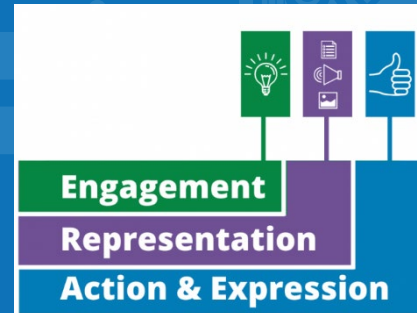




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Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

# Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project Symposia



Presented at the 3rd International UDL Symposium -

Changing mindsets, changing practice

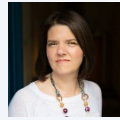
Maynooth University, Department of Education

15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> September 2025

# Overview of symposia



Introduction: Trinity INC and evaluation



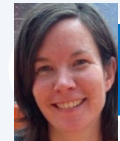
1. UDL in Trinity College Dublin: a project's journey into mainstreaming



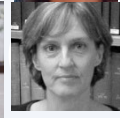
2. Evaluation of UDL/inclusive practices training in a third level education institution



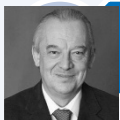
3. Embedding Trinity-INC principles into curricular evolution in the Discipline of Physiotherapy'



4. Systemic failures in embedding Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education



5. Examining the effectiveness of inclusive professional learning modules in higher education: a systematic review of the evidence

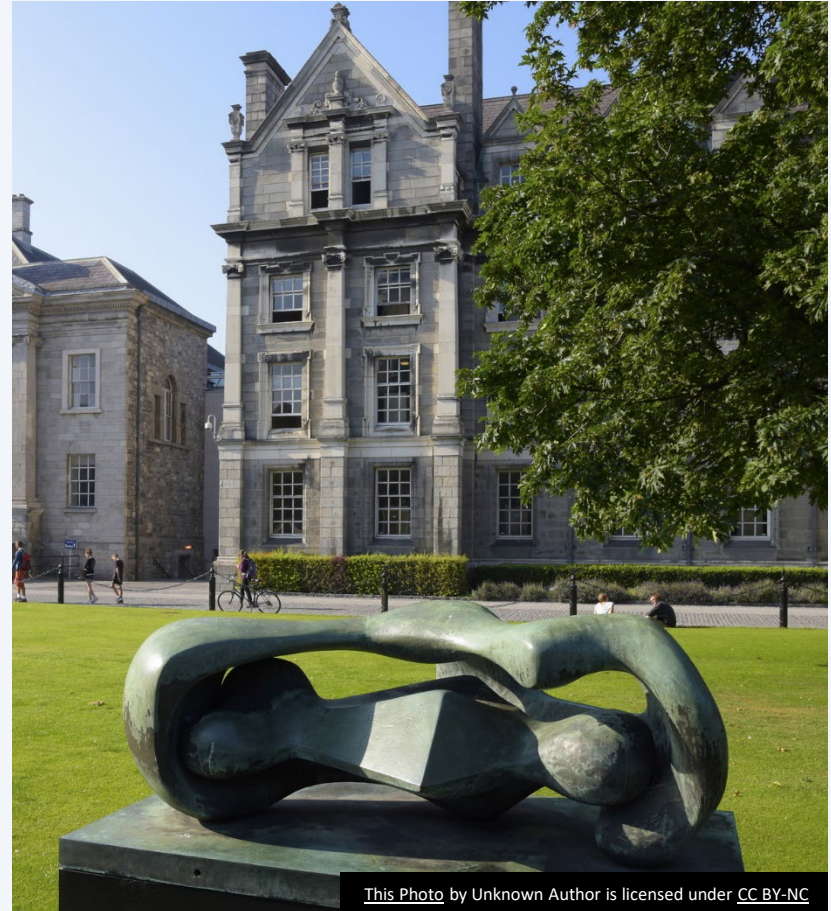


Discussion, Questions and Answers

# Trinity College Dublin, The University of Dublin

Trinity College Dublin is “one of the world’s great universities” ... “has been inspiring generations of brilliant thinkers for over 400 years.”

- 75<sup>th</sup> in the World (QS World University Rankings, 2025)
- Trinity has over 22,000 students and 3,701 staff (academic and professional support staff).



This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under [CC BY-NC](#)

# Introduction: Policy drivers of an inclusive curriculum at Trinity College Dublin



Equal access to university for all & for persons with disabilities

- Sustainable development goals (UN, 2015) & Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006)

The diversity of European population is reflected by students entering and graduating from higher education (HE) institutions

- European Union Agenda for Further Education (EC, 2017) & European Higher Education Area (2020)

HE institutions are inclusive, universally designed environments which support and foster student success and outcomes, equity and diversity and are responsive to the needs of students and wider communities

- National Access Plan (2022-2028) & National Charter for Universal Design in Tertiary Education (2024)



# Inclusive curriculum timeline at TCD

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TIC (2008-2012)



Trinity-INC  
(2020-2024)



Trinity Centre for  
Teaching and  
Learning (2025)

# An introduction to the Trinity Inclusive Curriculum Project (Trinity-INC)

## Four (equal & interconnected) pillars of project initiatives

### Academic

Supporting professional development and creating a community of practice at the School level; led by the Trinity-INC Staff Partner Programme.

### Student

Supporting awareness raising of inclusion challenges and successes and co-(re)creation of curricula components; in partnership Trinity-INC Student Partners.

### Institutional

Embedding inclusivity in College policies, discourse and other key documentation related to curricula (course, module) development and teaching practices.

### Infrastructure / Student Supports - as 'wraparound pillar'/buttress:

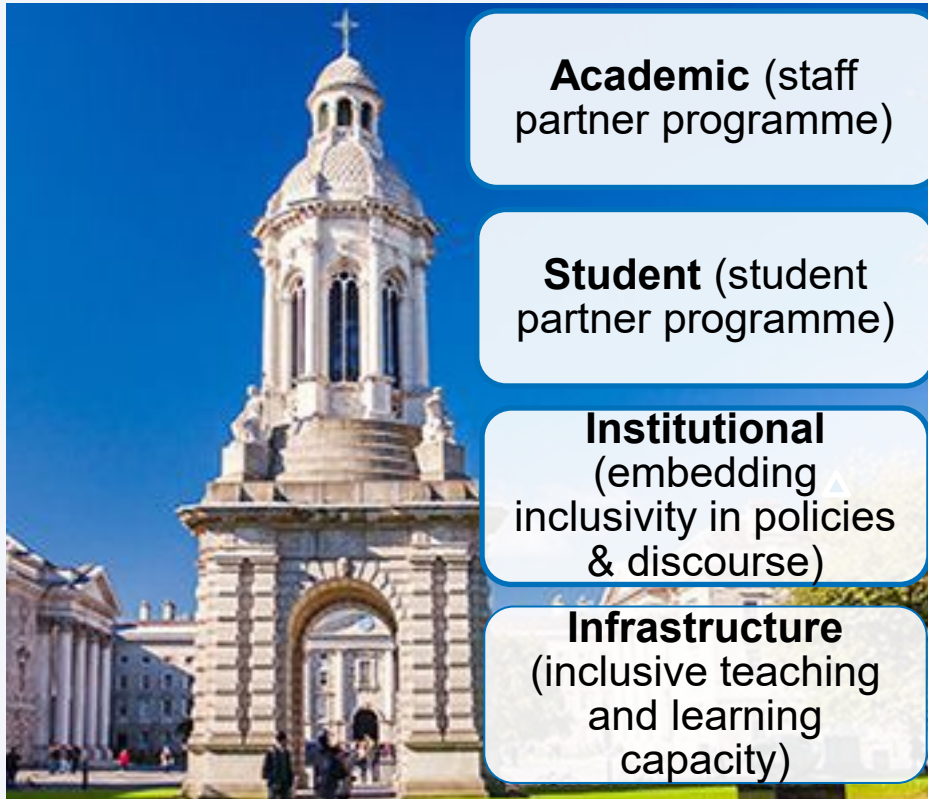
Sharing knowledge and building capacity across College to meet support needs of all students, and developing a College-wide intersectional standpoint.

**Trinity-INC Advisory Board**

**Universal Design for Learning**

# Trinity-INC 2024 evaluation context

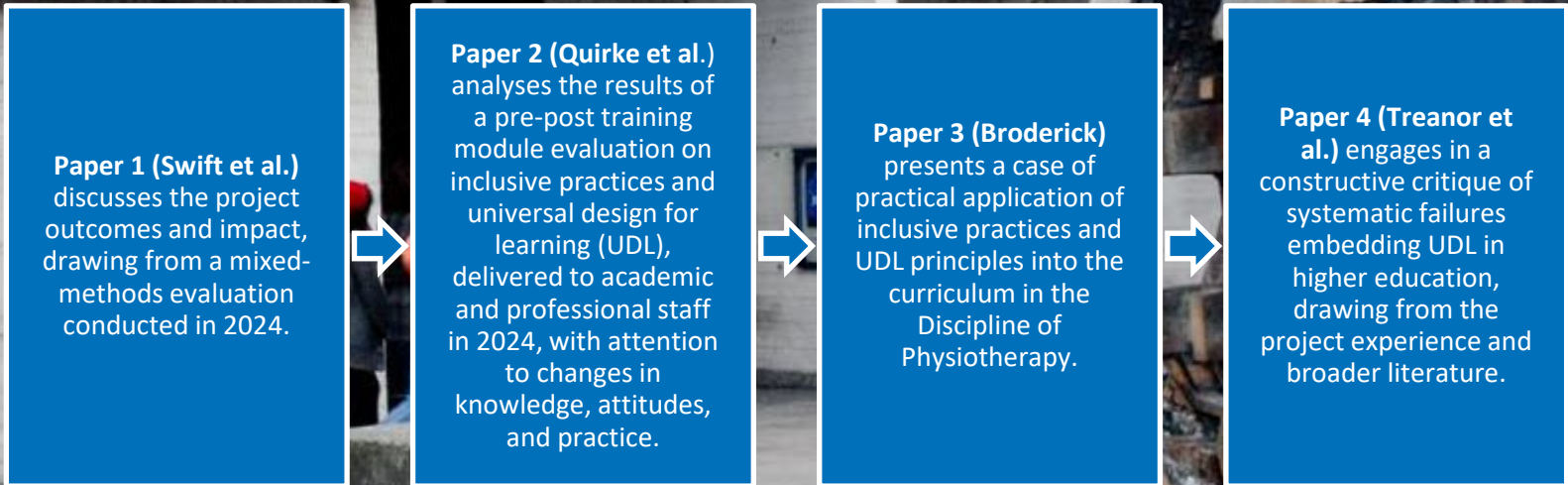
Aim: To embed principles of diversity, equality and **inclusion** across all teaching and learning at Trinity College Dublin.



## Evaluation context

- First evaluation conducted on the project since its inception in 2020.
- Initially, 1-year project funded by HEA Access grant to TCD, with funding rolling into subsequent years which has sustained the project work and staffing to date.
- In August 2024, discontinuation of Trinity-INC funding from March 2025 was announced by ASD.
- “Commitment to the intention to sustain and embed key project activities into our systems.”

# Papers drawing from the Trinity-INC project and its evaluation



**Evidence from a systematic literature review on inclusive practices and UDL training inform the papers.**



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# **1. UDL in Trinity College Dublin: a project's journey into mainstreaming**

Swift, A., García Iriarte, E., Adderley, S., Shevlin, M., & Leeson, L.

# Evaluation questions

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1. To what extent did the Trinity-INC project support Staff Partners to:
  - Make changes to their personal practice
  - Personally share new knowledge with colleagues
  - Lead wider change within their schools or professional units?
2. Did the Trinity-INC communications channels, training and events reach staff beyond the Staff Partners & their immediate networks?
  - Who engaged with these wider activities?
  - Were staff who encountered Trinity-INC via these activities also prompted to make changes in their personal practice?
3. Did the project adequately centre the voices of students, & did it support them to communicate their views widely across Trinity?
4. As a result of the work of Trinity-INC, did college-wide policies and systems increasingly take inclusion into account?

# Evaluation methodology

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1. **20 interviews** with staff (including Staff Partners), and with student representatives
2. **Group interview** with 4 Trinity-INC Student Partners
3. **Nested evaluation of the current presentation of the Trinity Inclusive Practices Module** (see later presentation)
4. **Online survey to staff who had engaged with the Trinity-INC project**
5. **Online survey to students, sampled from target groups, who had NOT participated in the Trinity-INC project**
6. **Desk-based analysis** of secondary data (eg Trinity-INC data, StudentSurvey.ie data, HEA data, TCD administrative data, web traffic, social media data), Trinity strategies & policies, national policies etc.

# Question 1: how effective was the Staff Partner pillar?

- 1. Clear evidence of the Staff Partner programme achieving its goals:**
  - Staff were prompted to make further changes to their personal practice
  - They also found multiple opportunities to advocate within their schools – ranging from informal ‘kitchen conversations’ to leading larger initiatives (with senior management support)
  - Staff Partners particularly appreciated the opportunity to tackle inclusive curriculum collectively as part of a community of practice
  
- 2. Faculties / schools differed in their level of engagement**
  - 10 schools appointed a Staff Partner immediately at launch in 2021, whereas at the time of the evaluation, 2 schools had not yet appointed any partner
  - (Staff in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences were over-represented amongst module participants & this Faculty was also over-represented amongst Student Partners)

## Question 1: how effective was the Staff Partner pillar?

“

*I think it is much easier to start conversations when you feel that there is kind of institutional buy-in; that there is a kind of a system or kind of support. . . I find it kind of an advantage in terms of . . you could feel kind of emboldened.*

***Staff Partner***

”

## Question 1: how effective was the Staff Partner pillar? (cont.)

“

*There was a strong sense that (inclusive curriculum) was something that we needed to grapple with collectively rather than just leaving people individually to find their own way. (Trinity-INC) really helped with that because it helped people feel that we weren't in a vacuum even if we had to do things in our ... own way.*

***Staff Partner***

”

## Question 2: did the project reach beyond Staff Partners?

- 1. Several hundred staff engaged directly with the project over the 4 years.**
  - Drawn from all areas of College, of all ages and grades
  - Most likely to be female
  - Self-motivated in this area: had mostly already sought out related information and training, and had also made individual change
  - Professional and admin staff were highly motivated to engage
  - Engaged in multiple ways: as Staff Partners, module participants, attending training, seeking advice, promoting initiatives etc
- 2. Indications that Trinity-INC's communications reached beyond Staff Partners**
  - Trinity-INC website has been a popular resource
  - Trinity-INC training and events were well subscribed

# Question 3: was the student perspective centred & shared?

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- 1. The c.100 Student Partners (mainly female students):**
  - Engaged in numerous actions, supported by Trinity-INC
  - Felt that the 'platform' and support they were given enabled them to advocate for themselves and peers
  - Highlighted the benefits of proactively addressing issues through dialogue, before they escalate

## Question 3: was the student perspective centred & shared?

“

*The Student Partner programme enables you to say these things because you have the backing. **Student***

*It is very hard to challenge authority if you are a student of colour. Having (named Trinity-INC staff members) in your corner has been very helpful. **Student***

”

## Question 3: was the student perspective centred & shared? (cont)

“

*Having actual people who are impacted by those forms of marginalisation and who were willing to come and say, this is what it means to me, and this is what you can do to make it better. It was really so great, because we are so limited by our own experience. **Academic (re Student Partners)***

”

## Question 4: Did the project impact Trinity policies/systems?

### While, at school or unit level:

- 85% of staff respondents said that their colleagues had engaged positively with the need for an inclusive curriculum
- Approximately half of staff respondents felt that sustained change took place in their school or unit “as a result of your involvement with Trinity-INC”

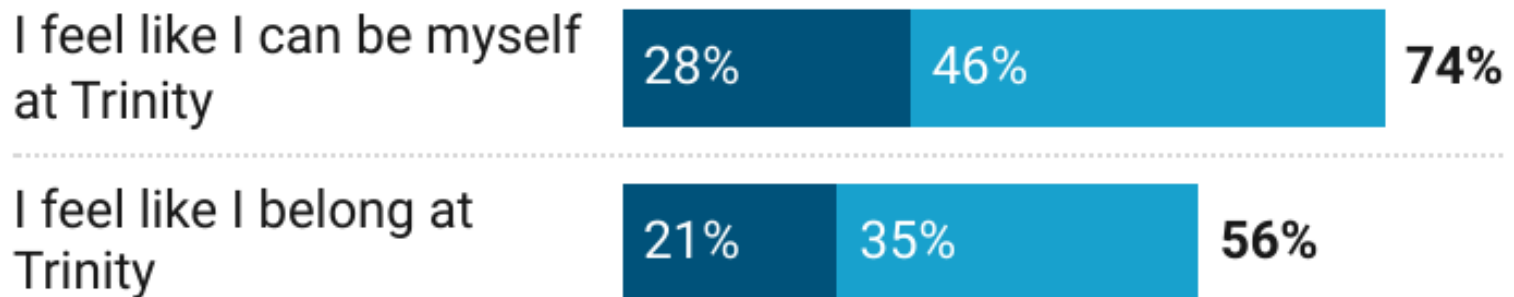
### At College level:

- Criticism that the project did not succeed in embedding inclusive practices more deeply into College structures and policies (& the evaluation identified only a handful of examples of policy change)
- The views of staff respondents were evenly split as to whether College’s approach to inclusive curriculum had improved over the past 4 years
- Students were also equally divided as to whether the curriculum had become more inclusive over their time in College

# Wider impact of the Trinity-INC project

## Student Survey: positive inclusion responses (n=230)

Strongly agree Agree



# Conclusions

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1. Strategy to identify and support advocates to ‘seed’ change towards inclusion amongst colleagues was very effective
2. Colleagues were broadly supportive – although mixed reports of level of support from school leadership
3. Prompted individuals to make further changes to their personal practice, and supported local (i.e. school or professional unit level) change, some of it transformational
4. The breadth of the Trinity-INC approach – which involved both academic and professional/admin staff – was embraced
5. **But** less success at bringing about systemic or institutional change
6. The ‘demand-led’ nature of the project’s activities, and the promotion of an ‘incremental’ approach to change, allowed some areas of College to minimise their engagement
7. Still only 56% of students in target groups feel that they ‘belong’ in Trinity



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## **2. Evaluation of UDL/inclusive practices training in a third level education institution**

Quirke, M., McCarthy, P., Adderley, S., Swift, A., & García Iriarte, E.

# Background: Understand educators' experiences before and after completing an Inclusive Practices module

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## Research questions:

- What motivates engagement in UDL?
- How do attitudes and practices change after UDL training?
- What barriers impact implementation?

# Literature

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## **UDL as an Evidence-Based Framework**

- Rao et al. (2023); Gunderson & Cumming (2022) — Proactive, flexible teaching for diverse learners

## **Policy & Legal Foundations**

- UNCRPD (2006); Ayeni & Eden (2024); Halabieh et al. (2022) — Rights-based mandates for inclusive access — SDGs & Bologna Process promoting inclusion

## **Global, Regional Initiatives + Individual Responses & Mindset**

- Ewe & Galvin (2023); Healy, Ryder & Banks (2024); Quirke, McGuckin & McCarthy (2024)

## **Impact of UDL Training**

- Dell’Anna et al. (2024); Moriña, Carballo & Doménech (2025) — Enhances teaching competence and student engagement

# Literature (cont.)

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## **Institutional Collaboration**

- McConkey & Swift (2025); Burgstahler (2015); Black, Weinberg & Brodwin (2015) — Cross-institutional support fosters sustainable inclusion

## **Challenges & Critiques**

- Tobin (2018, 2021); Boysen (2021); Edyburn (2020); Hollingshead et al. (2022) — Need for cultural change, critical reflection, and contextual sensitivity

## **Evolving, Equity-Driven Practice**

- Rao et al. (2023) — UDL as collaborative, iterative, and dynamic

# Methodology Overview

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**Participants: Academic staff, course leaders, support staff**

– Numbers 29 pre-module - 21 post-module

**Analysis:** Thematic analysis and comparative synthesis

Focus on attitudes, motivations, practical changes, and challenges

## Trinity-INC Module in Inclusive Practices

- The Professional Learning Module drew on the principles of Universal Design for Learning to provide an inclusive framework for the practice of those who teach or who support teaching and learning at Trinity.
- The **UDL Digital Badge** from National Forum for Teaching & Learning was received by those which completed the module.
- Structure: **20 hours over 10 weeks**. Flexible and light-touch engagement involving:

Self-directed  
learning

Peer Group  
meetings

Hybrid  
seminars

# Methodology:

What difference, if any, does the module make to participants' attitudes, knowledge and behaviours in relation to inclusive practices?

	<u>Pre module evaluation survey</u>	<u>Post module evaluation survey</u>
Baseline information	Demographic, role and experience, training, knowledge of UDL, motivation, attitudes towards EDI, individual and School/Department UDL practice, level of engagement with students, changes made and planned to make to practice in current role	
Self-reflection on diversity	Optional/Part of week 1	
Module feedback, completion and impact		Please describe -very briefly - any changes you have already made since starting the module (Similar to a question in the module report)

15-minute surveys (1 pre module survey & 1 post module survey, participants not matched),  
 Purposive sampling: all participants in the Inclusive Practices Module (Sept-Dec 2024), voluntary and anonymous

# Pre-Module Key Themes

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1. **Commitment & Motivation.** Desire to improve teaching quality and inclusivity

“To improve the quality of my teaching.”

“It is my responsibility to ensure that every individual feels valued.”

2. **Awareness of Gaps.** Limited formal training and confidence

“I often don’t feel confident enough when applying inclusive practices.”

“Receiving the digital badge in UDL will help my confidence.”

3. **Diverse Prior Learning** - Mix of formal courses, workshops, and lived experience

“I have experienced the effects of inequality, lack of diversity and exclusion first hand so I think I am well-equipped to understand these areas. I do realise, however, that I always need to be constantly learning and appreciating how the world works and looks to people from different backgrounds, gender (would like more information on the LGBTQ+ area please), countries, up-bringsings (I know nothing of the world of people from higher income backgrounds and access to private schools).”

# Post-Module Key Themes

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1. **Increased Self-Reflection & Confidence.** Greater awareness of own biases and knowledge gaps

“Doing this also gave me an opportunity to reflect on what I didn’t know about inclusion.”

2. **Practical Implementation.** Changes such as subtitled lectures and accessible materials

“Recording and subtitling lectures, making teaching materials available in multiple formats.”

“I have changed how I create signage and online information to include accessibility features.”

3. **Persistent Barriers.** Time pressures and bureaucratic obstacles

“Committees are a nightmare to engage with and they frighten me.”

“Mostly the time it will take to identify and then implement [changes].”

# Comparative Insights

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- Commitment to inclusion consistent pre- and post-module
- Confidence improved with training
- Practical application increased but limited by institutional barriers
- Inclusion understood as ongoing, systemic process post-module

# Key Themes in Inclusive Practice and UDL

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1. Motivation for Inclusive Practice
2. Transformative Potential of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
3. Reflective Practice
4. Need for Systemic Support and Collaborative Culture

# Implications for Practice & Policy

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- Continued professional development crucial for confidence and competence
- Institutional policies must reduce bureaucratic hurdles and allocate resources
- Encourage reflective practice and peer collaboration to sustain change
- Formal recognition (e.g., digital badges) strengthens motivation

# Conclusion & Questions

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**Inclusive practice is a committed, evolving journey requiring individual and institutional alignment**

- Training enhances knowledge and confidence but must be supported systemically
- Embedding inclusive practice is a complex, contested process involving shifts in organisational culture as well as individual behaviour.



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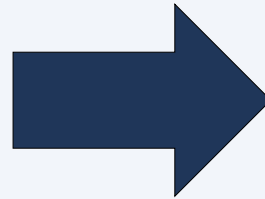
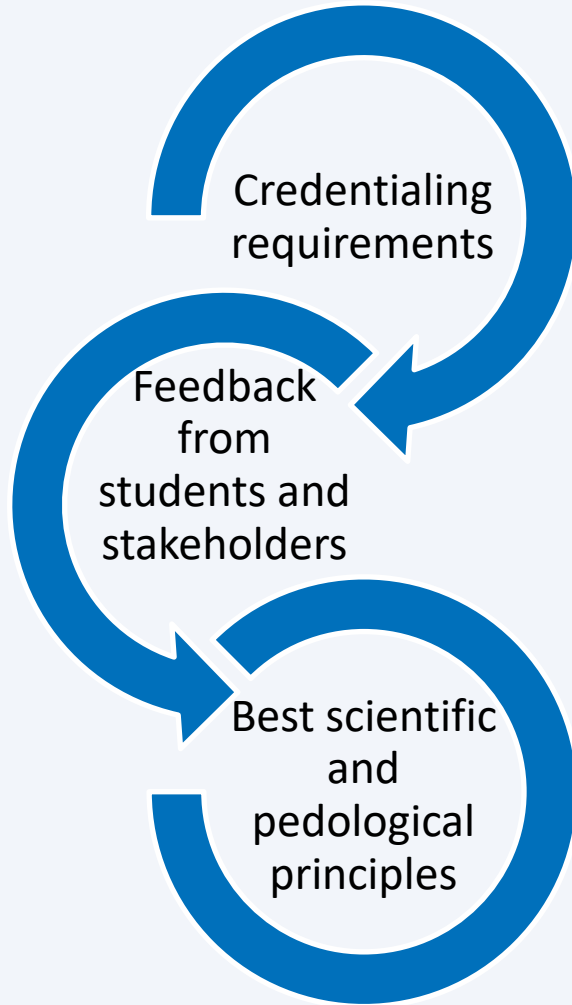
[www.tcd.ie/equality/inclusivecurriculum](http://www.tcd.ie/equality/inclusivecurriculum)

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### **3. Embedding Trinity-INC principles into curricular evolution in the Discipline of Physiotherapy'**

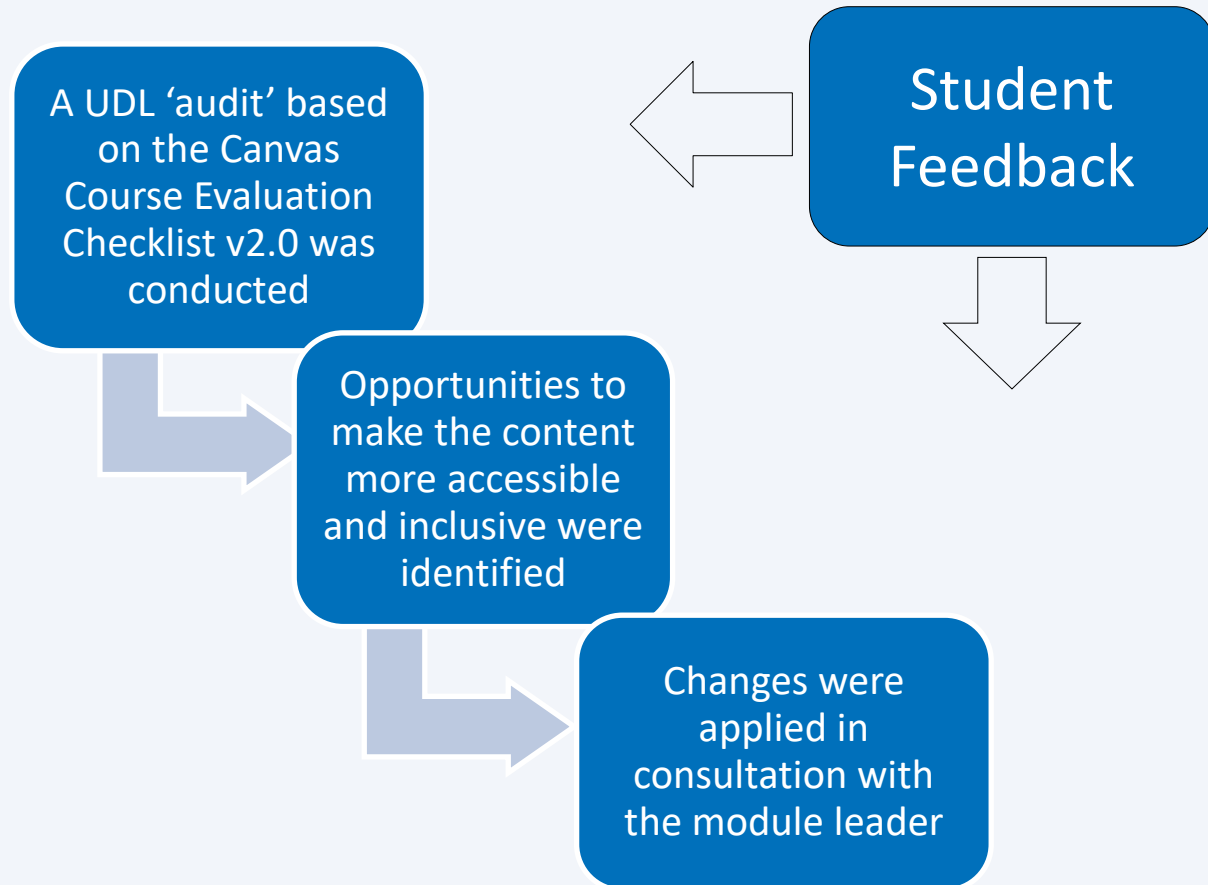
Broderick, J.

# Physiotherapy Curriculum - where does UDL fit in ?



To embed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in a 'bespoke way' into BSc Physiotherapy modules

# Methodology



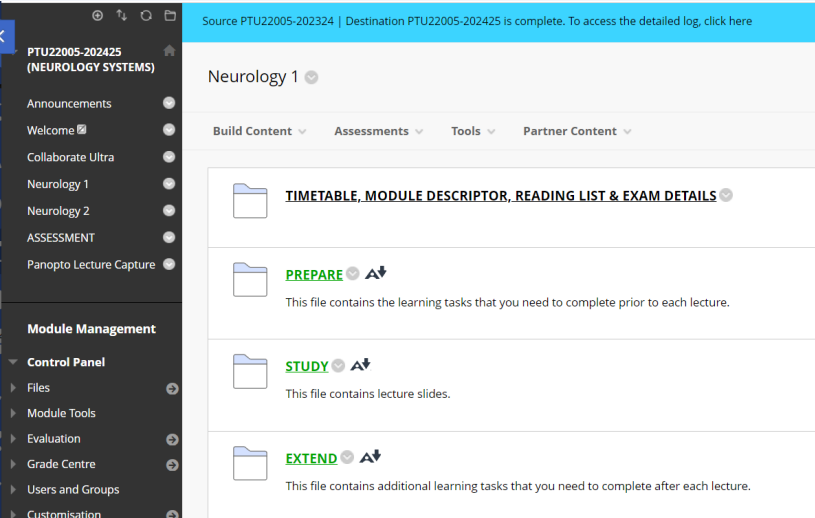
# Suggestions from Student Partners

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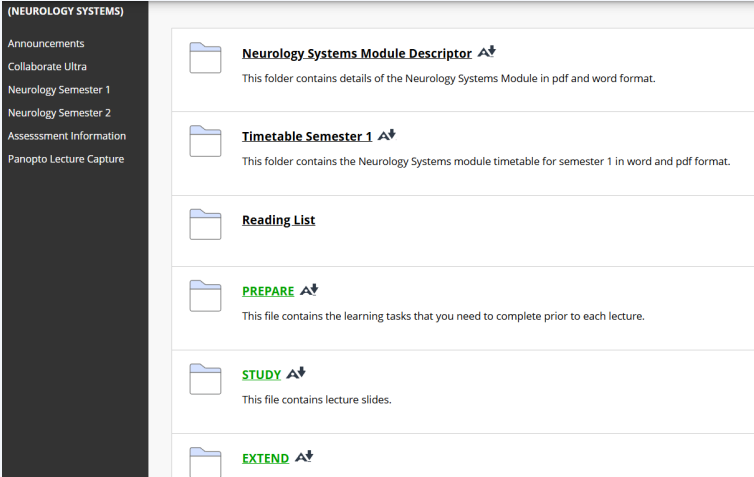
- Alternate text next to images is very helpful
- Closed captions on videos helpful but ensure they are correct
- Additional resources e.g. more links to videos and podcasts would be helpful for providing alternative way of learning
- Consider pre-recording lectures and make available to view online in order to use in-person time for more discussion/case studies and practical work

# Changes applied to module layout in Blackboard

Before



After



# Standard use of TCD power point template

## Before

GENERAL OBSERVATION




GENERAL OBSERVATION

- General Observation:
  - SOB/Distressed
  - Posture
  - Cyanosed
  - Supplemental Oxygen
  - Too breathless to speak
  - Level of consciousness
  - Ankle swelling

OXYGEN THERAPY

- Mode of delivery
  - Nasal cannulae
  - Oxygen mask
  - Nebuliser
  - NIV – BIPAP, CPAP
- Quantity
- Humidification







## After

General observation






Image of a patient on a ventilator

Image of a patient who is underweight and likely breathless as assuming a position of ease in chair

General observation continued

- General Observation:
  - SOB/Distressed
  - Posture
  - Cyanosed
  - Supplemental Oxygen
  - Too breathless to speak
  - Level of consciousness
  - Ankle swelling

Oxygen therapy

- Mode of delivery
  - Nasal cannulae
  - Oxygen mask
  - Nebuliser
  - NIV – BIPAP, CPAP
- Quantity
- Humidification




Image of facemask used to deliver oxygen








Image of a patient receiving oxygen via nasal cannulae

Image of a patient receiving oxygen via non-invasive ventilation

Image of a patient receiving oxygen via a facemask

# Addition of alternate text next to images

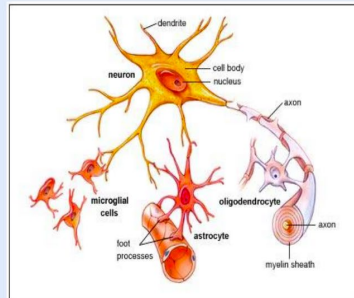
## Before

### Cells

Nerve cells (Neurons)-see next slide

**Neuroglia** (support cells- glia from Greek word for glue)

- Astrocytes (star shaped; provide nutrient supply lines to neurons)
- Oligodendrocytes/ Schwann cells (form myelin sheath)
- Microglia (can transform into a macrophage)



## After

### Cells

Nerve cells (Neurons)-see next slide

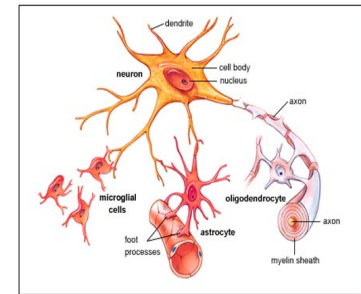
Neuroglia (support cells- glia from Greek word for glue)

Astrocytes (star shaped; provide nutrient supply lines to neurons)

Oligodendrocytes/ Schwann cells (form myelin sheath)

Microglia (can transform into a macrophage)

Diagram of a neuron (nerve cell)



# Benefits and challenges of this project

## Benefits

- Canvas UDL checklist was a useful audit tool
- Standardised approach to layout of module content enhances user experience
- Use of alternate text next to images, hyperlinks and use of closed captions useful
- Engagement with student partners provided additional useful insights

## Challenges

- Module co-ordinators may have different preferences for the layout of content
- Standardised format may not be appropriate for all course modules
- Guest lecturers less likely to be using power point template
- Time-consuming to retrospectively apply changes to lecture slides



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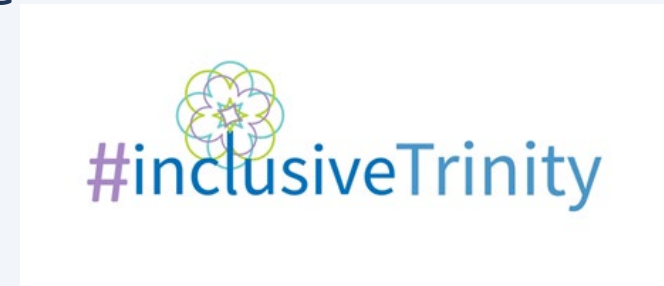
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## **4. Systemic failures in embedding Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education**

Treanor, D., Crampton, W., Dunne, S., & García Iriarte, E.

# Trinity-INC & Altitude

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) holds great promise in creating inclusive and accessible educational environments.
- However, systemic failures continue to hinder its adoption in higher education.
- This presentation critiques the structural and cultural limitations that prevent institutions from embedding UDL meaningfully using Trinity-INC and the ALTITUDE Charter as reference points.



# Systemic challenges

Lack of embedded policy and accountability

Short-term projects with limited long-term impact.


Resistance to inclusive assessment methods.

Fragmented institutional structures that impede collaboration.


Lack of systematic evaluation and evidence of UDL's effectiveness.




# Recommendations




**Institutionalizing UDL in strategy and quality assurance processes**




**Creating cross-functional working groups**



**Embedding UDL into programme approval and assessment**



**Mandating professional development**



**Discipline-specific guidance**

**Funding through national schemes**



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# Discussion, Questions and Answers



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# Thank You

<https://www.tcd.ie/equality/inclusive-curriculum/>



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