

Development of a Framework for a Digital Learner Support Hub (DLSH)

Authors

Clem O'Donnell, ICT Learning Centre, University of Limerick (UL)
James Murphy, Regional Peer-Supported Learning Centre (LC), UL

Impact and Findings

The development, as part of this initiative, of an online portal within UL's VLE to operationalise the DLSH framework has given the LCs an effective and flexible tool to allow the LCs to deliver quality fully online and blended learning support that will have an impact into the future across the disciplines.

This project informed us how important it was to have multiple avenues to capture impact particularly in a student-centred project such as the DLSH. As the diverse nature of the students involved across the disciplines showed us that just as students within and across the disciplines may have different learning styles, they can also have preferences in terms of providing feedback.

Some prefer direct involvement in focus groups and others prefer a more anonymous form such as surveys. Having these various mechanisms allowed us to

capture a more complete picture of the students' perceptions of the project and where changes needed to be made.

The use of a video as the presentation output for the initiative resulted in team members learning how to present the overall project aims and impact through this medium. The SATLE support network meetings helped the DLSH team a great deal with this learning.

Involvement in this SATLE initiative and the development of the DLSH portal has allowed the LCs to change some staff-led synchronous online supports to be peer-led synchronous and asynchronous supports instead. The use of these peer-led supports was received positively by early-stage students (as evidenced in the focus group discussions) and we believe is highly sustainable into the future.



Aims

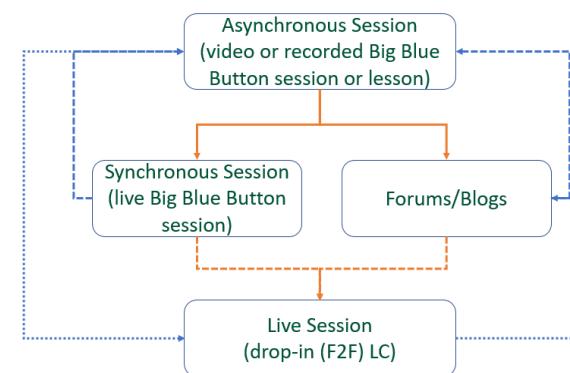
DLSH is a framework that allows content to be deployed easily and sustainably, acting as a 'one-stop-shop' for the LCs academic support services to UL's students. Conceived to address the increasing need to provide a more flexible, responsive learner support, it ensures UL's commitment to a HE accessible to all types of learners, including part-time, mature, study-abroad, and those students with disabilities.

While supporting students more flexibly, the project addresses some of the constraints on accessibility, reachability, and sustainability of current F2F services offered by the LCs such as scheduling in a manner that suits both tutors and tutees, and resourcing in terms of tutors, physical space, and associated costs.

The LCs fashioned a framework based on literature, best practice, and feedback from our stakeholders that allowed each centre to offer the best blend of online support in an engaging, structured, and accessible way to students. What developed was a delivery framework based around blended learning with both passive and active learning elements to ensure a good mix of student-to-content, student-to-tutor, and student-to-student interaction.

Visuals

DLSH is built around a 3-tier model that allows different opportunities to help students while maintaining their self-learning



Want to Learn More?

For more information on what DLSH is, how we implemented it, and what we learnt please visit our website (<http://pslc.ul.ie/dlsh/>), view our promo video (<https://tinyurl.com/22udfxux>) or email us at dlsh@ul.ie

- "I used them as the DLSH supports ultimately enhanced my overall learning experience. The live sessions and burst videos reinforced my understanding of content covered in the lectures and certainly improved my overall programming confidence."
- "They initially taught the method in a clear and concise way, using one or two examples rather than using a million examples and me getting confused."
- "I needed help with maths as my lecture notes were too in depth, the DLSH provided me with accessible content."