



2014

# Getting Smart about the First-Year Undergraduate Experience

Mary O'Rawe

Dublin Institute of Technology, [mary.orawe@dit.ie](mailto:mary.orawe@dit.ie)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://arrow.dit.ie/tfschhmtcon>

 Part of the [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

O'Rawe, M. (2014) 'Getting Smart! about the First-Year Experience', *33rd Annual conference on the First-Year Experience*, University of South Carolina, San Diego, USA.

This Presentation is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Hospitality Management and Tourism at ARROW@DIT. It has been accepted for inclusion in Other resources by an authorized administrator of ARROW@DIT. For more information, please contact [yvonne.desmond@dit.ie](mailto:yvonne.desmond@dit.ie), [arrow.admin@dit.ie](mailto:arrow.admin@dit.ie), [brian.widdis@dit.ie](mailto:brian.widdis@dit.ie).



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-Share Alike 3.0 License](#)






## Getting Smart! about the first-year undergraduate experience

Mary O'Rawe  
College of Arts & Tourism  
Dublin Institute of Technology  
Dublin, Ireland



mary.orawe@dit.ie

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## D.I.T.

- 125 year history
- combines the academic excellence of a traditional university with career-focused learning
- Student numbers currently 19,500.
- Shortly in transition to new Dublin city centre campus

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



### Current and projected student numbers

Student Category	12/13	Projected 2019/20 + 7%	Projected 2029/30 +24%
UG FT	12,307	13,168	15,261
PG FT (taught & research)	939	1,005	1,164
UG PT (incl cpd)	4,052	4,335	5,054
PG PT (taught & research)	1,374	1,470	1,704
Junior Music	900	900	900
<b>Total</b>	<b>19,572</b>	<b>20,878</b>	<b>24,083</b>

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### The Irish perspective

- Irish higher education now at a point of transition
  - ❖ Student numbers and participation – increase from 5% in 1960 to 65% in 2010  
Numbers enrolled are expected to rise continuously-2019 +7%  
2029 + 24%
  - ❖ Changing profile of student – demographics, learning styles & their impact on engagement
  - ❖ New emphasis on high-order knowledge-based skills
  - ❖ Economic & recessionary pressures

Renewed interest in:

- ❖ Quality of the student experience/strengthening student engagement
- ❖ Broadening the curriculum
- ❖ Adaptability & entrepreneurial skills
- ❖ Particular emphasis on the first-year experience

(\*Hunt Report: 2011  
Dept. of Education & Skills 2013)  
ESRI Nov 2012)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Development of key skills - the national picture

Range of key generic skills identified:

```

graph LR
    A[Critical thinking] --> B[Creativity]
    B --> C[Communication skills]
    D[Team skills] --> C
    E[Leadership ability] --> C
  
```

"The simple acquisition of knowledge is not enough to count as an education"  
*(Hunt Report 2011, p. 79)*

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Development of key skills – the local/D.I.T. picture

- An environment of change for all stakeholders was identified (post 2007):
- Opportunities and challenges
  - Engagement and retention
  - Student motivation
  - Professional and personal development
  - Oral and written communication problems
  - Students' ability to manage work and learning
  - Increased demands on curriculum space

↓

"Key skills" set identified  
Theoretical underpinnings

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Strengthening student engagement - the theoretical challenges

Engagement-based Learning & Teaching approach (Jones 2009)

1. Cultivate one-on-one relationships
2. Learn new skills & habits
3. Incorporate systematic strategies
4. Take responsibility for student engagement practices
5. Promote a school/department-wide culture of engagement
6. Focus on professional development of staff

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Strengthening student engagement - the practical challenges?





---

---

---

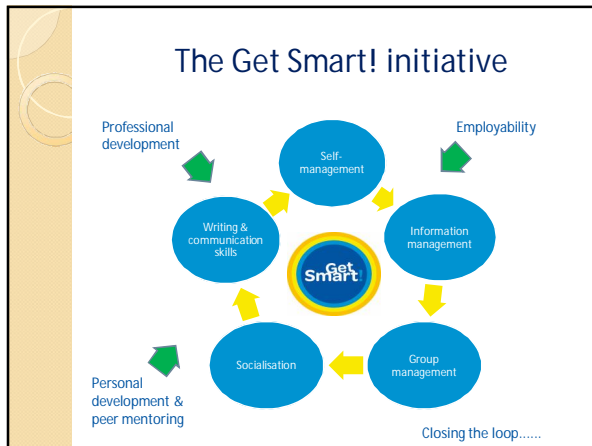
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Get Smart!

- An initiative developed through a bottom-up lecturer-led approach through which the emphasis is on teaching through engagement
- Designed to *communicate* with students in their language as well as formal communication modes;
- Sits laterally across modules and forms an *integrating* mechanism between academic and non-academic areas;
- *Embeds* learning strategies, information literacy, study skills, personal & professional development into all first year module content.

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

### Teaching for engagement – closing the loop

- Supportive feedback on formative assessment
- Teaching for student engagement
  - “The potential for enthusiastic engagement in the curricula should be harnessed in the critical first days of the first weeks of the first year, thereby promoting a sense of belonging, so often missing for the contemporary learner”  
*(Kitt & Nelson 2005, p. 229)*
- Induction – a new approach
- Getting a buzz – Get Smart! workshop

---

---

---

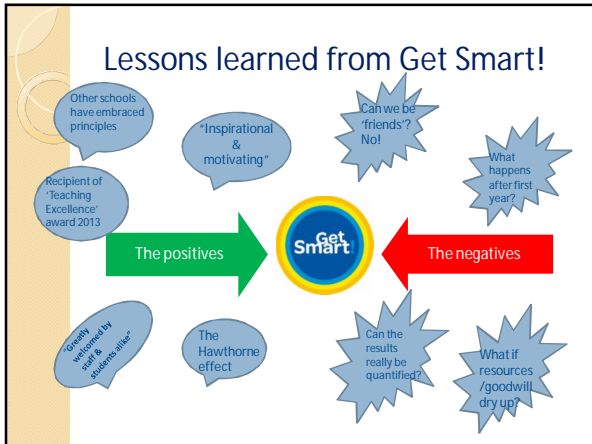
---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---


---

---

### Conclusion

A journey of chaos & cultural change... and trying to quantify the unquantifiable?

- Students only learn in an engaged environment
- Emergent role of lecturer as a provider of (academic) support mechanisms;
- New modes of communication employed (with varying degrees of success);
- The lecturer may now be viewed as an enhancer of the selected key skills;
- Need to interact strongly with non-academic areas.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



Get Smart! in action

<http://www.youtube.com/user/DITGetSmartVideos>



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---