

Dublin City University

Analysis of the DCAD Survey:

Responses to the Open-Ended Question 13: “*Could you please provide information on a structured professional development course or exercise which you found particularly useful for your teaching practice*”

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Table of Contents

1.1 Introduction	3
1.2 Positive and negative professional development	3
1.2.1 Positive professional development	3
1.2.2 Negative professional development	7
1.3 Form of professional development	10
1.4 Summary	32
Appendix 1	36
Appendix 2	39

Analysis of the open-ended question 13

1.1 Introduction

The data from the analysis of the open-ended question 13 will be presented in the sections below. In question 13 of the survey the respondents were asked about a structural professional development activity which they found particularly useful for their teaching practice (*Could you please provide information on a structured professional development course or exercise which you found particularly useful for your teaching practice?*). The responses were available for 404 respondents. The data from the open-ended question will be presented below in accordance with the following key themes:

1. Positive and Negative Professional Development;
2. Form of Professional Development.

1.2 Positive and Negative Professional Development

1.2.1 Positive Professional Development

Preliminary data analysis indicated that the responses to the question 13 were largely positive. Nevertheless, a number of participants (n=14) explicitly stated a positive response about the structural professional development which they found particularly useful for their teaching practice. While there was some variation in the responses in the *Positive Professional Development* theme, there was a consistent clustering of the similar types of statements, which resulted in the set of sub-categories. (Please see Appendix 1 for all quotations in the *Positive Professional Development* theme)

Theme 1: Courses / Workshops

Typically in this category respondents referred to a particular course or workshop attended as part of their continuing professional development. Respondents placed a strong emphasis on the direct relevance of the attended courses to their day-to-day teaching practice. More so, respondents' accounts revealed some insights in regard to the practical benefit of the attended PD activities. As such, the courses' content appeared to be very useful in regard to:

Response theme	N	PD focus	Relevance to practice
Courses/ workshops	7	Teaching methodology	Assessment techniques
		Problem-based learning workshop	Leading/guiding students' learning
		Doctoral research workshop (DCU Business school)	1) Great for the insights into qualitative research; personality testing 2) Opportunity to meet PhD fellow students
		Giving feedback to students	Improved efficiency and effectiveness of providing feedback to students in respondent's own practice
		Postgraduate research workshops (DIT – Learning, Teaching and Technology centre)	Introduction to research techniques / certificate award
		2 day course of T&L (CAPSL, TCD) on teaching theory	Group teaching, excellent – informed the way the respondent's teaching in class
		Using video clips	Useful ideas on teaching
Qualifications	4	PG Certificate in Teaching and Learning (LTTC Mount Street)	Generally useful for practice, excellent
		PG Cert in T&L (UCC)	Useful in understanding what way students learn/understand and how teachers can facilitate this process
		Postg. Dip in University Teaching (UCD)	Good for structuring teaching approach and seeing the 'big picture'
		Certificate in T&L	Relevant topics: Learning theories, Assessment and feedback, Use of technology (Useful to all aspects of teaching practice)
Other	3	Mathematics Education Ireland Conference	Research on third level teaching mathematics
		International summer school	Teaching methods
		External Examiner Training (UK)	Insights into potential for curriculum development; On-line teaching course encouraged to use more technology in respondent's teaching

1. **Assessment techniques** There was one reference to the courses /workshops on teaching methodology and assessment of student learning, in particular:

Courses aimed at use of specific technologies but more important are courses on relevant pedagogical / assessment techniques

2. **Leading and guiding students in their learning:**

I participated in a problem-based learning workshop that I found particularly useful. It required me to reflect in a quite different way on how I might lead students in their learning

3. **Providing some useful insights** into basics of research with a particular reference to qualitative research was also one of the responses. Additionally, this course proved to be a great opportunity to meet fellow PhD students and build networking relations in participant's own disciplinary field:

When doing my PhD in DCU, in Translation Studies, I did a course on doctoral research which ran for a few days a week over several weeks in the School of Business at DCU. It included insights into qualitative research and the personality and work approaches of the researcher, using the Briggs- Myer scale of personality testing. I found this course very useful as a means of reflecting on research and meeting PhD fellow students

4. **Providing feedback to students** professional development activities were highlighted in turn to raise efficiency and the quality of respondent's teaching practice:

Session on giving feedback to students was useful for improving efficiency and effectiveness of this activity in the classroom, and improve student participation. Role playing workshops, rather than a static presentation would have been more useful on the workshop

5. **Introduction to post-graduate research / certificate award:**

One workshop in the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) specifically focused on postgraduate research supervision and mentoring:

The DITs Learning, Teaching & Technology Centre team has facilitated me with innumerable and particularly useful PDCs over the past number of years to include post-graduate research and acquired academic/professional qualifications

6. **Students' group teaching** was a useful professional development activity which helped to inform the respondent's teaching style (The course was particularly useful in regard to the introduction to teaching theory):

On starting my contract at TCD, I was invited to attend a CAPSL-run two-day course on Teaching and Learning. The course introduced teaching theory in an active and participatory way which actually showed how to make group teaching work. This was excellent and has informed the way I have approached teaching since then. I believe that people at any stage in their career could get a lot from such a course as it helped me to re-focus on my core teaching function and to do so from the point of view of the student

7. **The use video clips in classroom teaching** was also mentioned as being helpful for the classroom teaching practice of the respondent:

A session on the use of video clips in classroom teaching, about 3 years ago. It was very useful and gave me some ideas that have become a mainstay in my teaching approach

Theme 2: Qualifications

In this group of responses the survey participants spoke largely about receiving accreditation for their attendance of a structural professional development. As such, there were only four responses within this grouping. The dominant pattern in the responses was the perception of usefulness and relevance of the attended professional development to the teaching practice of the respondents. For example, one respondent highlighted that not only talking part in the PD was well worth time and effort, but also that Postgraduate certificate in teaching and learning should be offered to all starting lecturers:

Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in LTTC Mount Street is an excellent and well worth the time/effort involved. Although I did not have to complete the course as I am employed since 2002 I found it excellent and should be compulsory for all.

Additionally, the **completion of Postgraduate Certificate** proved particularly useful for the understanding of the ways in which students learn best and understanding the role of the lecturer in facilitating learning process:

I completed a PG Cert in Teaching and Learning at UCC some years ago and have found this very useful, in terms of understanding what ways students learn/understand and how teachers can address these ways.

Furthermore, other respondent referred to the **module on curriculum development** within the **Postgraduate Diploma** as ‘excellent’ in regard to helping him to see the bigger picture of the programme:

Just completing Postgraduate Diploma in University Teaching in UCD which has been excellent. The curriculum development module was particularly good in terms of structuring my teaching and seeing it within the big picture of a programme.

With the last respondent in this group highlighting that the completion of **Certificate in Teaching and Learning** was very valuable for all aspects of his teaching practice:

Cert in Teaching and Learning Very useful for all aspects of my teaching practice. Relevant topics covered include: -Learning theories -Assessment and feedback -Use of Technology.

Theme 3: Other

In total, three responses were grouped under the “*Other*” category. In more detail, the participants talked about **attending conferences**, **summer schools** and **professional development training** outside of Ireland, which they found most useful to their teaching practice:

Mathematics Education Ireland Conference - research on third-level teaching of mathematics was extremely useful.

I was invited staff at an international summer school given by a leading team of experts in my discipline. The summer school was for senior executive MBA students, and highly experiential and cutting edge in practice. It was a fantastic experience to share in the formation, delivery and debrief of the teaching methods for the week.

External Examiner training (UK) - provided excellent insights into the potential for curriculum development, on-line teaching course - encouraged me to use more technology in my teaching.

1.2. 2 Negative Professional Development

The more detailed analysis of the questionnaire responses revealed that a number of participants (n=13) replied negatively about structural professional activities they have participated in. The table below summarises the presence of the themes across 13 respondents which emerged in response to the question *Could you please provide information on a structured professional development course or exercise which you found particularly useful for your teaching practice?*

Response theme	N	Reason why not useful (some examples)
Course Content	7	Little relevance to disciplinary differences: <i>“One size fits all”</i>
		Courses on postgraduate supervision and mature student teaching are of little relevance to practice
		Very general professional development on generic skills development
		<i>“Amateurish”</i> content
		Most of the courses seem to be narrowly focused on the humanities and social sciences
Value to practice	4	Limited value to teaching practice
		Not useful for teaching
		Pointless courses
Delivery	1	Courses delivered by people with limited expertise in teaching.
Additional workload	1	Time-consuming, demanding and obligatory

Theme 1: Course Content

Seven survey participants in their responses in relation to the structural professional development indicated a number of reasons why they did not find the professional development useful. Overall, respondents referred to the course content which was of little interest or value to them. Regarding the course content these were professional development workshops on **postgraduate supervision** and **mature student teaching**:

To be honest, I have attended a number of sessions on postgraduate supervision and mature student teaching but have not learned anything much that I didn't already know. In general, I have found these take up time that could be used better elsewhere.

None have been that impressive. Many are too enamoured of gadgets and gimmicks and the latest fashion in 'Teaching & Learning'. Discussion with peers has been far more fruitful than such training.

Another two respondents referred to the little **account of the disciplinary differences** in the course content they have attended:

I keep going to courses, but have never found one of interest or value, they tend to be a one size fits all, so you end up doing something on dissertation evaluation with scientists, linguists, engineers. It is useless.

To be honest, none have really worked so far as, in spite of all that's said, much of the research in teaching practice appears to be focussed on non-mathematical areas and/or small group teaching. Hence courses in teaching practice tend to emphasise techniques that work well in, for example, the humanities and/or soft sciences. This is particularly true when it comes to the use of assessment methods and also PBL.

Interestingly, there was also a perception of very **general nature** of the professional development workshops. As can be exemplified by the following example, the courses were perceived other two respondents as to be **lacking sufficient depth**:

I can't say that I have found anything 'particularly useful'. Generalised professional development concentrating on generic skills has not, in my view, been a particularly worthwhile activity.

Cant-they are all very amateurish-feel I could teach the so-called "teaching" experts". All they think is necessary is to-- Power point/ Moodle /Blackboard/electronic handout-- you--and the unfortunate students you teach--- to death. Gone is "the spontaneous", the challenging, the Socratic dialogue. I look at what passes for academic pedagogy - and weep!!! .And teaching is the poor relation of research-who ever heard of a University losing status because of bad/appalling teaching{endemic}---but you can lose your status/department/budget in the morning if you lag behind in research. Guess why University staff relegate teaching to the "ha-penny" place. No prizes.

Notably, there was also an impression that the courses were perceived as **too theoretical** and informal engagement with fellow colleagues was regarded to be much more helpful for the teaching practice than some formal professional development provision:

Most of the courses provided are theoretical nonsense and bureaucracy. Practical courses in dealing with student problems given by practitioners outside the 'official' courses are worth their weight in gold.

Theme 2: Value to practice

The analysis of the open-ended question revealed that four survey respondents stressed that most of the structured professional development activities were of little value to their teaching practice:

No. I found most of these training exercises to be of very, very limited value.

I attend a lot of seminars but haven't found many all that useful. I was at an integrating research and teaching session with Prof Mick Healey at St Pats Drumcondra recently and found that very good.

Most of them aren't actually that useful - they're a disappointment. Hope usually triumphs over experience when I sign up for the next one.

No, I usually do not find these terribly useful (pointless self serving exercises usually like learning objectives...

Theme 3: Delivery

The theme number three specifically related to the course **delivery methods** and **the lack of the teaching experience** by the course presenters. One of the respondents stressed that:

Very few. Most of the courses seem to be given by people who have very little experience of the reality of teaching practice or what undergraduate students (in particular) require. It seems a case of fashionable theory, especially from American research which really is not applicable in an Irish context, over what works.

Theme 4: Additional workload

And finally, only one person referred to amount of time he spends on professional development-related activities, referring to them as **time-consuming** and **obligatory**:

None. Most are obligatory, time-consuming, boring, and demeaning.

1.3 Form of Professional Development

The results of the analysis of the survey open-ended question 13 in regard to the form of professional development will be presented in this section. Preliminary data analysis pointed towards a number of emerging themes across the responses. A more detailed thematic analysis revealed about six recurrent themes. The summary of these themes some examples of the responses is presented below:

Theme 1: Courses / workshops / seminars

There were around 250 responses on the various forms of professional development activities attended by the respondents such as: workshops, conferences and seminars. The thematic analysis of the responses indicated that there were a number of recurrent themes. This section will comment on the most often mentioned responses within the identified themes. The sections below provide an in-sight into identified themes:

Response theme	(Approx) N	Some examples
Courses/ workshops/ seminars	254	Teaching philosophy statement / teaching portfolio; Problem-based learning; Assessment techniques; Assessment techniques; Use of technology; Group teaching; Presentation skills; Education equality; learning outcomes; Critical thinking; Curriculum design; Student feedback; Peer collaboration / Peer engagement; Language teaching; Research informed teaching
PG Diploma/ PG Certificate	50	<i>Developed skills on / opportunity for:</i> Understanding students' learning styles; Accommodating individual learning styles of students; Meeting and interacting with fellow colleagues, sharing teaching ideas and experiences
Degree	25	Master of Arts (MA); Master of Science (MSc); Master in Education (MEd); Doctor in Education (DEd); Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
E-learning	9	E-learning workshops; On-line activities; E-learning summer schools
Conferences	14	Problem-based learning; Teaching inclusion / special educational needs teaching methods Educational philosophy
Other	19	Continuing professional development; Self-directed learning Collaboration; Meetings and forums: Teaching and student feedback; Awards

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY / TEACHING PORTFOLIO

One of the most often recurrent themes within the '*Courses / workshops / seminars*' group of responses was around **developing a teaching portfolio**. In particular, the survey respondents referred to **writing a teaching philosophy statement** as part of teaching portfolio development. Quotations below represent some of the typical responses within this theme:

CAPSL course on teaching philosophy

1. Developing a Teaching Portfolio 2. Assessment of Student Learning 3. Writing for Academic Journals

Reflective teaching portfolio Problem-based learning

Development of a teaching portfolio

Teaching portfolio course Teaching enhancement cycle Symposium on critical thinking

*I took a teaching philosophy course, i did find this useful
Reflective teaching portfolio development*

DCU teaching portfolio

Additionally, there was a number of responses which provided a greater insight into why the professional development on writing a teaching philosophy statement regarded to be most useful for respondents' teaching practice. As such, it was useful in regard to **explaining what teaching approaches** are best suited for various **learning situations** and what might better work in teaching practice:

Creation of a teaching philosophy statement helped to clarify my approaches to teaching and provided space to consider what works and what does not. Input on the use of de Bono's '6 hats' was useful in considering a variety of approaches to delivering content and input on creating and utilising digital media has driven forward much of my work

Writing a personal philosophy of teaching - it made explicit that which was tacit

Interestingly, while a concern about the need to attend some professional development on teaching philosophy statement in order to **secure a successful promotion** was also expressed, there was an agreement that the professional development of this kind is an **effective reflection mechanism** on teaching and learning practice:

How to write a teaching philosophy. This is a requirement for promotion (if that is ever allowed again) and also a good way to reflect on the past year teaching and find ways to improve

Moreover, the professional development of this kind seemed to be very helpful in **encouraging academic staff share their experience** on teaching. Nevertheless, one respondent also felt that integrating the role of technology and distance education into this professional development course might be needed:

The Teaching Portfolio course run by LIU at DCU was useful in being able to hear what other members of the group thought, but it lacked a focus on the use of technology to reach students. I strongly feel that some students will always act as distance learners and so we need to offer alternative modes of delivery for undergraduate and postgraduate courses.

The courses on teaching philosophy as mentioned by the respondents were provided by the Learning Innovation Unit in Dublin City University and the Centre for Academic Practice and eLearning in Trinity College Dublin.

PROBLEM BASED LEARNING

A number of respondents highlighted completing professional development workshops and seminars around problem based learning. The typical examples of the responses within this group are as follows:

Problem-based learning seminars

Problem based learning

Using Emotional Intelligence in Teaching Inquiry Based Learning

Problem based learning and work-based learning

The workshops around problem based learning were regarded useful because they **allowed resources and opportunity** on how the students' learning process and enquiry could be best structured:

I participated in a problem-based learning workshop that I found particularly useful. It required me to reflect in a quite different way on how I might lead students in their learning.

There were also some positive comments about the **course structure** and the **opportunity to meet fellow colleagues** and **exchanging practical ideas on new teaching techniques**:

I did a week course when I started which was invaluable in explaining some of the new techniques used in teaching such as problem based learning etc... It was very useful not only because of the content of the course but also interacting with other academics and hearing some of their ideas.

There were no references to the professional development providers on problem based learning in this group of responses.

ASSESSMENT TECHNIQUES

The professional development around assessment techniques were mentioned by a number of respondents. As such, the analysis indicated that the respondents highlighted relevant **assessment techniques**, the focus on **different types of assessment, continuous assessment, student engagement**, and **assessment of student learning**:

Courses aimed at use of specific technologies but more important are courses on relevant pedagogical/assessment techniques

*Assessment workshop which dealt with the comparative findings between peer, formative and summative assessment
Reviewing useful assessment techniques*

I have taken several short courses through the QPO and CTL at NUIM, including: - Engaging Students in Assessment - Establishing a Global Research Profile - The Good Supervisor - Curriculum Design and Planning

1. Developing a Teaching Portfolio 2. Assessment of Student Learning 3. Writing for Academic Journals

It was more of a 2 day workshop than a course. It was in creating continuous assessment

Additionally, among the responses the workshops on **assessment of learning in large classes** and **peer-observation** were also mentioned:

Introducing critical thinking skills; assessment in large classes

Workshop on small group teaching, workshop on assessment methods for large groups.

Student engagement, first year experience, assessment of learning and peer-observation. Being involved in research and collaboration with other Institutions

Interestingly, **assessment methodology** was highlighted by one respondent:

Curriculum development, Assessment methodology, supervision of research students.

Innovative group assessment methods, reflective learning assessment and **non-exam based assessment** were also mentioned by one respondent to highlight the most useful professional development for teaching practice:

DIT Learning and Teaching Centre seminars on innovative group assessment methods, working with new technologies and problem based learning

Assessment of reflective learning

I tend only to primarily attend sessions that I think will be directly useful to me in a practical way. Subsequently all sessions that I have participated in have been useful. Most recently this is has focused on assessment methods.

Non-exam based assessment run by Engineering & Architecture.

USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Quite a large number of responses on the structured professional development most useful for teaching practice referred to the workshops and seminars on the **use of technology**. Most of the responses in this group were very general such as:

Using technology

Classroom Technology workshops

The use of technology for education seminars are useful.

Assessment methods; Technology in education through the DIT LTTC

There were a few references made on using the workshops such as **on-line teaching methods**:

Use of online teaching methods

E learning courses - on line training courses providing up to date technological information and tutorials. Time management course and presentation courses

Use of online teaching methods

Training in new technologies and presentation skills

Further, **sessions on the Blackboard software use** were often mentioned by the respondents:

Sessions on Blackboard, a 3 day tailored programme for my Dept which all academic staff attended delivered by a specialist in 3rd level education

Endnote Blackboard

Moreover, blogging using **Moodle** and the use of **WebCT learning environment** was also mentioned as the most useful structured professional development for respondents' teaching practice. Some of the reasons for finding the workshops around the WebCT useful were introduction to **how to use the technology**, activities for **becoming familiar** with the system and **ways to enhance teaching and learning** process:

Blended Learning on Webct. This course focussed on facilitating learning through WebCT. It introduced the technology, how to use it and provided some clear ideas and activities for getting familiar with the system and providing some ideas for enhancing teaching and learning.

I was involved in training on the use of Moodle for the purposes of delivering power point lecture notes and for the delivery of assessments. I also participated on a structured workshop of the effects of exercise on the health of diabetic patients. I also participated in a workshop on the use of Camtasia screen capture software.

Creating blogs with students in language using Moodle learning styles

Developing necessary skills to teach with Moodle.

Courses in Moodle, advanced excel, PowerPoint, technology 'gadget' training - headset, recording lectures, Camtasia, marking online using Onenote

Training in use of VLEs (Virtual Learning Environments)

I found courses on the use of WebCT helpful

WebCT and previously Moodle classes

Other responses included references on the **use of video clips** in classroom teaching, the use of the **emerging technology**:

A session on the use of video clips in classroom teaching, about 3 years ago. It was very useful and gave me some ideas that have become a mainstay in my teaching approach.

Use of emerging technology are most beneficial.

GROUP TEACHING

One of the themes with quite a large number of responses across the survey respondents was 'Group teaching'. The majority of the responses within this theme related to **large group teaching** and covered areas like **teaching with a power point**, the **use of technology**, **assessment**, **teaching and learning methodology**:

Workshops such as how to teach large groups, power point, etc

In house training on large group teaching.

In house training on large group teaching.

Teaching large groups Teaching small groups

Training in working with large groups

Teaching large groups and use of technology

Workshop on small group teaching, workshop on assessment methods for large groups

Modules on teaching and learning e.g. large group teaching

Course on teaching in a large group setting

There were a number of references to the workshops / seminars on **teaching in small group settings** such as:

Half day workshop on small group teaching techniques

Small group teaching, facilitation skills

Interestingly, one reference was made to teaching **critical thinking skills in a small group setting**. This particular course was delivered in UCD and found by the respondent to be very useful for his teaching practice:

During my studies as a graduate student, I attended seminars on small group teaching. I still rely heavily on what I learned there - I attended a workshop at UCD on instilling critical thinking into students.

Similarly, another respondent commented on a two-day course provided by the CAPSL in TCD around **teaching theory on group teaching**. The course was referred to as 'excellent' and as the one which should be made available to the academics at any stage of their teaching careers:

On starting my contract at TCD, I was invited to attend a CAPSL-run two-day course on Teaching and Learning. The course introduced teaching theory in an active and participatory way which actually showed how to make group teaching work. This was excellent and has informed the way I have approached teaching since then. I believe that people at any stage in their career could get a lot from such a course as it helped me to re-focus on my core teaching function and to do so from the point of view of the student.

PRESENTATION SKILLS

There were a number of responses on the workshops and seminars on the role of **presentation skills in teaching practice**. For example, these included **motivational interviewing skills, interviewing techniques, content delivering** at presentations and **effective presentations**:

Motivational Interviewing Techniques provided by the HSE

Training in new technologies and presentation skills

Delivering effective presentations

Interview techniques

Enhancing your presentation skills course organised by CAPSL

There was one reference to the CAPSL, a course provider of this type of professional development. Additionally one respondent highlighted attending a **writing skills workshop**, which was reported to be of value for respondent's teaching practice:

Writing workshop although it was a little too basic for me. While it was about writing, it was more about writing habits and I feel my habits are my strongest area in writing for publication. I would have benefitted more from technical training.

EDUCATION EQUALITY

There were about five references to the **quality of education** and learning about **cultural diversity of students** and dealing with various **differences in learning styles** and **special educational needs**:

Equality and education CPD course

Dyslexia course

Cultural diversity seminar

Dealing with distressed students effective presentations

As such, one respondent also highlighted teaching students with Asperger's syndrome:

Recent session regarding teaching students with Asperger's syndrome. Looking forward to forthcoming training re supervising PhD students.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

A number of responses revolved around workshops and seminars **on writing learning outcomes**. Amongst the responses were mentioned the following: **setting learning outcomes**, **writing learning outcomes** and **designing learning outcomes** and **assessment methods**:

In house seminars and workshops. Learning outcomes workshops over a year

A one-day programme in DCU on setting learning outcomes/objectives.

Learning outcomes course, helpful in writing course outlines and shaping assessments

Writing learning outcomes

Designing course outlines - learning outcomes and assessment methods

CRITICAL THINKING

There were only about four responses around 'Critical thinking' theme. The professional development workshops, for example, were delivered on **creative thinking** and **introduction of critical thinking**:

Workshop on creative thinking

A course on the implementation of the new syllabus for teaching Irish in 3rd level institutions

Critical thinking

Introducing critical thinking skills; assessment in large classes

There were no references in this group of responses to the courses / workshops providers.

CURRICULUM DESIGN

Within the references to curriculum design were the ones on **curriculum development** and **programme module design**:

Curriculum development class planning

I've attended seminars on Assessment, Module Design and some others, but I didn't find they were of much relevance to my teaching: either the ideas were too theoretical to have much practical relevance or required resources that made them impossible to put into practice.

Curriculum development, Assessment methodology, supervision of research students

Additionally, there was a reference of the Centre for Teaching and Learning in UCD, which run a curriculum design workshop for academic staff. The respondent particularly stressed

becoming aware of the all aspects of curriculum design and the workshop practical applicability to his/her teaching practice:

Curriculum Design Module run by UCD Centre for Teaching & Learning. Very useful to learn about models of curriculum design and become aware of all the aspects of curriculum design which should be factored into a new or revised programme.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

A few responses were concerned with workshops on students' feedback. As such, the references related to **using the feedback to inform teaching practice, approaches to student evaluation and interpreting students' feedback:**

How to request and use student feedback during the semester

Workshops on approaches to student evaluation methods and student feedback

Short one day or half day courses on evaluation, student feedback, etc.

One respondent particularly commented that the workshops on student feedback was useful in regard to **improving efficiency and effectiveness of using the feedback** in the classroom and **increasing students' involvement and participation** in the learning process:

Session on giving feedback to students was useful for improving efficiency and effectiveness of this activity in the classroom, and improve student participation. Role playing workshops, rather than a static presentation would have been more useful on the workshop

PEER COLLABORATION / PEER ENGAGEMENT

The workshops and courses around **peer collaboration** and **peer engagement** were additionally mentioned by the respondents in their answer to the structural professional development most useful for their teaching practice:

Student engagement, first year experience, assessment of learning and peer-observation. Being involved in research and collaboration with other Institutions

Writers Retreat for Research but also fed into teaching to students to try and improve their writing skills. Subject T&L session with colleagues from other Universities where we shared our experiences and ideas.

Peer review of teaching

As evident from the responses above, the respondents most valued sharing ideas and experiences with their colleagues and participating in joint research initiatives and projects.

LANGUAGE TEACHING

Teaching language in a classroom setting was also one of the structural professional activities mentioned by the survey participants. Nevertheless, there were only two responses with the *Language Teaching* theme:

Making it local; Publishers workshop on bringing local knowledge to bear in classroom language teaching

A course on the implementation of the new syllabus for teaching Irish in 3rd level institutions

RESEARCH TEACHING INTEGRATION

Furthermore, there were only two responses within the *Research Teaching Integration* theme which generally had a reference to **research – led teaching** and **informing teaching through research**:

I attend a lot of seminars but haven't found many all that useful. I was at an integrating research and teaching session with Prof Mick Healey at St Pats Drumcondra recently and found that very good.

Using research-led teaching

Theme 2: Postgraduate Diploma / Postgraduate Certificate

Within the theme '*Postgraduate Diploma / Postgraduate Certificate*' survey respondents have additionally identified a number of institutions in which their teaching and learning qualifications were obtained. The section below will highlight some of the responses on institutions.

INSTITUTION

In total, there were about 50 references in regard to obtaining a postgraduate qualification in teaching and learning. For example, a number of respondents highlighted completing their Postgraduate Diploma in University College Dublin (UCD):

UCD's PGD in University Teaching & Learning Current transferring it over to an MA in Education from DkiT. ...

Just completing Postgraduate Diploma in University Teaching in UCD which has been excellent...

I have recently done the certificate in university teaching and learning in UCD...

A number of respondents referred to the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT) as the source of their Postgraduate qualification in teaching and learning:

DIT provide in-house training on aspects of teaching and research that incorporate technology and recent developments within these areas. Currently undertaking a post-graduate qualification in teaching and learning.

Certificate in Third Level Learning and Teaching at DIT

PGCertDIT: excellent, stimulating, inspiring.

The DITs Learning, Teaching & Technology Centre team has facilitated me with innumerable and particularly useful PDCs over the past number of years to include post-graduate research and acquired academic/professional qualifications

National University of Ireland, Maynooth (NUIM) was also mentioned by several respondents. As such, the courses completed in NUIM included postgraduate diplomas and professional certificates in teaching and learning:

Professional Certificate in Teaching and Learning (in Higher Education) course at NUIM ...

PGDHE at NUIM

Post-Graduate Diploma in Higher Education at NUI Maynooth

Interestingly, there were additionally two references on the course providers located outside of Ireland. These included the University of Brighton, which offered a Postgraduate Certificate in research methodology:

Postgrad. Cert in research methodology, University of Brighton, particularly a module on teaching in higher education

Teaching in Higher Education module of the Postgrad Cert in Research Methodology, offered by the University of Brighton - focussed on the UK system, but largely relevant to the Irish context.

Other course providers were mentioned – Open University, Kings College London and the Irish-based providers including University College Cork (UCC) and Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology (IADT).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONTENT

A more in-depth analysis on the content of the structured professional development revealed that the activities attended have been found useful, for instance, for the **deepening of understanding about students' learning styles and how lecturers can accommodate students' individual learning styles**. The following quotation is from the respondent who attended UCC for his/her Postgraduate Certificate:

I completed a PG Cert in Teaching and Learning at UCC some years ago and have found this very useful, in terms of understanding what ways students learn/understand and how teachers can address these ways.

In turn, a diploma completed with the Open University, was particularly helpful in regard to **acquisition of teaching skills** and the **course material** which proved to be very helpful for teaching:

I recently took a two year part-time diploma in literature & creative writing with the Open University. The course material and skills acquired throughout the course helped inform my teaching.

Additionally, a Professional Certificate from NUIM was referred to as 'beneficial' for the beginner lecturer for teaching at a higher level:

Professional Certificate in Teaching and Learning (in Higher Education) course at NUIM - basic introduction to practices in T&L and how to manage and approach teaching. Learned skills that were beneficial to me as a beginner in teaching at higher level.

The Kings College London was highlighted for the **opportunity to meet and interact** with fellow colleagues starting their teaching and **share their experiences and teaching ideas**:

I completed the PGCAP qualification at Kings College London, which was a great opportunity to meet other young lecturers and discuss our experiences.

A Postgraduate Diploma from UCD was referred to as being ‘excellent’ within the module on curriculum development being particularly good in terms of **introducing an overall structure to respondent’s approach** to teaching and **seeing the bigger picture** of the overall programme:

Just completing Postgraduate Diploma in University Teaching in UCD which has been excellent. The curriculum development module was particularly good in terms of structuring my teaching and seeing it within the big picture of a programme.

I have recently done the certificate in university teaching and learning in UCD, The module on curriculum development was particularly well developed and relevant to my teaching.

In responses, where the provider institution has not been identified course following content was highlighted: Module on *Problem Based Learning and Assessment*, Certificate in *Enquiry Based Learning*, module on *Interview Selection Skills*, modules on *Learning Theories, Assessment and Feedback* and *Use of New Technology*.

Theme 3: Degree

In total, there were 25 responses to the open ended question 13 which could be loosely grouped around the theme ‘*Degree*’. The respondents highlighted receiving a **Master of Arts** or **Master of Science degrees**. Among the respondents there were also those who replied completing **Master in Education** degree course and **Doctor of Education** (Ed.D) degree.

Some respondents highlighted completing a structured PhD and the Doctor in Education (D.Ed) degree programme.

INSTITUTION PROVIDER AND CONTENT

Master of Arts

The majority of the respondents (N=9) in this group talked about completing their **Masters of Arts degree** as the structured professional development which they found particularly useful for their teaching practice. The following quotations are some typical examples within this response theme:

Masters of Arts.

Postgrad diploma in teaching and learning PBL and assessment strategies MA in teaching and learning.

I undertook an MA. I go to regular courses offered by DIT.

MA in Third Level Teaching.

1998-2002 Completed a M.A. in Education Management under the Training of Trainers scheme in the IoT's. Ongoing CPD at ITTD has provided regular engaging workshops in teaching and assessment practice.

There were only a few references among the respondents related to the course providers. As such the most often mentioned courses providers was Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT).

Master of Science degree

Furthermore, 5 respondents highlighted receiving **MSc degree** with one obtaining a **Masters in Medical education**, and one **MSc secondary care qualification**:

I decided to gain an MSc secondary care qualification for which I could design undergraduate modules, postgraduate modules and continuing professional development modules.

MSc in e-Learning.

MSc in Technology and Learning Internal workshop on Research organised by School of Business.

MSc in Applied eLearning DIT.

Currently participating in an MSC course in Applied eLearning.

Regarding the course content, the respondents highlighted *Technology and Learning* workshops, *E-learning* and *Applied e-learning*. There was only one reference to DIT (Dublin Institute of Technology) as an MSc degree provider.

Master in Education

There were only two respondents who identified completing their **Masters in Education** degree, as can be exemplified by the quotations below:

MEd degree with Open University

CAPSL and the new M.Ed

Regarding the content of the M.Ed degrees there were no references to any specific modules which the respondents found particularly useful within their degree. And there was only one respondent who identified the provider of his/he degree. This was the Open University.

Doctorate of Education

Additionally, four respondents highlighted completing their **Doctorate of Education** degree (Ed.D) while only one respondent referring to a **Doctorate in Education (D.Ed.)** degree as a structured professional development course which they found particularly useful for their teaching practice:

IT systems in DIT Ed.D degree

Structured EdD research which informed my practice

I have completed a Doctorate (Ed.D) in Education and a higher diploma in Higher Education, both these were extremely useful for my teaching.

I am currently engaged in an EdD programme at the University of Manchester.

The Doctor in Education programme run in the School of Education Trinity College Dublin

Among the course providers were mentioned DIT, Trinity College Dublin and the University of Manchester.

Doctor of Philosophy

There were three references among the respondents to the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**, as the structural professional development activity which they found most useful for their teaching practice:

Structured PhDs

Doing my PhD. Various presentations and workshops

PhD at University of Wales

There was only one respondent who identified the University of Wales as the provider of his/her Ph.D degree.

Theme 4: E-learning

The thematic analysis revealed that there were only about nine responses within the '*E-learning theme*'.

INSTITUTIONAL PROVIDERS AND CONTENT

Majority of the responses within this theme predominantly clustered around the **e-learning course provision, e-learning workshops** and various **online activities**:

Assessment of reflective learning Web courses

E learning course, workshops in assessment strategies

Online activities

E - learning

Programme on e-learning where I was registered as a student on an e-learning module

*Online teaching course - encouraged me to use more technology in my teaching
Webinar introduction to synchronous classroom software. It was concise (1 hour),
available at my desk, and targeted to a specific area of interest and relevance.*

As can be shown by the quotations, the *e-learning* structured professional development was particularly useful for respondents' teaching practice in terms of courses and modules on **assessment strategies** and **reflective practice assessment**. Moreover, the e-learning courses were reported to be quite influential in **encouraging respondents to use the technology** in their classroom teaching and learning practices.

Additionally, within the theme 'E-learning' there were two references to participating in **e-learning summer schools**:

Dublin E-Learning Summer School

E-learning summer school

As exemplified by the quotation above, one of the summers schools attended by the respondents were held in Dublin.

Theme 5: Conferences

Within the theme '*Conferences*' there were about 14 quotations from the survey respondents. Some examples of the responses and information on the institutions provider and the course content are presented in this section.

There was a number of very general references to attending conferences such as:

Attendance at conferences/seminars. Reading journals/magazines. talking to students.

Professional Training Courses & Conference.

Attendance at conferences, professional development courses offered through DIT, DRHEA, online seminars.

Some conferences attended had a particular **disciplinary focus**:

Mathematics Education Ireland Conference - research on third-level teaching of mathematics was extremely useful.

Attendance at AMEE (Glasgow, Sept 2010) (Medical education conference).

Irish Maths Service teaching conference

Conference on Engineering education (learning styles etc) Assessment methods

Attendance at SEDA and other conferences.

Workshop on teaching/learning tools and their effective use at FIE Conference

There were some references to why the respondents highlighted attending conferences as the structured professional development most useful for their teaching practice. As such, the respondents remarked about the conferences with a **focus on professional development** and **problem based learning** as the most useful for them:

I regularly attend conferences and seminars where there is a focus on professional development.

Problem Based Learning summer schools being run by Facilitate, the National Enquiry & problem Based learning organisation.

Furthermore, the conferences with a focus **on teaching inclusion** and **special educational needs teaching methods** were highlighted:

Inclusive teaching strategies for teacher education. I recently attended a conference which gave an overview of methods. As I am in teacher training and special educational needs is my area I would always use a variety of methods anyway.

On the other hand, the conferences on **educational philosophy** were also identified, while the conferences **focused on research** were useful because of **keeping up to date with the developments** in teaching:

I attended a conference in Helsinki on developing a personal and professional philosophy in relation to my discipline.

Research conferences. Keep me fully up to date on my discipline and allow me to keep teaching materials updated.

Theme 6: Other

There was about 19 responses to the open ended question 13 which could be loosely grouped around the theme 'Other'. More specifically, the responses in regard to the structured professional development activity most useful to the teaching practice varied and included references to a number of activities such as **attending continuing professional development sessions, collaboration with colleagues, self-directed learning** and others. This section will discuss these responses in greater detail.

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

One of the most common response within the theme 'Other' related to attending continuing professional development (CPD):

Teaching entrepreneurship primarily through innovative experiential learning - international in-service course in England, over 18 months. Unfortunately I've not had a chance to implement it here in my institution.

Equality and education CPD course.

External Examiner training (UK) - provided excellent insights into the potential for curriculum development and online teaching course - encouraged me to use more technology in my teaching

I regularly attend CPD lecture in my professional area both in Ireland and the UK and I found some of these to be particularly useful for my teaching practice. Also I attended a week long learning and teaching course with an emphasis on technology in the class room run by DIT during the holiday period which was extremely helpful

One respondents referred to a course on Self-Directed learning in Medical education. Interestingly, participating in this CPD has motivated him/her to undertake a further study – Masters degree in Medical Science and a Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics:

Attended Maastricht University in relation to Self-Directed Learning in Medical education. This motivated me to undertake a Masters in Medical Science (Medical Education) programme, completed in 3 years. I undertook the Postgraduate Diploma in Statistics in TCD to aid in understanding educational instructional

design arrangements as well as helping with my own research areas. I decided to gain an MSc secondary care qualification for which I could design undergraduate modules, postgraduate modules and continuing professional development modules.

The content of reported CPD within this group of responses, varied from courses on **education equality** to **teaching entrepreneurship** and also included an **innovative experiential learning**. Additionally, External Examiner training in the UK was mentioned, along with the courses with **the emphasis on technology**. Regarding the source of the professional development, the respondents referred to attending CPD in the UK and Ireland. There was one reference to the course duration, which was over 18 months. Additionally, there was a reference to the professional development provided by the DIT (Dublin Institute of Technology), TCD (Trinity College Dublin) and Maastricht University in Netherlands.

COLLABORATION

Among other frequently mentioned structured professional development activities attended by the respondents were **collaboration with their peers**. For example, one respondent highlighted working with his/her colleagues on **designing and teaching an institutional capacity building programme in Africa** and **designing technology supported course** activities:

Working with colleagues to design and teach an Irish Aid funded institutional capacity building programme in Africa. Working with the UN Training School Ireland to design better technology supported exercises within their course schedule.

Cross-institutional collaboration was mentioned by two respondents. The focus of collaboration was for example on **exploring innovative ways of engaging students in research**:

Engagement with professionals in other institutions to learn innovative ways to getting students to research and be engaged with research.

Student engagement, first year experience, assessment of learning and peer-observation. Being involved in research and collaboration with other Institutions.

Interestingly, there was one reference to the **peer-review of respondent's teaching**, which seemed to be particularly useful early at the start of academic career of the respondent:

Peer-review of my teaching certainly helped me a great deal in my earlier years to address many weaknesses within my teaching that I had not even been aware of. More recently, I have implemented a variety of CA and other written assessment

practices across the modules I teach (as opposed to simply relying on a final written exam).

MEETINGS AND FORUMS

There was a number of responses on meetings and forums organised around topic like **marketing, digital media, research** and teaching in the area of Physics:

One and a half day forum on use of digital media in marketing.

Meetings organised by the Higher Education Group of the Institute of Physics on various topics relevant to undergraduate and research students in Physics.

Additionally, two respondents mentioned attending the workshop by Felder and Brent on teaching in technical disciplines, while one respondent referred to attending a FP7 workshop:

The postgraduate scientific meeting run by the Irish Section of the Nutrition Society attended a series of workshops by Felder and Brent DESIGNING AND PRESENTING EFFECTIVE TEACHING WORKSHOPS IN TECHNICAL DISCIPLINES Richard M.Felder Hoechst Celanese Professor Emeritus of Chemical Engineering North Carolina State University Rebecca Brent President, Education Designs, Inc. Cary, North Carolina

Richard Felder 1.5 day Teaching Workshop

FP7 Workshop

And finally, one respondent within this group of responses referred to the experience of **chairing a professional body** Commission. In particular, the publications and various events were very helpful for the modules he was teaching:

I have chaired one of the Commissions for my professional body for the last 4 years - publications and events organised have been particular relevant for one module group that I teach.

TEACHING AND STUDENT FEEDBACK

It was thematic analysis within the theme 'Other' highlighted that there were two quotations on teaching and student feedback. It was decided to group these two responses together. As such, **teaching in other institutions** and **obtaining students' feedback early on in the term** were referred to as the structured professional development most useful for respondents' teaching practice:

Teaching in other Institutes

Getting student feedback through asking just one or two very specific questions early in the term.

AWARD

There was also a reference to receiving a teaching award, as the professional development activity most useful for respondents' teaching practice:

Working for (and succeeding in getting) a teaching award.

1.4 Summary

The sections above provided an overview of the results of the analysis of the open-ended survey question 13. The question was concerned with a structural professional development activity which respondents might have found useful for their teaching practice (*Could you please provide information on a structured professional development course or exercise which you found particularly useful for your teaching practice?*). There were approximately 404 responses available to the open-ended question 13. The summary of the results is presented below.

- **Positive professional development** theme contained about 14 references. The respondents in this group remarked very positively about the structural professional development attended:

1) According to the responses, attended professional development course or a workshop was of a direct relevance to respondents' day-to-day teaching practice in regard to updating their knowledge on **assessment techniques**, **leading and guiding students in their learning** process, **communicating feedback** back to students and **group teaching**, to mention a few.

2) The results revealed that four survey respondents spoke about receiving accreditation for their attendance of a structural professional development. A number of references, for example, related to the completion of **postgraduate certificate**, completing the **Postgraduate diploma** and obtaining **Certificate in Teaching and Learning**, valuable for all aspects of the teaching practice.

3) In total, three respondents talked about **attending conferences, summer schools and professional development activities** outside of Ireland as the most useful structured professional development.

- **Negative professional development** theme contained responses from about 13 respondents. There were a number of reasons identified why the attended structural professional development was not highlighted as useful for respondents' teaching practice:

1) In total, there were about seven references to the **course content**, which was not interesting neither useful for the teaching practice. The courses on **postgraduate supervision** and **mature students teaching** were additionally highlighted. Moreover, there were references to a **little account of multidisciplinary differences** within the attended courses. There was also a perception that the **course content** of the professional development **lacked sufficient depth** and some workshops were of a **very general nature** as well as **too theoretical**.

2) A number of respondents identify **no value** to their teaching practice from the professional development they have attended.

3) Additionally, the results highlighted that the professional development **course delivery methods** were the reason for not finding the professional development to be useful for the teaching practice. With one respondent stressing a **lack of teaching experience** of those who deliver professional development.

4) Only one respondent referred to the professional development activities as **time-consuming** and **obligatory**, which was the primary reason for not finding the attended professional development of any value to his teaching.

- **Form of professional development** included the references on participating in:

1) The courses / workshops and seminars on a number of themes. There were about 250 responses in this group with the references, for example, on **teaching philosophy statement** and seminars on **developing a teaching portfolio**. As emerged from the responses these structural professional development was regarded particularly useful for i) learning about teaching approaches best suited to various classroom learning situations; ii) securing a successful job promotion; iii) reflecting on classroom practice of teaching and learning and; iv)

peer collaboration and sharing practical teaching experiences. Additionally, the workshops around **problem-based learning** was highlighted for allowing i) resources and opportunity to best structure students' learning process and enquiry; ii) the opportunity to meet fellow colleagues and iii) was regarded to be a practical mechanism for exchange on teaching ideas and new teaching techniques. A number of positive comments related to **assessment workshops** which seem to provide information on learning about relevant assessment techniques and different types of assessment in general. Quite a large number of responses also related to attending the workshops on the **use of technology**, which included sessions on the Blackboard software use, WebCT learning environment, and ways of enhancing teaching and learning process. Within the positive professional development theme there were references on attending courses on **group teaching**. The areas covered within the course were on using technology, methods of group assessment, group teaching and learning methodology and critical skills development within the small group setting to mention a few. A number of positive responses from the survey participants regarded the workshops around the **presentation skills**. The survey respondents stressed the value of the attended courses in improving their interviewing techniques and effective content presentation. The courses on the cultural diversity of students and understanding the learning styles of individual students were highlighted. Additionally, the respondents noted attending professional development on **critical skills development, writing learning outcomes and curriculum design**. Interestingly, the seminars on **student feedback** were highlighted for increased knowledge on how to use the feedback to inform and improve teaching practice, innovative approaches to student evaluation and interpreting students' feedback. Moreover, the respondents talked about participating in seminars on **peer collaboration and peer engagement, language teaching and integrating research into teaching**.

2) A number of responses on professional development activities contained references to completing **Postgraduate Diploma** and **Postgraduate Certificate**. The analysis also revealed that while the majority of the providers of the accredited courses were located within the Dublin region (UCD, DIT, NUIM), a few international providers were also mentioned (University of Brighton, Open University, Kings College London). A more in-depth analysis revealed that the structured professional development of this type was regarded as helpful in **acquisition of teaching skills, learning about students' individual learning styles, how best to accommodate students' individual learning styles, meeting fellow colleagues and sharing teaching experiences**.

3) There were about 25 responses with specific references on completing a **degree course** as the structured professional development most useful for teaching practice. The respondents referred to Master of Arts, Master of Science, Master in Education and Doctor of Education degrees.

4) The thematic analysis revealed that there were only about nine responses about completing the e-learning courses or workshops. For example, the professional development of this kind was stressed to be particularly beneficial for learning about **different assessment strategies, reflective practice assessment, using technology in teaching**. There were also responses in regard to attending **e-learning summer schools**.

5) Interestingly, a number of very remarks were made in regard to attending Conferences with a focus on **problem-based learning, special education needs teaching methods, educational inclusion, educational philosophy** and **research conferences**.

6) Additionally, there were a few responses on completed professional development which could not fit within any individual thematic area. Within this group, there were references on i) attending **continuous professional development** sessions with the content on teaching entrepreneurship, education equality, innovative experiential learning; ii) **collaborating with fellow colleagues** through cross-institutional collaboration and programme design; iii) **self-directed learning**; iv) **students' feedback** and vi) **attending meetings** and **forums** on the topics of marketing and digital media.

Appendix 1
(Quotations from question 13 where the responses were explicitly positive)

Mathematics Education Ireland Conference - research on third-level teaching of mathematics was extremely useful.

Courses aimed at use of specific technologies but more important are courses on relevant pedagogical/assessment techniques

Post Graduate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in LTTC Mount Street is an excellent and well worth the time/effort involved. Although I did not have to complete the course as I am employed since 2002 I found it excellent and should be compulsory for all.

I completed a PG Cert in Teaching and Learning at UCC some years ago and have found this very useful, in terms of understanding what ways students learn/understand and how teachers can address these ways.

I participated in a problem-based learning workshop that I found particularly useful. It required me to reflect in a quite different way on how I might lead students in their learning

When doing my PhD in DCU, in Translation Studies, I did a course on doctoral research which ran for a few days a week over several weeks in the School of BUbusiness at DCU. It included insights into qualitative research and the personality and work approaches of the researcher, using the Briggs- Myer scale of personality testing. I found this course very useful as a means of reflecting on research and meeting PhD fellow students

Session on giving feedback to students was useful for improving efficiency and effectiveness of this activity in the classroom, and improve student participation. Role playing workshops, rather than a static presentation would have been more useful on the workshop

I was invited staff at an international summer school given by a leading team of experts in my discipline. The summer school was for senior executive MBA students, and highly experiential and cutting edge in practice. It was a fantastic experience to share in the formation, delivery and debrief of the teaching methods for the week.

External Examiner training (UK) - provided excellent insights into the potential for curriculum development Online teaching course - encouraged me to use more technology in my teaching

The DITs Learning, Teaching & Technology Centre team has facilitated me with innumerable and particularly useful PDCs over the past number of years to include post-graduate research and acquired academic/professional qualifications

On starting my contract at TCD, I was invited to attend a CAPSL-run two-day course on Teaching and Learning. The course introduced teaching theory in an active and participatory way which actually showed how to make group teaching work. This was excellent and has informed the way I have approached teaching since then. I believe that

people at any stage in their career could get a lot from such a course as it helped me to re-focus on my core teaching function and to do so from the point of view of the student

Just completing Postgraduate Diploma in University Teaching in UCD which has been excellent. The curriculum development module was particularly good in terms of structuring my teaching and seeing it within the big picture of a programme.

A session on the use of video clips in classroom teaching, about 3 years ago. It was very useful and gave me some ideas that have become a mainstay in my teaching approach

Cert in Teaching and Learning Very useful for all aspects of my teaching practice. Relevant topics covered include: -Learning theories -Assessment and feedback -Use of Technology

Appendix 2
(Quotations from question 13 where the responses were explicitly negative)

To be honest, I have attended a number of sessions on postgraduate supervision and mature student teaching but have not learned anything much that I didn't already know. In general, I have found these take up time that could be used better elsewhere.

None have been that impressive. Many are too enamoured of gadgets and gimmicks and the latest fashion in 'Teaching & Learning'. Discussion with peers has been far more fruitful than such training.

I keep going to courses, but have never found one of interest or value, they tend to be a one size fits all, so you end up doing something on dissertation evaluation with scientists, linguists, engineers. It is useless.

To be honest, none have really worked so far as, in spite of all that's said, much of the research in teaching practice appears to be focussed on non-mathematical areas and/or small group teaching. Hence courses in teaching practice tend to emphasise techniques that work well in, for example, the humanities and/or soft sciences. This is particularly true when it comes to the use of assessment methods and also PBL.

I can't say that I have found anything 'particularly useful'. Generalised professional development concentrating on generic skills has not, in my view, been a particularly worthwhile activity.

Cant-they are all very amateurish-feel I could teach the so-called "teaching" experts". All they think is necessary is to-- Power point/ Moodle /Blackboard/electronic handout--- you-- and the unfortunate students you teach--- to death. Gone is "the spontaneous", the challenging, the Socratic dialogue. I look at what passes for academic pedagogy -and weep!!! .And teaching is the poor relation of research-who ever heard of a University losing status because of bad/appalling teaching{endemic}---but you can lose your status/department/budget in the morning if you lag behind in research. Guess why University staff relegate teaching to the "ha-penny" place. No prizes.

Most of the courses provided are theoretical nonsense and bureaucracy. Practical courses in dealing with student problems given by practitioners outside the 'official' courses are worth their weight in gold.

No. I found most of these training exercises to be of very, very limited value.

I attend a lot of seminars but haven't found many all that useful. I was at an integrating research and teaching session with Prof Mick Healey at St Pats Drumcondra recently and found that very good.

Most of them aren't actually that useful - they're a disappointment. Hope usually triumphs over experience when I sign up for the next one.

No, I usually do not find these terribly useful (pointless self serving exercises usually like learning objectives - At the end of this survey, you will have given/ feedback on blah blah)

Very few. Most of the courses seem to be given by people who have very little experience of the reality of teaching practice or what undergraduate students (in particular) require. It seems a case of fashionable theory, especially from American research which really is not applicable in an Irish context, over what works.

None. Most are obligatory, time-consuming, boring, and demeaning.