



**National Student  
Engagement Programme**

Clár Rannpháirtíochta Náisiúnta  
na Mac Léinn



# Case Study: Teach Digi Podcast: “Ag Caint”

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# Introduction and Context: Ag Caint Podcast

## Background:

Our Teach Digi 'Ag Caint' [podcast](#) was established as part of the UCC project & larger national project, IUA (Irish Universities Association) '[Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning](#)'.

[Teach Digi](#) was launched by Clíodhna O'Callaghan, Project Lead, EDTL, in June 2020 to respond to the UCC staff digital professional development training needs during the global pandemic, Covid19.

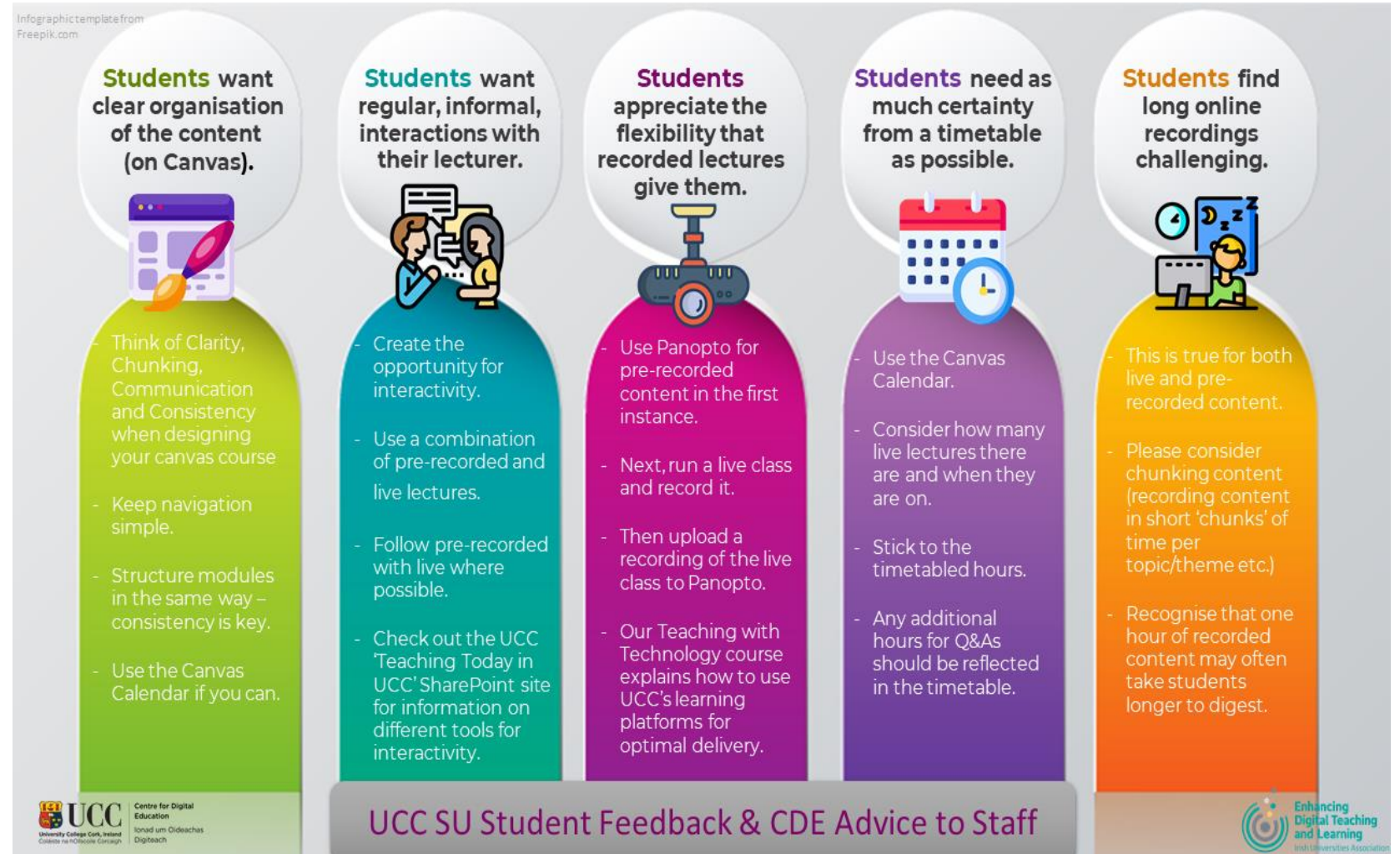
The Teach Digi training series, in conjunction with the IUA 'Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning' project, has as one of its four key pillars, '**Students as Partners**'. Therefore, ensuring the student voice was front and centre to our training was always the priority.

The Teach Digi training series, in conjunction with the IUA 'Enhancing Digital Teaching & Learning' project, has four key pillars:



# Research and Development

In October 2020 the UCC Student's Union did a [survey](#) of our Students where 2049 students responded. This survey focused on what was working and what was not working in the context of learning online. As a direct result of this student feedback we summarised the feedback and designed the five pillars of student feedback, with practical advice for UCC staff, as follows: *(Next slide has full graphic)*





**Students** want clear organisation of the content (on Canvas).



- Think of Clarity, Chunking, Communication and Consistency when designing your canvas course
- Keep navigation simple.
- Structure modules in the same way – consistency is key.
- Use the Canvas Calendar if you can.

**Students** want regular, informal, interactions with their lecturer.



- Create the opportunity for interactivity.
- Use a combination of pre-recorded and live lectures.
- Follow pre-recorded with live where possible.
- Check out the UCC 'Teaching Today in UCC' SharePoint site for information on different tools for interactivity.

**Students** appreciate the flexibility that recorded lectures give them.



- Use Panopto for pre-recorded content in the first instance.
- Next, run a live class and record it.
- Then upload a recording of the live class to Panopto.
- Our Teaching with Technology course explains how to use UCC's learning platforms for optimal delivery.

**Students** need as much certainty from a timetable as possible.



- Use the Canvas Calendar.
- Consider how many live lectures there are and when they are on.
- Stick to the timetabled hours.
- Any additional hours for Q&As should be reflected in the timetable.

**Students** find long online recordings challenging.



- This is true for both live and pre-recorded content.
- Please consider chunking content (recording content in short 'chunks' of time per topic/theme etc.)
- Recognise that one hour of recorded content may often take students longer to digest.

# Research and Development

These **five pillars** of student feedback formed the underpinning framework to the establishment of a new podcast series called '**Ag Caint**'.

'Ag Caint' is the Irish for 'chatting' or 'talking' and the format of this training series initially included a 'chat' with Clíodhna O'Callaghan & a lecturer and a separate session with EDTL then Student Intern, Catherine Dawson and a student/learner in UCC on each of the five pillars. The conversations were informal in nature however they were guided by the five pillars of student feedback. It focused firmly on some practical advice for staff on how they can adapt their teaching to incorporate some simple and accessible advice from the lived experience of both staff and students of online teaching and learning in UCC.

We expanded the podcast to include the voices of professional services staff and more students during the academic year 2020-2021. This included interviewing the President of UCC, Professor John O'Halloran, & UCC SU Education Officer, Eimear Curtin, again with the five pillars of student feedback underpinning.

## Reflection:

The analytics showed us that the downloads of our staff led podcasts were higher than the student led podcasts and this feedback **led us to make a fundamental change** to the structure of the podcast series in the academic year 2021-2022. We incorporated the student and lecturer/staff into the **one podcast**.

Therefore, Clíodhna O'Callaghan, and now Student Intern, Stephen O'Riordan, would jointly meet with a staff and a student of theirs to reflect on all things digital teaching and learning today together. We focused on what was working, not working and plans for the future...

This dynamic was hugely positive including the richness of the staff & student relationship within the conversation. This was a hugely positive development as a result of engaging with analytics and listening to feedback. This change worked very well.

We continued with this structure, always underpinned by the five pillars of student feedback informing the conversation, for the full academic year. We have now over 35 podcasts recorded with staff and students, students at the heart, and have recently [launched our podcast series on Spotify!](#)



# Actions & Outputs taken during the project

The conversations were so rich with feedback from both staff and students that we worked on summarising the **key points** from each conversation as resources for staff, created by students. We had an awareness that not only was time a major issue for staff, we also wanted to capture this moment in time so that we could all learn from it, and build on it into the future.

Some examples of these key points as resources are included in the following slides.



## Actions & Outputs taken during the project

### Regular Interaction

#### Staff

1. Internet connectivity – remains a challenge for a lot of people!
2. Work WITH your Students & Be Honest – what works/doesn't work?
3. Two-hour sessions too much & Flexibility of when to engage = Pre-record.
4. Podcasts! Opportunity to engage with others.
5. Live Teams Event for discussion. Chat function a big hit! Significantly more engagement! Consistent Communications.



#### Students

1. Interacting with students and societies in a social setting has been impossible.
2. Favourite classes became the class where they were given time to interact as a class socially.
3. Q&A sessions were found to be beneficial.
4. Asking questions has become easier because the camera can be off, and "No one is looking at you."
5. Allowing time with the content beforehand leads to a richer and more involved engagement from students in the class.

### Clarity

#### Staff

1. Use page headings in Canvas so students can see at a glance what is required of them on each page.
2. Try to be consistent each week and across modules in terms of how you structure and describe content. It will benefit teachers as well as students.
3. Be prepared to change tack.
4. Mistakes happen and we're all human – this is okay.
5. Use Panopto where you can. Teams recordings should be uploaded into Panopto. Use Canvas Calendar if you can.

#### Students

1. All pre-recorded videos were put up on time.
2. They were split into sections to give students breaks.
3. Canvas is clear, well laid out and easy to use.
4. Timetable was provided as early as possible.
5. Guidance was provided on when to watch pre-recorded lectures.



## Actions & Outputs taken during the project

# Flexibility

## Staff

1. Short Snippets work.
2. Podcasts work really well.
3. Flipped Classroom works.
4. Regular Icebreakers at the start of each live session.
5. Flexibility of learning means a lot to everyone.



## Students

1. Flexibility helped develop self-discipline and a routine.
2. It allows students to focus on a different module every day.
3. It also allows students to engage with the content on a deeper level as they can take things at their own pace.
4. Recorded lectures allow students to work when it suits them, so they don't need to schedule work around lectures.
5. Flexibility of learning means a lot to everyone.

# Certainty

## Staff

1. An opportunity to reflect on value for hours in the timetable.
2. Short Videos & Recaps work really well.
3. Label 'Synchronous' or 'Asynchronous' in Canvas Calendar.
4. Avoid Multiplicity of platforms if possible.
5. Emojis in the chat box work great!



## Students

1. Give a concrete timetable as early as possible.
2. Give an outline for assessment timings when possible.
3. Q&As are very valuable but shouldn't be used to cover more content.
4. Recordings allow students to work when they work best.
5. Certainty reduces stress and anxiety for students and allows students to engage more with the material.

## Actions & Outputs taken during the project

# Chunking Content

## Staff

1. Schedule both pre-recorded content and live lectures in the Timetable /Canvas calendar.
2. Chunking content worked well!
3. Flipped classroom worked but I look forward to the vibe in the classroom again!
4. If you set expectations you must follow through on these – using a communications policy is a great idea.
5. Useful tip is to label each video consistently and with the length of the video, e.g. (9.07 mins).

## Students

1. Prerecorded lectures make it difficult to ask questions and need more clarity around "what is email worthy".
2. Chunking lectures: 15 mins too short but 1hr is too long.

### ***First year thoughts***

1. Missing informal interaction with lecturers as well.
2. Missing out on being part of the UCC Community.
3. If a lecturer mentions a pet, a pet **MUST** be shown.







## Reflecting On Teaching and Learning During The Pandemic

Podcast style conversations on what worked, what didn't work, plans for the future and some key nuggets of learning from both staff and students grounded in the 5 Pillars of student feedback

### Staff 'Ag Caint'



### Students 'Ag Caint'



Students want clear organisation of the content (on Canvas).



Students want regular, informal, interactions with their lecturer.



Students appreciate the flexibility that recorded lectures give them.



Students need as much certainty from a timetable as possible.



Students find long online recordings challenging.





# Ag Caint: Key Points



## Colette McKenna

- UCC Library is a hugely important 'place' for students to go to do work and have a consistent environment.
- Library staff went above and beyond to deliver services to both students and staff.
- There are tonnes of eBooks and eJournals available. New schemes include:
  - Click & Collect
  - Scan & Deliver
  - 'Ask us' Virtually
  - Digitised Course Readings
- UCC Library has always had a great relationship with UCCSU and that partnership helps them.
- Digital can enhance the services UCC provides and streamline things for everyone.

## Cara Long

- UCC Library is a consistent part of most student's studies, and routines.
- UCC Library is always adapting to student feedback, such as with the book a seat initiative.
- Student & Library partnership is huge with the IT help desk, library assistants etc. There are tonnes of technologies available:
  - Studio
  - VR Digital Environment Lounge
  - 3D Printing
- Separating the study and life environment is important and the Library creates that balance.
- Sometimes it can be difficult to create a productive environment at home and the library provides that for everyone.

Actions & Outputs taken during the project

# Ag Caint: Key Points

Staff:

Dr. Amanullah de Soudy



Student:

Amano Miura

1. Challenging to teach online during a global pandemic – especially not being able to see your students!
2. We all felt grounded, and it allowed us to become more sensitive to social injustices. We can't go back!
3. Flexibility was key to adjusting and blended learning is a positive.
4. We have become more efficient and we have become closer through our social injustices.
5. We need to learn from this experience and think about how to be more sustainable and socially active. We should be proud of what we did achieve.

1. Learning is a social experience – we are not used to learning in isolation.
2. The social anxiety students often face can make it hard to reach out when online.
3. Tech mistakes can make a lecturer seem more human and approachable.
4. As a person who suffers from IBS, recorded lectures provide me with the flexibility to recap on any part of a missed lecture. It makes education more accessible and fairer for everyone, not just those registered with the DSS.
5. Let's ensure no student is left behind as we return to campus and think about representation in wider university and societal circles.

## Actions & Outputs taken during the project

# Ag Caint: Key Points



## Dr. Mohammed Abdulla

- Having friends or colleagues who could give critical feedback on recording was useful.
- Getting student feedback mid-way through the module helped shape - the content to be more interactive.
- Chunking content (based on learning outcomes) worked better. It helped with attention spans and giving students space to digest material.
- Shorter lectures give more room for self-directed learning.
- Including the quizz in panopto meant it was in the recording afterwards.
- Regular quizzes/MCQs let students digest material and acted as 'checkpoints' in content.

## Ethan Shamis

- Regular MCQs/breaks help recharge batteries and remind yourself of the content.
- Different virtual backgrounds in online lectures can be conversation starters/mood booster.
- Give students the flexibility to attend in person or at home. People learn in different ways.
- We should focus less on mandatory attendance for students and more on ensuring they meet the learning outcomes.
- Flexibility in assessment helps. Some people are better at regular assessments over end of year exams.

# Ag Caint: Key Points



## Prof. Luigina Ciolfi

- As a new member of staff, learning things from scratch online was a steep learning curve but lead to Lui considering some new approaches.
- NEW: Lui met with the researcher of assigned papers to discuss their work (& in context of COVID) as an additional study aide. This was made available to the class.
- Don't want to overwhelm the class with material but providing different tools gives students the option.
- Having a different person speak occasionally (Researchers, Youtube videos etc.) can switch things up and keep it interesting.
- It was easier to mix up the teaching style online. In person lectures can tend to be very presentation heavy, whereas online gives flexibility to use discussion forums, Q&A's, pre-recorded and live content.

## Thomas Forde

- If you only have one on campus tutorial, it can be hard/costly to commute for just that.
- Focused on studies as a mature student but felt the social aspect was missing for a lot of his classmates. Large part of university.
- When a lecturer does something right, the class notices it and it's appreciated.
- Lecture recordings were hugely useful as a study aide and made a large difference last year.
- Tech difficulties during lectures are something both students and staff face and is frustrating for everyone. We can learn from each other.

# Reflections on engagement

## What worked well?

1. Staff & Students as partners (meaningfully). Not only were we recording with our students as partners, but we were recording with our students as equals and with their authentic feedback informing the conversation. Reflective practice was demonstrated when we changed the structure of our podcasts to include the student within the conversation, rather than parallel to it. We will continue to do this into the future.
2. Capturing this feedback at an incredible moment in time – that of throughout the global pandemic ensured reflective practice was incorporated into our conversations. Reflection has been a challenge for our staff and students during this time and so this opportunity for conversation allowed both staff and students to reflect on what was working for them as well as what was not working for them. Through informal, yet structured conversation, we captured some incredible insights and learnings.

## What could have been done differently?

1. We now have all our recordings available on Spotify, as well as on our internal SharePoint sites for staff. We should have considered the more public platform earlier to ensure ease of access for all staff. Some feedback from staff included not knowing where to find our podcast recordings. This may have impacted on our engagement levels.



# Thank You – Go Raibh Míle Maith Agaibh:

1. **A huge thank you to the UCC Student's Union for the kindness of collaboration and constant dedication to the student voice. Without this, our podcast would not have been possible.**
2. **A massive thank you to the many students who have participated in this podcast series thus far. Their honesty and genuine feedback has been invaluable. Their bravery in coming into a joint staff/student podcast is admirable, especially when their voices and contributions were sent to all staff in the UCC community.**
3. **A mile buíochas to Catherine Dawson, our first Student Associate Intern in the academic year 2020-2021 and to Stephen O'Riordan, our second Student Associate Intern in the academic year 2021-2022, for their incredible contribution to this project. At all times they were professional, dedicated and real. It is no mean feat to represent the 'student voice' - a responsibility they handled with great respect and dignity. Congratulations.**