universal Design for Learning 'Digital Badge' with AHEAD in 2019/2020 and intend to offer further iterations in the future. We also hope to explore delivery of the Getting Started with Online Learning Programme.

National Moodle for Teachers Programme: This is a self-paced programme hosted by eCollege of approximately 30 hours in duration and will give Learning Practitioners the skills they need to get started using Moodle as a virtual learning environment.

We would encourage staff to look at other opportunities for professional development in TEL, eLearning and instructional design and have presented a list of free/low cost programmes in appendix 1 which you might like to investigate.

In addition, the Limerick Education Centre, the Clare Education Centre, and the Further Education and Support Service (FESS) offer excellent workshops in the area of TEL that are open to FET staff. Finally, the FET Division also offers staff the chance to attend some excellent conferences abroad such as EDEN, JISC and Bett, through our Erasmus+ Projects.

Other Resources

Appendix 1: Online Teaching and Learning Courses details

<https://library.etbi.ie/covid19/resources>

Digital Wellbeing

Digital wellbeing is the impact of technologies and digital services on people's mental, social, physical and emotional health.

Why is this important for our staff and learners?

Technology can impact wellbeing in positive and negative ways depending on personal context, circumstances and capacity to deal with these issues.

Potential Impact of digital tools and activities on learners:

Positives of Digital Learning

- Alternative ways to learn
- Online collaborative learning opportunities
- Engaging learning activities
- Practice digital skills for employment
- Learn digital skills for new careers/career change
- Increased access to learning
- More engaging assessment and feedback

Negatives of Digital Learning

- Lack of digital skills
- Digital overload
- Negative impact of compulsory online collaboration
- Time learning new technologies not the subject
- Inappropriate use of technologies
- Lack of choice (e.g. told which technologies to use)

How can I support my learners' digital wellbeing?

- Know how to access and use ETB supported systems and tools.
- Choose the most appropriate tools for specific learning and tasks.
- Understand your learners' needs e.g. for assistive technologies or personalised learning.
- Manage workload.
- Safely use tools and equipment.
- Support the learners to develop their digital skills.
- Be social and connect with learners.
- Ask learners for feedback.
- Get support from the TEL team.
- Remember physical wellbeing! – Remind learners of good posture, take plenty of breaks, move around, adjust monitor brightness, get enough sleep.

Resources

<https://digitalwellbeing.org/>

https://digitalcapability.jisc.ac.uk/documents/228/JB0019A_DIGITAL_WELLBENG_PRACTITIONERS_BRIEFING_PAPER_NOV19_WEB_v2.pdf

Digital Inclusion – Reaching out to all Learners

Digital inclusion is about ensuring that everybody can contribute to and benefit from digital. It's about access to technology for all, the use of assistive technology, developing digital skills and the use of technology to address exclusion.

Why is digital inclusion important – how does this affect my learners?

Learners may feel anxious and demotivated working remotely and issues with connectivity, lack of digital skills or access to devices can cause additional stress.

How to ensure I include all learners?

- Know your learners and find out what resources they have.
- Choose tools and resources depending on their digital skills – See Infographic overleaf.
- Bringing all learners online together may not be realistic. Asynchronous activities may suit some learners better as they can complete work in their own time. You could organise 'drop in clinics' to answer questions or review work with learners.
- 1-2-1 sessions may be required for some learners.
- If learners have limited internet access, assign work in non-digital format or email to complete in their own time. Instructions should be really easy to understand.
- Give the learner options. If learners don't have a computer, they would take photos on a mobile phone of an assignment or record a voice note and upload them.
- Give loads of feedback to your learners as a group and 1-2-1.

Tips

- Connect with other Learning Practitioners and share best practice. Connect with your local Digital Champion, the TEL Support Service and your local Learning Hub if there is one in your centre. Share your experience and seek the support and help of others.
- MS Teams works well on mobile devices. Check out the TEL Learning Zone for more info.
- Get learners to complete introductory tasks online so they learn how to do basic tasks and build up their skills gradually. Consider step-by-step guides on completing these tasks.
- Encourage learners to use the accessibility tools in Office 365 and MS Edge such as *Read Aloud*.
- Create touchpoints with your learners. If you see they aren't engaging, give them a call to chat about solutions that will work for them.
- The FET Divisions' Active Inclusion Support Service offers supports under the fund for learners with additional needs to learners who are interested in applying for additional supports. Instructions and forms required can be seen on Active Inclusion Support Service's space on StaffCONNECT

<https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/AI>

Resources

Creating accessible documents

<https://abilitynet.org.uk/factsheets/creating-accessible-documents-0>

Tools for Teaching and Learning with different types of Learners



EXAM FOCUSED LEARNERS

Learners that need to complete assessments for QQI validation, including; part-time and full-time programmes, Apprenticeships and LCA.



CORE SKILLS LEARNERS

Learners improving their Literacy or English language skills, who may be returning to education, refugees, immigrants, direct provision clients and employed workers or retirees wishing to upskill.



COMMUNITY BASED LEARNERS

Community learners who learn skills with others, often unaccredited always with a social and community aspect.



EXAM FOCUSED LEARNING

Virtual Learning environments such as ; Moodle & Microsoft teams. Live classes, collaboration on projects, class resources, conversation tools, assignments, grading, quizzes, plagiarism tools. Mobile Apps. Kahoot! for revision quizzes and exam preparation.



CORE SKILLS LEARNING

Easily accessed sharing spaces such as; Padlet, Flipgrid and Live classes in Microsoft teams. Learners engage in writing skills using teams chat and posts. Learning practitioners share videos and learners share videos in Flipgrid to practise language skills and get feedback. Use of Mobile apps for Teams, Padlet and Flipgrid.



COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING

Easily accessed tools with a strong social element such as; Padlet and Flipgrid,. No passwords required only pins, interactive and fun. Easy to use, video and text communications. Videos shared across a wide range of topics on Flipgrid with learners making their own videos. Resources shared and interaction on Padlet.



LEARNERS

Learners may have issues accessing reliable broadband or not have access to a device other than a mobile phone. Where possible consider this restriction and design with it in mind.



LEARNING PRACTITIONERS

Learning practitioners should not be too caught up in doing everything perfectly online. Getting things wrong is part of the learning curve. Remember to try and make the online class interactive and fun for learners and yourself!

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn, including learners with Disabilities. UDL aims to improve the educational experience of all learners by introducing more flexible methods of teaching, assessment and service provision to cater for the diversity of learners in our classrooms (source AHEAD 2020).

Why is UDL relevant to me?

Equality is a key and core value for the ETB. We strive to ensure that all learners have a high quality learning experience. As a Learning Practitioner in Further Education and Training, you are undoubtedly already engaging in practices to take account of all your learners. Adopting UDL principles enables you to do this in a strategic and effective manner and can support you to make learning a fully inclusive experience for all. It provides you with a framework to plan your learning in a manner which reflects the inclusive values you hold.

How can online learning and technology enable UDL?

Technology advances have had a revolutionary impact on UDL by enabling universal access to learning content. When learning materials are presented through digital platforms, they can adapt uniquely to all learners and their needs and preferences. Learners can use screen readers, translate text and adjust content to their individual needs with regard to photos. They can use video submissions or dictation for assignments.

Simply using technology is not however a guarantee of inclusion. Sometimes technology can create new barriers for learners especially

those who are vulnerable in a traditional learning situation, such as learners with disabilities. In order to prevent this, it is smart to arrange ways for getting regular feedback from learners with different impairments. Technology in itself is not inclusive, and it is important to acknowledge that a good UDL Learning Practitioner does not need to use a lot of ICT tools and be an expert in technology in order to be a good UDL ambassador.

What can I do to make a start with UDL?




A few simple guidelines can support UDL in your planning & practice.

- **Make yourself aware of the assistive technologies that are at your fingertips**

There are numerous assistive technologies at your fingertips. From the use of Read Aloud in MS Edge browser to Immersive reader, dictate and translate in word online or the use of Browsealoud on ETB sites and Moodle, numerous tools are readily available. Familiarise yourself and your learners with these tools.

- **Start to apply UDL principles into your practice**

Assess your teaching, learning and assessment practices with a UDL lens. Take simple steps to apply UDL principles to your practices. Give learner choices with regard to multiple means of engagement, representation and action/ expression in line with UDL principles (Rose & Meyer 2014). Make your assessments inclusive (see p. 16 of this guide). Use learner feedback to understand the approaches and methodologies that ensure you are reaching all your learners and that no one is missing out.

Multiple Means of Engagement	Multiple Means of Representation	Multiple Means of Action/Expression
Stimulate motivation and sustained enthusiasm for learning by promoting various ways of engaging with material.	Present information and content in a variety of ways to support understanding by students with different learning styles/abilities.	Offer options for students to demonstrate their learning in various ways (e.g. allow choice of assessment type).
		

- **Learn more about UDL**

UDL is a systematic strategic approach to planning learning. To learn more and apply your learning to your practice, self-enrol yourself in the ETB FET Moodle UDL Course. This blended learning programme, run in conjunction with AHEAD and organised collaboratively by the Active Inclusion Support Service, TEL Support Service and PD Officer, will give you an opportunity to learn about Universal Design for Learning. Instances of the course will be on our Professional Development calendar but by enrolling on the course you will get access to all the course resources and can self-manage your own learning journey with UDL. To enrol login to Moodle with your ETB credential and use the once off enrolment key LimerickClare12 to access the course.

Course Link: <https://lcbtfet.etbonline.ie/course/view.php?id=1366>

- **Connect with other Learning Practitioners and share best practice**

Connect with your local Digital Champion, the TEL Support Service and your local Learning Hub if there is one in your centre. Share your experience and seek the support and help of others.

Resources

<https://www.ahead.ie/udl>

Our Active Inclusion Support Service promotes Universal Design for Learning and Learning Practitioners can access UDL resources on the Active Inclusion Support Service's space on StaffCONNECT

<https://limerickandclareetb.sharepoint.com/sites/fetdivision/AI>

Online Assessment

Online assessment can provide Learning Practitioners with numerous possibilities to replace existing classroom-based assessment or examinations with online alternatives. Online quizzes, assignments, ePortfolios and video submissions are just some of the possibilities to replace or supplement traditional examinations or portfolios of evidence, however such methods present Learning Practitioners with a number of challenges with regard to ensuring fairness and equity for all learners. A few simple guidelines to follow include:

- If the assessment is summative assessment for a QQI module, your starting point is the module descriptor. Carefully read the Learning Objectives and the assessment guidelines from the relevant module descriptor. The specific guidelines apply to both offline and online assessment and all assessment must be fully compliant with the assessment criteria.
- Use the tools to hand. The FET Division uses both Moodle and Teams, both of which have assignment functionality, where rubrics can be used if applicable with grading and feedback readily provided to learners.
- Communicate with learners in relation to assessment. Clearly describe what is expected and listen to and respond to any concerns they may have.
- Apply the principles of UDL to assessment. Ensure the assessment is presented in accessible formats for all learners and offer choice to learners particularly with regard to multiple means of representation.
- Provide sample assessment in advance and give learners the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the assessment process.
- Allow reasonable accommodation in line with the ETB's Quality Assurance policies. Respond to accessibility issues or concern raised and seek support to ensure all learners can access assessment fairly.
- Data retention periods for online assessments are the same as for written assessments so it is essential that assessment evidence is retained and stored safely and securely in compliance with GDPR requirements. All staff should complete the online GDPR training at <https://lcetbfet.etbonline.ie/course/view.php?id=1098>. For more details email dataprotection@lcetb.ie.

Resources

<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/resource/10-points-to-consider-in-choosing-alterative-assessment-methods-for-the-online-environment/>

<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/resource/10-ways-to-ensure-online-assessment-is-accessible-and-inclusive/>

<https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/resource/selecting-online-alternatives-to-common-assessment-methods/>



Young Adult Learners – Guidelines & Etiquette

There are specific additional requirements when teaching online if learners are under the age of eighteen. In particular, Learning Practitioners need to ensure that they have communicated with parents/guardians and that they are fully satisfied that their child's use of distance learning platforms is safe. It is essential that parents/guardian have provided written consent for the use of online platforms before use. Both learners and parents/guardians need to be fully informed that the photographing or recording of staff or other learners for the purposes of publication elsewhere is strictly prohibited and in breach of those individuals' basic human right to privacy. Parents/guardians also need to be fully informed in relation to communication with their child by support or other non-teaching staff.

In 2020, the ETB's Schools Division published a Distance Learning Teacher Handbook: 'Guidelines & Etiquette for Teachers using Teleconferencing Tools'. The handbook provides teachers with detailed guidelines and ground-rules for communicating with parents/guardians and students online. The handbook is available on request by emailing schools@lcteb.ie.

Webwise is part of the PDST Technology in Education, which promotes and supports the integration of ICT in teaching and learning in first and second level schools. The website [webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) provides advice on school policy and safe practice and is particularly relevant for Learning Practitioners teaching young adults.

<https://www.webwise.ie/category/teachers/advice-teachers/>

Covid-19 Resources Supports and Services

The Covid-19 pandemic has effected everybody in society. In Further Education and Training some learners might find the pandemic more challenging than others and may need some extra support.

The HSE has published detailed guidelines on minding your mental health during the coronavirus outbreak.

<https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/covid-19/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>

While it may not be possible to get face to face appointments there are a number of service providers that offer online and phone mental health supports and services. These include online counselling, phone and text services as well as online supports which can be found on <https://www.yourmentalhealth.ie>.

The Department of Education and Skills' NEPS psychologists have developed advice and some resources for young people to manage and stay well when schools are closed.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/covid-19.html>

In addition, the Department has published detailed Guidelines for continued provision of Guidance Counselling and resources available to support practice during Covid-19.

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Post-Primary-School-Policies/Policies/Guidance-Plan.html>

For information pertaining to resources in place relevant to FET the NCGE has published guidelines for Further Education and Training.

<https://www.ncge.ie/covid-19/support/FET>

Appendix 1: Useful Online Learning Courses and Resources

FutureLearn offers a wide variety of courses from top universities and organisations around the world. You can access for free and complete the course. There are upgrade options which give you access to courses for longer and access to assessments and certification. Its courses on teaching online are available on: <https://www.futurelearn.com/subjects/teaching-courses/how-to-teach-online>

Coursera offers courses from leading universities and companies such as google. It has hundreds of courses on teaching online, teaching STEM and e-learning. Browse its courses on: <https://www.coursera.org/browse/social-sciences/education>

edX is a global non-profit organisation started in Harvard and MIT. You can access courses for free and have the option of paying for certification. Its educational technology courses are available at <https://www.edx.org/learn/educational-technology>

edX also has a really nice guide for students on learning online, available on: <https://blog.edx.org/tips-for-successful-online-learning/>

LinkedIn Learning (formerly Lynda.com) is a leading online subscription learning platform where you can sign up for 1 month free. It focuses on software training and includes educational technology courses available on: <https://www.lynda.com/Educational-Technology-training-tutorials/1794-0.html>

Microsoft Educator Center gives you free access to Microsoft courses where you can learn how to use its tools and earn badges as you go. Sign in with your email address e.g. joe.blogges@lcbt.ie to access. If you get an error or 'Oops, page not found', try logging in again. Available on: <https://www.education.microsoft.com/en-us>

TED-Ed has videos on a wide variety of topics on <https://www.ted.com/watch/ted-ed>

MERLOT has material and resources for teaching on <http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>

OER Commons has open educational resources on <https://www.oercommons.org/>

ETBI provides access to digital resources that support teaching and learning practices and enhances the educational experience for learners at <https://library.etbi.ie/home>

National Forum for Teaching and Learning has supports for online teaching on <https://www.teachingandlearning.ie/2020/03/20/supporting-teaching-and-learning-through-covid-19/>

Libraries Ireland is providing free access to books, newspapers and much more online on <https://www.librariesireland.ie/news/online-services-during-coronavirus>

Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board has resources for positive wellbeing available on [StaffCONNECT](#)

AHEAD is an Irish organisation focusing on creating inclusive educational experiences for all learners of all abilities. This blog focuses on accessibility tools and engaging all students online, available on <https://www.ahead.ie/Distance-Teaching>

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