

**Implementing the Professional Development Framework in
your emotionally intelligent higher education institution;
challenges and breath taking opportunities for educators**

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Abstract

The implementation of the Professional Development Framework (PDF) presents challenges and opportunities for educators and higher education institutions (HEIs). In brief, the PDF (NFETL, 2016) recommends that those who teach in HEIs develop their knowledge, skills and competences through a variety of learning activities, namely: 1) new learning, 2) consolidating learning, 3) mentoring and 4) leading. The five key domains identified for professional development are: 1) the 'Self' in teaching, learning and scholarship, 2) Professional Identity, Values and Development, 3) Professional Communication and Dialogue in Teaching and Learning, 4) Knowledge and Skills in Teaching and Learning and 5) Personal and Professional Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning. A digital teaching portfolio will evidence this learning and continuing professional development (CPD). The National Forum have developed 15 digital badges (each of 25 hour duration) to facilitate CPD. The PDF may present challenges for some educators: such as technophobes, part-time contract workers, those at the end of their careers, those completing doctoral studies, and those who feel time constrained and those who abhor change. That said, it also presents breath-taking opportunities for professional growth, the opportunity for educators to engage in reflective practice and the scholarship of teaching and learning, join an international community of practice and share best teaching practices with colleagues and students and to showcase their work. Senior management have a role to play in supporting and encouraging educators to engage in CPD. Implementation of the PDF will incur financial costs for HEIs, time will need to be allocated to educators to create a teaching portfolio.

Keyword 1 digital

Keyword 2 portfolio,

Keyword 3 professional

Keyword 4 development

Keyword 5 PDF

Keyword 6 digital

Keyword 7 badges

Keyword 8 HEI

Keyword 9 values

Keyword 10 TLA

We live in exciting times of changing policies in higher education where student centred learning has taken a front seat. Third level education in Ireland has become transformed and democratised with growing access for students from diverse backgrounds (Clancy, 2015). The Higher Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education (2013) in Europe aspires to have 40% of young people in member states attain a third level qualification by the year 2020. Ireland already achieved this target in 2012, with 51% of those aged 30-34 completing third level education (Doyle, 2013). To enable changes, educators must make changes, some of which may be painful, and will require a time and effort investment. In this discussion paper, I consider policy change and the challenges and ‘breath taking’ opportunities (Gardner cited in Shulman, 2014) associated with implementing the professional development framework (PDF) (National Forum, 2016) in ‘emotionally intelligent’ (Carty, 2017) higher education institutions (HEIs). I argue that not only has democratisation occurred through increased student access and participation but also that the democratisation of education involves a transformation of educators. First, it is necessary to locate the PDF within national and international policies, which seek to enhance teaching, learning and assessment and the student experience.

National and international drivers of change

The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development Policy (OECD) was instrumental in driving policy changes in Ireland. In 2014, world leaders met and set education goals and targets. One of the Sustainable Goals (Goal 4) seeks to ensure ‘inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life long learning opportunities for all’ (OECD, 2016) and aims to ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality teaching in the vocational sector and third level education. The OECD gathered data from 29 countries on the quality of teaching in HEIs (OECD, 2010). They claimed that senior management must lead quality teaching by encouraging and supporting faculty members in an auspicious teaching environment with enhanced student participation in all aspects of higher education. National laws (Education Act 1998) and policies such as *Charting our Educational Future White Paper on Education* (DES, 1995), and the *National Strategy for Higher*

Education to 2030 [Hunt Report] (DES, 2011) also reformed higher education. The Hunt Report states that the vision for higher education in Ireland is to achieve three objectives: 1) enhanced teaching and learning, 2) research (investment and capacity building, relationship between research and teaching, and 3) engagement (responsibility towards society and the world). The aim is to ensure that students have an excellent teaching and learning experience informed by research in a high-quality environment with up to date resources. The Hunt report (2011, p. 18) recommends that: ‘higher education institutions must ensure that all teaching staff are both qualified and competent in teaching and learning, and should support ongoing development and improvement of their skills’. The High Level Group on the Modernisation of Higher Education (2013) recommend certified pedagogical training by 2020 for those teaching in HEIs. In addition, policies urge HEIs to embed technology in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) (NFETL, 2015). Currently there are over 60 HEIs offering programmes for teaching in HEIs (at certificate, diploma and master’s level) (NFETL, 2015). It will take time for all educators in HEIs to become accredited; additionally, educators are encouraged to engage in continuing professional development (CPD) as outlined in PDF (NFETL, 2016). To facilitate CPD, the National Forum developed 15 digital badges (each one is equivalent to 25 hours of work); educators can complete a digital badge and then evidence their practice in a teaching portfolio. Facilitators who have completed a workshop will have the skills, knowledge, competence and confidence to become an effective facilitator (NFETL, 2017) to enable the badges. A professional standards framework has also been developed in the United Kingdom for educators in HEIs.

UK Policy on Higher Education

Undoubtedly, *The UK Professional Standards Framework for teaching and supporting learning in higher education* (UKPSF) has influenced Irish policy (Higher Education Academy (HEA), 2011). The UKPSF aims to support the initial and continuing professional development (CPD) of all engaged in teaching and supporting students in HEIs and aims to foster innovation and creativity in pedagogies in diverse settings. The UKPSF aims to demonstrate the professionalism of educators to students and stakeholders and acknowledges the quality and variety of teaching, learning and assessment (TLA) practices. Finally, it aims to provide formal recognition to individuals and HEIs of quality enhanced TLA and student support (Higher Education

Academy, 2011). The dimensions of practice describe what an educator should be able to evidence in terms of activities, core knowledge and professional values as outlined in the table below.

Table 1 The UK Professional Standards Framework

Areas of Activity (A1-5)	Core Knowledge (K1-6)	Professional Values (V1-4)
Design and plan learning activities and/or programmes of study	The subject material	Respect individual learners and diverse learning communities
Teach and/or support learning	Appropriate methods for TLA in the subject area and at the level of the academic programme	Promote participation in higher education and equality of opportunity for learners
Assess and give feedback to learners	How students learn, both generally and within their subject/disciplinary area(s)	Use evidence-informed approaches and the outcomes from research, scholarship and CPD
Develop effective learning environments and approaches to student support and guidance	The use and value of appropriate learning technologies	Acknowledge the wider context in which higher education operates recognising the implications for professional practice
Engage in CPD in subjects/disciplines and their pedagogy, incorporating research, scholarship and the evaluation of professional practices	Methods for evaluating the effectiveness of teaching	
	The implications of quality assurance and quality enhancement for academic and professional practice	

	with a particular focus on teaching	
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Source: Higher Education Academy (2011)

The PSF provides four descriptors to reflect the various career stages of educators: Associate Fellow (AFHEA), Fellow (FHEA), Senior Fellow (SFHEA) and Principal Fellow (PFHEA). The descriptors are ‘a set of statements outlining the key characteristics of someone performing four broad categories of typical teaching and learning support roles within Higher Education’ (HEA, 2012, p.1). The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) said that gaining a recognised teaching qualification showed a commitment to professional development that in turn would enhance teaching and the student experience (Botham, 2017). The British Government introduced the *Teaching Excellence Framework* (TEF) in 2016, which aims to recognise and reward excellence in TLA and to help students in choosing programmes and HEIs (HEFCE, 2016). There are two routes to accreditation with the HEA, through a taught accredited programme or, for more experienced educators, through a HEACPD recognition route, which involves the creation of a reflective portfolio based on the four categories described in the UKPSF. According to van der Sluis, Burden and Huet (2017) taught programmes are front loaded in that they enable participants to develop their understanding of best teaching practices through interrogation of theories and application of them to practice. Recognition schemes promote a ‘retrospective, reflective model of professional development, one whereby participants need to demonstrate that they reflect on and interrogate their practice, incorporate dimensions of the UKPSF and evidence their experiential development of knowledge and competencies’ (van der Sluis et al., 2017, p.127).

UK CPD Schemes

According to Botham (2017), 149 HEIs in UK have accredited HEACPD schemes, and 85,260 educators have Fellowships. Recent studies show that engagement with the HEACPD appears to enhance teaching practices. Botham (2017) found positive benefits for educators and institutions, in that educators’ engagement with CPD and knowledge of the scholarship of teaching led to increased confidence in teaching, and recognition of the importance of reflective practice had a positive influence on future teaching practice. Educators were also more willing to engage in dialogue with

colleagues as to what constitutes good TLA practice and were more willing to act as leaders and mentors. In a case study of one HEI, van der Sluis et al. (2017) found that the majority (56%) of staff members were aiming for a SFHEA, 13% for FHEA, 6% for PFHEA, and 4% for AFHEA. The majority believed that participation in HEACDP stimulated their professional development, encouraged them to read more and engage in research (71%), collaborate with peers (65%), evaluate their teaching (63%), attend workshops (69%), become more aware of quality enhancement and assurance (63%) and stimulated them to disseminate their innovative pedagogies and practices (58%). It encouraged engagement with the scholarship of teaching and learning, inspired them to participate in CPD workshops, collaborate with peers and share innovative practices and ultimately changed their teaching practices (van der Sluis et al., 2017). Hibbert and Semler (2017) state that the UKPSF is not mandatory for experienced staff who were employed before its introduction, however, it is becoming increasingly a requirement for the employment of new staff. Although it is not compulsory, over a quarter of all academic staff (n=141,395) have become accredited. This a strong take up given that the majority of staff were already in permanent positions before the UKPSF was established, and as such over time the ‘the framework will become a *de facto* universal standard in the UK sector’ (Hibbert and Semler, 2017, p.587). Most aspects of the UKPSF are mirrored in the Irish PDF.

The National Professional Development Framework (PDF)

The PDF (NFETL, 2016) recommends that those who teach in HEIs develop their knowledge, skills and competences through a variety of learning activities, namely: 1) new learning, 2) consolidating learning, 3) mentoring and 4) leading. The five key domains identified for professional development are: the ‘Self’ in teaching, learning and scholarship, 2) Professional Identity, Values and Development, 3) Professional Communication and Dialogue in Teaching and Learning, 4) Knowledge and Skills in Teaching and Learning and 5) Personal and Professional Digital Capacity in Teaching and Learning. The NF presents a useful typology of professional development activities ranging from non-accredited to accredited activities. All of this learning is to be encapsulated in a digital teaching portfolio, which is a recognised non-accredited activity.

Challenges for professional development

Implementation of the PDF may present challenges for some educators: technophobes, part-time contract workers, those at the end of their careers, those completing doctoral studies, and those who feel that the demands of third-level teaching and conducting research are already onerous and those who dislike change. Part-time contract workers may feel challenged because they may only work a few hours per week or per semester. Their main work may be in another industry unrelated to teaching and some may work in more than one college (Coughlan, 2015). A survey of part-time academic staff in HEIs, with the aim of identifying their professional needs found that only 11% had a formal qualification in teaching and learning (certificate/ diploma/master's); the majority learnt on the job or through observing peers and by doing workshops or training events. Despite their lack of accreditation, the majority of respondents (70%) felt confident in the practice of third-level teaching (Coughlan, 2015).

The PDF may also present challenges to technophobes. They may be fearful of admitting that they are not digitally literate, and may be afraid of negative judgment from their students or peers (O'Farrell, 2007). Those who have a fixed mind-set (Dweck, 2008) and are not open to change may question why they have to produce a digital portfolio. Change involves letting go of the old to let in the new. Zeus and Skiffington (2002, p. 24) suggest that change is an inevitable part of life and brings with it the requirement to reflect on our values and beliefs and 'our purpose and mission in life'. Control can be maintained through the acceptance of change and through seeing it as an opportunity rather than a hindrance (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002).

Those at the end of their teaching careers may also question the worthiness of creating a teaching portfolio. However, those nearing retirement might wish to leave a legacy of writings about education (Lyubomirsky and Layous, 2013). Perhaps the biggest challenge for educators in creating a digital portfolio is a time deficit. Educators are busy people who face daily challenges, juggling research, teaching and assessment commitments and may already feel overwrought (Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012). Based on completing the digital badges (25 hours per badge) educators should give themselves at least 2 years to create a teaching portfolio. Once created, a teaching portfolio is always a work in progress (Barrett, 2016) and will need to be updated

regularly to reflect professional development. Educators will need to take ownership of their teaching portfolio and maintain its boundaries. A teaching portfolio need not be public, but can be shared with a selected audience such as other educators or students. Implementation of the PDF will also incur financial costs for HEIs, time will need to be allocated to educators to create a teaching portfolio and could be specified in new teaching contracts. Technical support may also be required.

Opportunities for professional development

The PDF provides many opportunities for educators: the opportunity for them to showcase their work, engage in an international community of practice and share best teaching practices with colleagues and students. It is no longer sufficient that educators have subject knowledge of their academic discipline, but also that they have pedagogical and technical knowledge. The TPACK framework, an acronym for technology, pedagogy and content knowledge (Koehler and Mishra, 2009) is a framework for integrating technology into teaching. It built on Lee Shulman's concept of pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1986) and describes the complex interaction of three bodies of knowledge: content, pedagogy and technology (Koehler, Mishra, Kereluik and Graham, 2014). The PDF creates opportunities for those who are proficient in technology to support and scaffold technophobes; technicians can enable educators to reach the zone of proximal development by scaffolding their learning to bring them to a new stage of learning (Vygotsky, 1978).

Opportunities exist for senior management, such as deans and chief executive officers to drive the change in their institutions (OECD, 2010). Senior management have a role to play in supporting and encouraging educators to engage in professional development and to create a digital portfolio. A further opportunity presented by this digital age, is that it will increase employment for ancillary educators such as learning designers, graphic designers, knowledge officers, technical support personnel, librarians and student support officers. In the past, one lecturer and a programme director may have been responsible for a module or subject; today many more educators are involved thus diffusing education over a broad spectrum of educators and providing a richer learning experience for the student. The Higher Education Collages Association (HECA) funded a hand-book to support the development of the PDF and the creation of a teaching portfolio, with a view that 'new teachers will

collaborate with each other, form study groups, engage in peer learning and dialogue’ (Whitaker, 2017, Preface). Those who have already developed teaching portfolios could act as change agents within the HEI. Inspiration for creating a portfolio can be gained from looking at the teaching portfolios of other educators such as, Lee Shulman (<http://www.leeshulman.net/>) or Helen Barrett (<http://electronicportfolios.org>). According to Shulman (2014) when approaching change, it is worthwhile remembering the words of John Gardner who was president of the Carnegie Foundation and was requested to ‘design and deliver legislation called “the Great Society” from the civil rights to the voting rights act. Gardner elaborated on the daunting challenges he faced: ‘What we have before us are some breath-taking opportunities disguised as insoluble problems’ (Gardner cited in Shulman, 2014, p.166). The breath taking opportunity presented by the creation of a teaching portfolio is that it encourages educators to reflect on values such inclusivity, authenticity, (NFETL, 2016) and the personal values that underpin any human interaction; these values also underpin emotional intelligence.

Emotionally intelligent educators and HEIs

What is an emotionally intelligent college and an emotionally intelligent educator? Salovey, Hsee and Mayer (1990, p.258) describe emotional intelligence as a set of skills in which people are aware of and regulate their own emotions and use emotions to motivate and plan one’s life. Carty (2017, p. 879) defines an emotionally intelligent college as one that is:

Collaborative, reflective and where appropriate embraces change. It is a college where staff model effective social skills, particularly through the use of praise and encouragement in the classroom and overall an emotionally intelligent college is simply one that encourages and supports each educator and each student to reach their maximum potential.

Carthy (2017) claims that colleges need to be committed to the holistic development of the student and programmes should include modules on social and emotional skills so that graduates will have competencies such as professional accountability and etiquette for the workplace and learn how to deal with stress. In reality, these skills may already be encapsulated in codes of ethics and standards that underpin professional practice in programmes such as nursing (Nursing and Midwifery Board Ireland, 2014) and teaching (Teaching Council, 2016). Aspects of these programmes incorporate skills such as interpersonal communication and these are assessed by

qualified assessors during teaching and nursing practice. A word of caution, in relation to the term ‘emotionally intelligent college’ we need to guard against reification, colleges are inanimate objects of both a physical and virtual nature, it is those who work in colleges that need to develop their emotional intelligence (educators, deans, leaders), they can do this through professional development and evidence it in their teaching portfolios. The PDF emphasises collaboration, reflective practice, communication with students and colleagues.

Conclusions and Future Work

In conclusion, the PDF provides educators with a very solid, prescriptive and tangible framework for professional development; however, large-scale research is required to assess its impact on Irish educators. Research could focus on barriers to implementation and supports required. Future work is required on how the PDF will receive recognition and how it compares with teaching credentials in HEIs. The implementation of the PDF presents challenges and ‘breath taking’ opportunities for educators and HEIs. With good leadership, challenges can be overcome so that by 2025 all educators will have digital teaching portfolios based on professional development, values, identity as an educator, exhibiting reflective practice, collaboration with colleagues, knowledge of the scholarship of teaching and learning, subject knowledge mastery, enhanced communication skills, digital literacy underpinned by emotional intelligence. Lest we forget our purpose as educators, it is good to go back to first principles as enunciated in the words of Cardinal John Henry Newman on the idea of a university:

For why do we educate, except to prepare for the world? Why do we cultivate the intellect of the many beyond the first elements of knowledge, except for this world? ...If then a University is a direct preparation for this world, let it be what it professes. It is not a Convent, it is not a Seminary; it is a place to fit men (sic) of the world for the world. We cannot possibly keep them from plunging into the world, with all its ways and principles and maxims, when their time comes; but we can prepare them against what is inevitable; and it is not the way to learn to swim in troubled waters, never to have gone into them. From Discourse IX, The Idea of a University (Newman, 1852)

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