Teaching and Learning for Social Justice in a Digital World

Thursday 9th May, UCC Centre for Executive Education, 1 Lapp's Quay

Date: Thursday, 9th May 2019, 10am-3.30pm
Venue: UCC Centre for Executive Education, 1 Lapp's Quay

In social policy and social professional higher education, the appropriate, intelligent, and creative use of digital technologies in teaching and learning practices facilitates academics' and students' development as thinkers, researchers, professionals, and citizens. In contemporary higher education, strong digital leadership is vital to progressing digital capacities (Phipps and Lanclos, 2017). Alongside leadership at an institutional level, this requires digital leadership from within the discipline. However, educators in social policy and the social professions have to date been too quiet about the ramifications of digital technologies for our disciplines, our professional identities, our methods of enquiry, and our teaching and learning practices. The aim of this symposium is to bring together educators in social policy and the social professions to collectively and collaboratively explore and discuss the enhancement of teaching and learning practices within our disciplines and to articulate strategies for future development.

In the process of developing our digital fluency as educators in social policy and the social professions, we are challenged to consider the relationship between digital technologies, society, and well-being. In responding to this challenge, we are inspired by the notion of 'radical digital citizenship', a concept introduced by Emejulu and McGregor (2016), who argue that 'the apolitical stance of digital education amounts to an abdication of responsibility about what education in digital spaces might mean and what education in these spaces might be' (ibid, 143). This exhorts us to think about technology-enhanced teaching and learning through a more radical lens that takes into consideration multiple forms of oppression and systemic social, economic and environmental inequalities. This perspective complements the emancipatory project of social policy and social professional education, which entails a commitment to social justice and to advancing individual and collective well-being, based on principles of equality, diversity and inclusion. It demands that we think critically about the impact of technologies on our social and professional practices, and how digital technology shapes our advocacy, social action, and activism.

With this in mind, the SPEEDS team invites participants to join us on Thursday, 9th May, to reflect on our use of digital technologies in engaging with learners in social policy and the social professions (including social work, social care, youth work, community development, and early years education). We also welcome attendance from the wider academic community, including those who are engaged in social justice-oriented education in cognate disciplines, such as planning, psychology, sociology, education, criminology, philosophy, etc.

We are delighted to welcome our guest speaker, **Dr Callum McGregor**, who will deliver the Keynote Address. Callum is Lecturer in Education at the Institute for Education, Community and Society, University of Edinburgh. As well as teaching on the BA Community Education, he is also currently Programme Director of the fully online, part time, MSc Social Justice and Community Action. Callum's research and teaching interests are located at the intersection of critical education, social movement studies and critical social policy. Reflecting on the challenges of developing social justice-oriented digital education with Professor Akwugo Emejulu, together they published "Towards a radical digital citizenship in digital education" in the journal *Critical Studies in Education*. Callum believes that social justice scholars and practitioners have a lot to contribute to debates over 'the digital' and 'data-driven innovation', and that it is a mistake to view such debates as supplementary concerns, rather than central to the pursuit of social and environmental justice. Dissatisfied with the seeming lack of space to collectively address the intersection of 'the digital' and social justice in educational contexts, Callum has sought to organise and facilitate several public and academic seminars to address this and is currently co-organising a week of late May events on the theme of 'data justice' with colleagues from the University of Edinburgh.

We are also delighted to welcome the following speakers:

Professor Paul McSweeney, Vice-President for Learning and Teaching in University College Cork. His office coordinates the activities of the University's Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL), Adult Continuing Education (ACE), Centre for Digital Education, CPD Directorate, Examinations Appeals and the Language Centre, together with responsibility for delivering aspects of the University's Academic Strategy.

Professor Cathal O'Connell, Head of the School of Applied Social Studies. Professor O'Connell has served on a wide range of school, faculty, college and university committees and is a former Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in the Faculty of Arts. He is a member of the Academic Standards Board of ACE agus ta se ina mball de Bord na Gaeilge. He is an active researcher in the areas of social housing, regeneration and social inclusion and has published extensively in these areas. He as raised over €1.2 million in research income for University College Cork and is the recipient of multiple competitive national funding awards under PTRLI4, IRCHSS, IRC and numerous public and private tenders. Professor O'Connell is the recipient of numerous IRCHSS and IRC Research awards including three New Foundations Scheme Awards which to undertake social policy related research with community partners.

Dr Eileen McEvoy, Policy and Projects Officer with the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education in Ireland. Eileen McEvoy is Policy and Projects Manager at the National Forum. Her role is to ensure that the impact of the work of the Forum is captured and communicated. She also assists the Forum to act as a conduit between those shaping teaching and learning practices at institutional level and those developing national policies related to teaching and learning.

Dr Briony Supple, Lecturer in Teaching and Learning Enhancement in UCC's Centre for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL). Briony is responsible for co-ordinating and teaching on the fully online Certificate and Diploma in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education and the Masters in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. She holds a PhD in Education, awarded in 2013, from Monash University Australia. Her current research interests are around how technology enhanced learning

can be conceptualised from a SoTL perspective and embedded into professional development for academics. She is also working on a number of international projects around assessment of/for/as learning, and the influence of learning spaces on teaching practice.

The Symposium is designed to be a highly participatory event, giving time and space for discussion about the challenges of teaching and learning for social justice in the 21st century.

We welcome all participants with an interest in social justice-oriented education, digital education, and in the scholarship of teaching and learning more broadly.

Registration is open at: https://forms.gle/vYwJC6BQ79GAob5Z7
Refreshments and lunch are provided, so please note any special dietary requirements in your registration form. If you would like to attend in the morning but need to leave before lunch please note "I do not require lunch" on the registration form.

The schedule is as follows:

10am:	Tea/coffee and dangerous pastries
10.30am:	Welcome from Professor Cathal O'Connell and Professor Paul McSweeney
10.45am:	Overview by Dr Eileen McEvoy on opportunities for teaching and learning enhancement through the National Forum
11am:	Keynote address by Dr Callum McGregor
12pm:	Panel discussion chaired by Dr Briony Supple on 'Teaching and Learning for Social Justice in a Digital World'
12.30pm:	Lunch
1.45pm:	Poster session
2.15pm:	Themed discussions in small groups (see below)
3.15pm:	Feedback from small groups
3.30pm:	Close

Discussion themes
- What kinds of teaching and learning practices embody our disciplines' core values? For example, how are our practices empowering for students? Are our teaching and learning practices inclusive? Are they shaped by principles of Universal Design for Learning? How do digital technologies facilitate inclusive design?
- Are there distinctive assessments FOR/AS/OF learning that are particularly valuable to our disciplines? What are good examples of authentic assessment? How do digital technologies facilitate the design of authentic assessment practices?
- Do (and how do) we act as compassionate practitioners in our everyday educational praxis? How can we model an ethics of care in our professional engagements with students? What is technology's potential for supporting caring practices with our students and colleagues?
- How can we participate in and encourage coalition-building through an educational praxis that is inclusive, challenges systemic inequalities, and promotes radical digital citizenship? What is the potential of technology for realising this goal?
- How do our understandings of power, participation, and active citizenship shape our design of teaching and learning practices and environments? How does technology enable the creation of more democratic possibilities? How do we involve students as partners?
- How might digital technologies be used to foster students' capacities for integrative learning? Using digital tools, how can we support students in analysing complex social issues?
- How does the uncritical use of digital technologies serve neoliberal models of higher education? How can we harness our disciplinary expertise to reframe digital education in radical, politicised, empowering, and inclusive ways?
- What is the impact of organisational cultures on academics' engagement in digital education? What barriers to the adoption of digital technologies exist and how can these be addressed? What is the

interplay between these barriers and disciplinary practices? What kinds of discipline-specific interventions are valuable for encouraging academics' continuing professional development in teaching and learning?

- How can the National Forum's strategy on Teaching and Learning Enhancement within the Disciplines and its DELTA Framework guide us in planning for the future development of teaching and learning in social policy and the social professions?

References

Emejulu, A. & McGregor, C. (2019) Towards a radical digital citizenship in digital education, *Critical Studies in Education*, 60(1), 131-147. https://doi.org/10.1080/17508487.2016.1234494

Phipps, L., & Lanclos, D. (2017). Leading with digital in an age of supercomplexity. *Irish Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning*, 3(1), 1 - 11. https://doi.org/10.22554/ijtel.v2i2.22