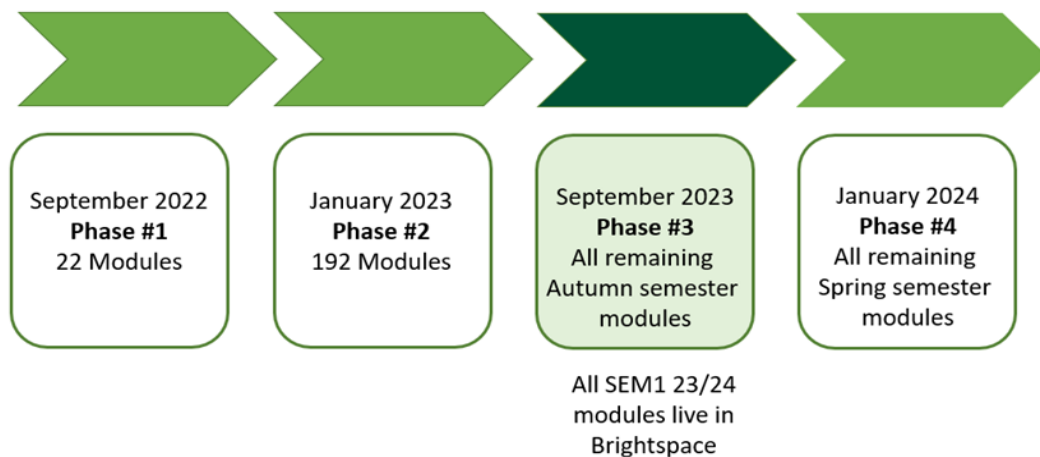## Digital Education

Brightspace VLE

The Brightspace project is progressing towards the September 2023 milestone of transitioning all SEM1 23/24 modules to Brightspace. In recent months, several important milestones have been achieved by the VLE project team., such as:

- September 2022: The first 22 modules launched in Brightspace.
- January 2023: 192 modules launched in Brightspace.
- March 2023: All SEM1 23/24 modules created in Brightspace.
- March 2023: Brightspace training available to the campus community.

Brightspace Campus Onboarding - Four Phase Approach

September 2022
Phase #1
22 Modules

January 2023
Phase #2
192 Modules

September 2023
Phase #3
All remaining Autumn semester modules

All SEM1 23/24 modules live in Brightspace

January 2024
Phase #4
All remaining Spring semester modules

Digital Education

Digital Skills Development

LevUL Up, the student Digital Skills Development Programme ran for 3 weeks from 13th February offering a series of live workshops to 360 registered participants.

Details and recordings are available from the LevUL Up website and promotions can be found on our social media. The cross-divisional programme was coordinated by the Digital Skills Development Lead in CTL in collaboration with colleagues in CTL, the Glucksman Library, and the Educational Assistive Technology Centre (EATC).

Over 530 students are currently enrolled on the open Digital Skills Awareness Course on Sulis. To-date, 23 students have been awarded the 'Digitally Aware' digital badge for successfully completing the course.
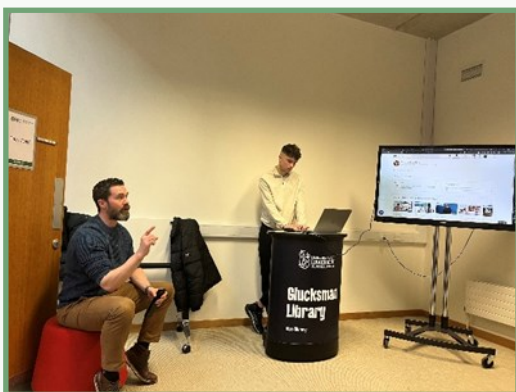
As part of a collaborative *LinkedIn Learning Student Campaign* between CTL, the Library, and the UL@Work project, the Digital Skills Development team ran daily live workshop demonstrations from 17-21 April in the Library's new i-Zone space, GL0 033, to promote increased activation and use of the LinkedIn Learning platform (LiL) among the UL student body. Workshop demonstrations, in addition to an associated competition for vouchers, resulted in a marked increase in the number of student activations on the LiL

Digital Learner Support Hub (DLSH) received PATH 1 funding to support students in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) programmes, specifically emphasising supporting Access & Widening the participation of students. Funding will sustainably support both materials and delivery using the LCs' DLSH framework.
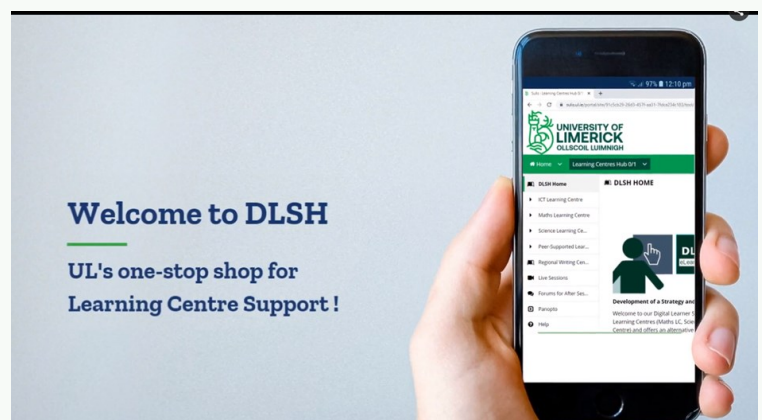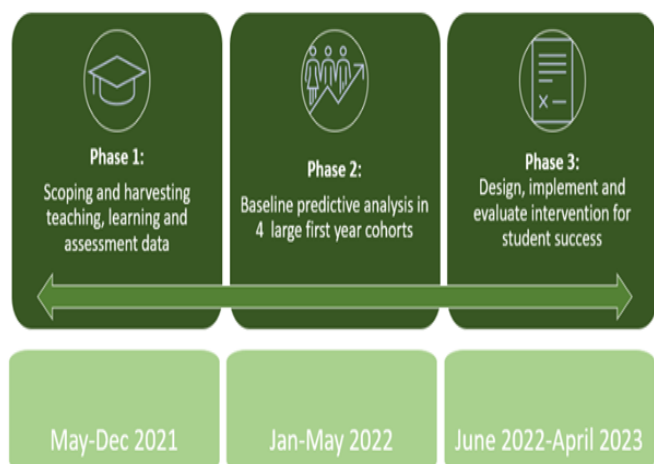
Digital Education

Learning Analytics for Student Success

'*STELA Live*: Learning Analytics for Student Success' is a project funded under the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning SATLE 2020 call led by Dr Angelica Rísquez (Educational Technologies and Learning Analytics Lead) in collaboration with Sarah Gibbons/Claire Halpin (Student Experience Lead) and Dr Mohd Fazil (STELA Live Lead Researcher) in CTL; Dominic Burns (ITD Business Intelligence); and first year module leaders: Michael P O'Brien (KBS), Donal Palcic (KBS), Teresa Curtin (S&E), Chris McInerney (AHSS). The project also worked with the support from Academic Registry, Data Protection Officer and Registrar.
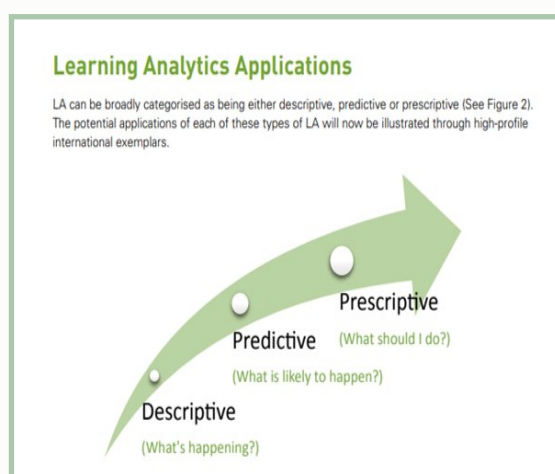
The project, which ran between May 2021 and April 2023, builds on the ongoing sectoral work on learning analytics and the Online Resource for Learning Analytics (ORLA) in order to take an informed approach to Learning Analytics (Using Learning Analytics to support the enhancement of teaching and learning in Higher Education) and the previous work in the former STELA (STudent Evaluation and Learning Analytics), led by the Quality Office in UL (2019-2021).

In *STELA Live*, we worked to lay the foundations to implement the *Policy on the Use of Data to Enhance Teaching, Learning and Assessment (Learning Analytics)* and contribute to building institutional data and insight on the possible application of learning analytics interventions in UL at this time, while building a community of practice around their application. In doing so, we worked to progress Aim 3 under Transforming Teaching in the UL Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022-2027 to establish new learner analytics capabilities and supports to inform and enhance teaching, learning and assessment.

Learning Analytics Applications

LA can be broadly categorised as being either descriptive, predictive or prescriptive (See Figure 2). The potential applications of each of these types of LA will now be illustrated through high-profile international exemplars.

Prescriptive (What should I do?)

Predictive (What is likely to happen?)

Descriptive (What's happening?)

Three Levels of Application of Learning Analytics

In summary, the project has conducted a baseline analysis based on machine learning models with 8000 students over four academic years, and a pilot implementation of an intervention for student success with four large first year cohorts. A pilot intervention was designed and evaluated, where students were notified mid-semester of their likelihood to succeed in the module and referred to appropriate supports.

Phase 1:
Scoping and harvesting teaching, learning and assessment data

Phase 2:
Baseline predictive analysis in 4 large first year cohorts

Phase 3:
Design, implement and evaluate intervention for student success

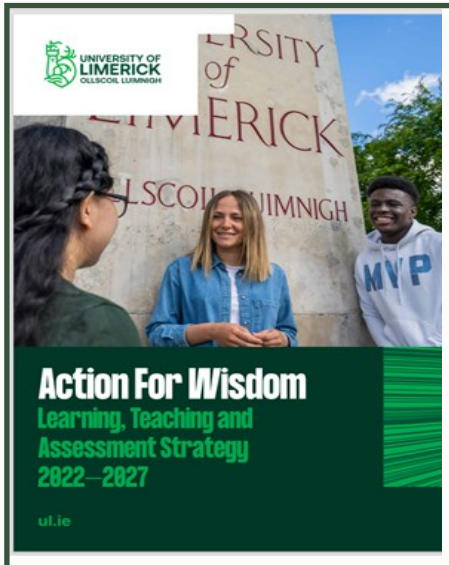May-Dec 2021   Jan-May 2022   June 2022-April 2023

Learnings and insights have been shared based on the evaluation of the impact of the initiative. In doing so, we aim to contribute to building institutional data and insights on the possible application of learning analytics interventions at UL. Also, we set the ground to explore sustainable and contextually relevant solutions to the applications of learning analytics through Brightspace, the new VLE at UL. For more information, please visit STELA Live - Learning Analytics for Student Success | University of Limerick (ul.ie)

Professional Development

Action for Wisdom: Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2022-27- At the time of writing, July 2023, the implementation of Action for Wisdom is well underway, with progress on key actions across all three pillars of the strategy including the implementation of the Integrated Curriculum Development Framework, further embedding of UDL and enhancement of Academic Integrity, all on track for implementation in the forthcoming academic year.

UDL@UL Project

Building on the UDL@UL project, and with the leadership for UDL being formally transferred to CTL, a webinar 'UDL and Tacos: Applying Universal Design for Learning'. CTL CPD events update on new faculty lead interfaculty seminar series on Learning, Teaching and Assessment – what do you do, and curriculum development sessions and others.   Link here.

SATLE funding has enabled CTL to create three new positions to meet the strategic aims of the University under UDL, academic integrity and digital skills and development. CTL is delighted to welcome Dr Suzanne Stone (UDL Lead, Senior Educational Developer) and Dr Annie O'Donovan (UDL Educational Developer) who will join CTL the week commencing 17th July.

Graduate Certificate, Diploma and MA in Teaching, Learning & Scholarship

We are very pleased to congratulate the recent graduates of the Graduate Certificate/Diploma in Teaching Learning and Scholarship in Education. The Graduate Cert/Diploma/MA in Teaching, Learning and Scholarship provides high-level, scholarly, practice-based professional development for faculty to ensure competence in the areas of teaching, learning and scholarship within their professional contexts. The programme is designed to equip academics with a range of skills, competencies, insights and capacities, which will ensure that they will bring the highest quality teaching and learning experiences to the students that they teach, while also managing and progressing their own scholarly careers.

Íde O'Sullivan (CTL) pictured with recent graduates of the Graduate Certificate in Teaching Learning and Scholarship in Higher Education, Ann-Marie Bright and Andrew Moynihan

Professional Development

Peer Observation Network

The peer observation network at UL continues to go from strength to strength with twenty-three lecturing staff engaging in providing feedback to each other on their teaching. Those taking part continue to view this as an extremely   positive and supportive process where teaching staff can take part in reciprocal peer observations or team up with a more experienced colleague to gain valuable insights about their teaching performance in a confidential, trusting and formative climate.

The process has been adapted to align with fully online, blended and fully face-to-face formats, with the latter comprising the majority of the peer observations this semester, indicating a welcome return to in-person teaching   link here

A seminar series aligned to the Action for Wisdom strategy, Teaching, Learning and Assessment – What do you do?, designed to showcase innovation was launched, where faculty Teaching Excellence Award winners and colleagues, from each of the four Faculties shared their practice. Speakers were Shalini Singh, Jean McCarthy, Anne Griffin, Luke Danagher, Ciara Breathnach, Audrey O'Grady, Colette Grey and Roisin Cahalan.

The final session was a panel discussion that provided a very timely overview of different perspectives, challenges and opportunities associated with generative AI/Chat GPT. Thank you to the panel members, Ross Anderson, Liam Murray, Reena Cole and Muhammad Irfan for a very stimulating discussion.

CTL's response to tender to provide an accredited programme in Teaching and Learning to   colleagues in the Garda College has been successful. we look forward to working with colleagues in the Garda College in the coming years.

Dr Michael Wride, Transformative Pedagogies Lead presented a talk at the recent EDIN workshop   Sustainable Educational Development with a Focus on Wellbeing on May 25th on an Introduction to Contemplative Pedagogies in Higher Education. The talk outlined how contemplative pedagogy shifts the focus of teaching and learning to incorporate 'first person' approaches which connect students to their lived, embodied experience to enhance learning and health & wellbeing.

Integration of Research & Teaching

A Critical Conversation, a discussion panel as part of Research Week, comprised four talks at the nexus of teaching and research for both undergraduates and postgraduates. Dr Audrey O'Grady, Dr Geraldine Mooney Simmie, Prof Michael Walsh, and Prof Jeff Punch spoke to key issues and this was followed by a panel discussion, which was chaired by Prof Ann Ledwith.

Regional Conversations Series in Teaching & Learning focussed on Sharing innovative assessment strategies with presentations from colleagues from MIC, TUS and UL took place on April 20th.

International

Dr Mary Fitzpatrick, as chair of an EUA Thematic Peer Group comprised of members from 10 institutions, presented the report on **Collaborative Teaching Practice** to delegates at the EUA Learning and Teaching Forum in Bilboa 1st – 3rd February.

Teaching Excellence Awards

Regional Teaching Excellence Awards

The 5 shortlisted candidates for the Regional Teaching Excellence Award 2023 were recognised at a ceremony on June 16th in the presence of the Presidents of MIC, TUS and UL, colleagues and family members. This is a critically important collaborative award which recognises and validates tea ching excellence. The process is supported and guided by colleagues in Learning and Teaching across the three partner institutions, in particular Dr Michael Wride, UL, Dr Laura Costello from MIC and Dr Nuala Harding from TUS.

This award showcases and champions outstanding practice in Higher Education teaching from across the region. It is a comprehensive and rigorous process requiring in-depth reflection and engagement by each of the candidates in their practice. Many candidates applied for the award across the institutions. The shortlisted candidates were:

Shortlisted Candidates from UL, TUS and MIC

Prof. Eugene Wall, President MIC presenting winner Dr Conchúr Ó Brolcháin MIC with his certificate

Dr Ingrid Hunt and Dr Rosie Gowran UL

Dr Rosie Gowran, School of Allied Health, Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, UL
Dr Ingrid Hunt, Design And Manufacturing Technology, School of Engineering, Faculty Of Science & Engineering, UL
Dr Anne Marie O'Brien, Faculty of Science and Health, TUS
Dr Conchúr Ó Brolcháin, Department of Language & Literacy Education, Faculty of Education, MIC
Dr Michael Russell, Department of Computer & Software Engineering, Faculty of Engineering & Informatics, TUS

The teaching portfolios submitted were reviewed by an external panel : Dr Rachael Carkett (Independent HE Consultant), Dr Martina Crehan (DCU), Marc Matouc (UCDSU Graduate Officer), Ken McCarthy (SETU), and the Chair Dr Sharon Flynn (THEA). The panel carefully considered the applications and adjudicated on an overall winner. While they recognised the exceptionally high standard of the short-listed candidates the overall winner was Dr Conchúr Ó Brolcháin from MIC.

UL Teaching Excellence Award

All Faculties were represented in the 2022/23 UL Excellence in Teaching Awards with submissions received for each category of award.

Teaching Excellence Award (Individual): Christina O'Connor (KBS)
Teaching Excellence Award (Team):   Ciara Breathnach (AHSS), Tiziana Margaria (SEN)
and Rachel Murphy (AHSS)
Excellence in Pedagogic Support: Antoinette Flynn (KBS), James Murphy (Peer Supported Learning
Centre) and Jacqui Geoghegan Peer Supported Learning Centre)

We look forward to the presentation of these awards at the Autumn Conferring.

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Student Engagement
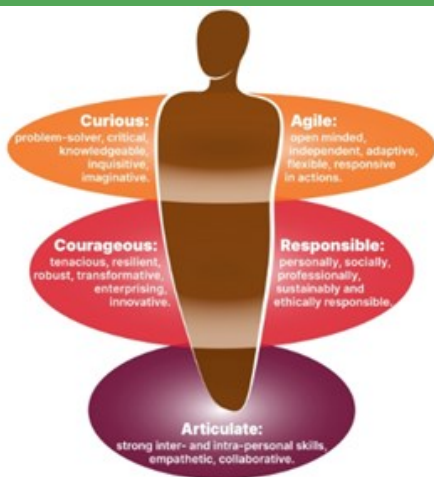
The All-Ireland Conference for Undergraduate Research (AICUR) 2023

The 10th All-Ireland Conference for Undergraduate Research (AICUR) was hosted by the Centre for Transformative Learning and took place online on 13th April 2023. This has been the third year the conference has been hosted online and this format has attracted a broader representation from HEIs in Ireland. In addition to UL, there were delegates from UCD, ATU (Galway, Sligo, and Connemara campuses), Maynooth University, and Galway University. Abstract submissions were received from 70 undergraduate students, 44 of whom presented live on the day of the conference, and the remainder provided either recorded presentations (22) or posters (5). The breadth of research shared was representative of most disciplines and delegates did an excellent job at presenting their work to a non-expert audience.

The conference was opened by Prof. Norelee Kennedy, and the keynote address was delivered by Mr Oisín Hassan. Oisín is a Policy Executive with the IUA and was previously instrumental in the strategic work of the National Student Engagement Programme (NStEP), as well as being an elected member of the Union of Students in Ireland.

The keynote address and breakout rooms were attended by conference delegates, AICUR Committee, CTL staff, family members, and research supervisors. Each delegate received a book of abstracts and certificate of achievement for their portfolios.

Students' exceptional work can be viewed on the AICUR webpage.

The F4W programme is designed to extend the support offered to students during the second semester of the academic year 2022/23. The content of the programme included information that targeted specific cohorts of students including first-year students, second-year students UL Global students, Access, Mature and students with disabilities. The focus this semester was on highlighting the various support services on campus (Writing Centre, Maths Centre, Science Centre and ICT Learning Centre), the student Advisor System, the Student Support Officers and workshops on academic tools that are available to support student learning.

F7W Hub
The F7W Hub in the student courtyard was open five days per week from 9am to 5pm daily and was staffed at all times by the social media guides who dealt with in-person queries. Students were also invited to use the facilities of the space.

Social Media - In total, information was shared on 5 Social Media Platforms and again for this iteration Instagram was the most popular social media channel that students interacted with. The most successful posts included tips for First-Year students and competitions (including the promotion of the competitions and the posts sharing the pictures with the winners). Some of the posts that had higher reach included video tutorials on how to find the different places on campus.

The following are the themes and targeted student population for the four weeks:

01	January 23rd – 27th	International Students & Academic Tools
02	January 30th – February 3rd	Access Students & Meet Your Academic Advisor
03	February 6th – 10th	Mature Students & Healthy UL
04	February 13th – 17th	Students with Disabilities & Student Support Officers
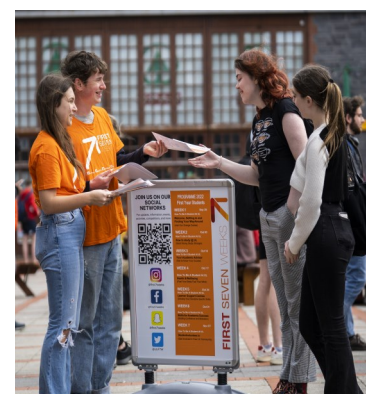
Learning Centres

CTL Learning Centres (LC): Directors of LCs collaborated with the Student Union Academic Officer, Head of Access & Widening Participation, UL Global Office, First Year Support Co-Ordinator, and Student Support Officers to improve the student experience engaging with various support options in the Spring Semester (SS)

Regional Peer-Supported Learning Centre (https://pslc.ul.ie/)
A total of 10 modules were supported by PSLG this semester resulting in 812 visits by 302 students across the 3 faculties supported. The support continued to be provided as a a mix of in-person and online support depending on the particular needs of the module. In addition, seminars and workshops a further 86 students. We trained a total of 59 leaders this semester and these we deployed across the 10 modules over the two semesters.

The centre applied for the Teaching Excellence Award (Pedagogical Support) category for its work with the first-year accounting modules in KBS and was successful at the faculty level in February and subsequently at the University level in May. We'd like to offer our sincere thanks to Dr. Antoinette Flynn (KBS) for her support and help both with the PSLG support programme for her module and the application of these awards.

The PSLC will continue its partnership with the ICTLC for this year's UL Cybercamp – an introductory ICT camp aimed at second-level students 13-18. The camp offers the students a chance to see some of the they topics they will encounter if they decide to pursue an academic or professional career in ICT in fun, small-group-based activities.

DLSH continues to be a vital support initiative for the PSLC with all online PSLG supports running on this platform. We hope to expand our offerings on this platform (as well as complete the move over to BrightSpace) by the end of this summer ready for new and returning students in September.

Mathematics Learning Centre www.ul.ie/ctl/mlc/

A total of **4,491 attendances** were made to the MLC's live (in-person and online) services in the AY2022/23. These were recorded via 1,390 attendances at the MLC drop-in centre for in-person support and 3,101 attendances at the MLC's live online group support sessions. A further **4,000 hours of the MLC's 24/7 support material was viewed by 1,647 students** throughout the year on Sulis. 42.9% of students that respond-ed (n=35) to end of semester voluntary anonymous surveys stated that they feared that they would fail their mathematics module, however 97% of respondents stated that their use of the MLC would help them to get a better grade. Many very positive comments were made by students on anonymous MLC tutor evaluation surveys, e.g. "Made the material easy to understand and gave me a huge amount of clarity and relief that I would be able to get past this module with the continued support of the MLC". Other achieve-ments during the year include the continued running of the Head Start Maths programme to mature students, a tutor-training programme to mathematics PhD students, and the delivery of two mathematics modules on the International Foundation programme.
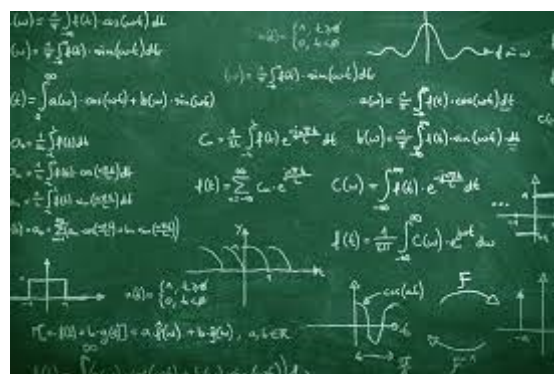
ICT Learning Centre (https://ictlc.ul.ie/)

During the AY 2022/23, the ICT Learning Centre (ICTLC) operated a hybrid model of support with students being able to avail of both online synchronous support and face-to-face support. These supports include drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, Peer-Led sessions, group targeted sessions, Prepare and Repeat (PAR) sessions and in-lab pair-programming support. In total, 665 students, primarily from the core ICT courses, availed of the face-to-face ICTLC supports with a total of 3160 visits recorded.

Over 50 hours of targeted support classes for 3 first-year and 6 second-year modules were delivered during the year. Four first-year CSIS modules were supported during AY2022/23 by the ICTLC using the Digital Learning Support Hub (DLSH) framework, with relevant online video and quiz content being made available to the students each week, starting in week 2 in both semesters. This content is then reviewed each following week (starting week 3) in Peer-lead support sessions, both face-to-face (f2f) and online (evening) to maximise reach and ensure that students can discuss any learning issues that they may have. These live sessions use the Peer Supported Learning Group (PSLG) model with trained second-year peers leading the session.

At the start of the Spring semester, Prepare and Repeat (PAR) support was implemented by the ICTLC for two core first-year programming modules (CSIS and ECE) with a follow-on module. In week 1, At-Risk students are informed by mail of the PAR support and given access to online learning content to review prior to fully supported on-campus evening labs commencing in week 2. Each week up to and including week 5, the PAR support   covers the core content and concepts taught during the first semester. This allows targeted students to be better prepared for the follow-on module and any repeat exam they may have to undertake. In total, 110 students were targeted for this additional learning support.

The ICT Learning Centre (ICTLC) organised and ran an internal Robocode competition, which is a national programming competition for first year undergraduate students, to select a team to represent UL in the National final held as part of the 2023 Games Fleadh at TUS, Thurles in March. In total 24 students from 5 undergraduate courses attended the mentoring sessions during February resulting in five 3-person teams taking part in our internal competition. The UL entrant was a team comprised of three first year BSc in Immersive Software Engineering (LM173) students. This year six institutions were represented (one team per institution) in the competition and over the course of an enjoyable morning, UL's robot engaged in individual combats with the robots from each institution on the way to the final, where, in a series of engagements they lost out to a very good Dundalk Institute of Technology robot.

The ICTLC delivered two 2-hour java programming workshops during the ECE Transition-Year camp and another three 2-hour Python workshops during the CSIS Open Day, both held in March. The first of our three on-campus 3-day UL Cybercamp's for 40 secondary school students will commence on the 26th of June, with the camps completing by the 5th of July. All 120 places on the three camps have been taken. Each 3-day camp consists of a day that focuses on a specific area of ICT namely: An introduction to programming, basic web design and Electronics/robots. The ICT Learning Centre and the Peer Supported Learning Centre manage the camps with funding from the HEA and additional help from both the CSIS and ECE departments.

Our UL winners of Robocode competition 2023 Dervla Gargan Daniel J. Kennedy and Art O'Liathain

Cybercamp participants

The Regional Writing Centre (www.ul.ie/rwc)

The Regional Writing Centre (RWC) continues to offer writing support both **face to face and online tutoring for students writing for academic assessment or publication**. 933 students attended RWC **workshops on writing** in the 2022/3 academic year. 401 of those students attended workshops specific to their field, predominantly in the Faculties of Education and Health Sciences and The Kemmy Business School. **PhD Writers' Weeks** were held in June, August and January of this academic year, 21 PhD candidates participating in a week-long in-house retreat. 25 PhD students participated in writers' group during 2022/3, occupying **the RWC's Writers' Space** for 244 hours. The RWC also facilitated an external weekend retreat in January of 2023 at the Lyrath Estate, Kilkenny, for 10 students in the **Executive MBA programme**.

The RWC presented at four **induction programmes** for 25 post-Doctoral writers in the Bernal Institute, 18 at the EHS Postgraduate Research Induction, 96 for undergraduate programmes in EHS, 50 for the Matures Students Office, 6 at the UL Global Orientation, 10 at the Access Orientation and 83 first-year students as part of the F7Ws programme. The RWC is currently collaborating with **Dr. Elaine Rogers** on a manual for writing in **Clinical Psychology**.
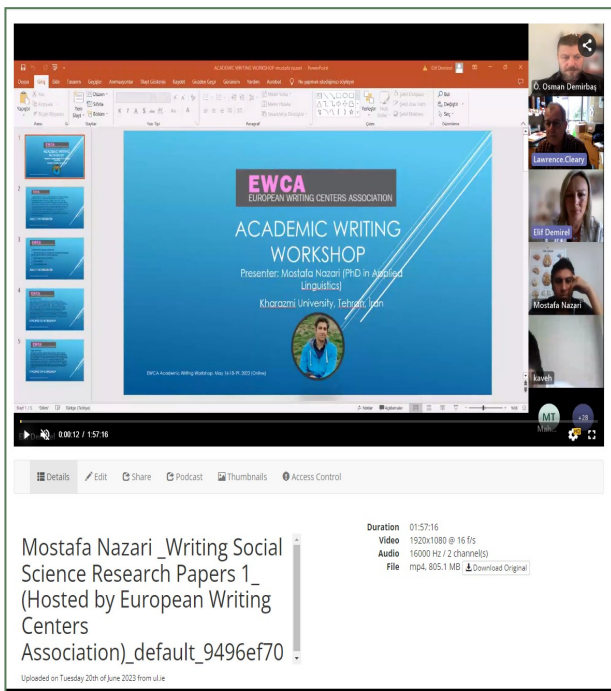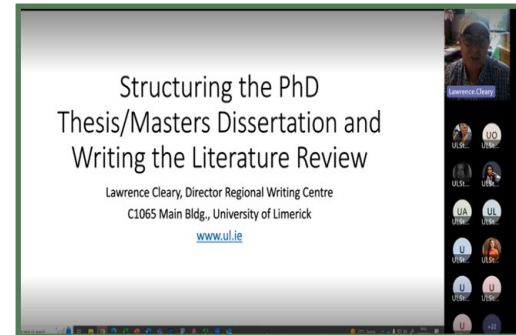
Externally, the RWC has hosted a European Writing Centers Association-sponsored three-day workshop on writing in the Social Sciences, facilitated online by Mostafa Nazari, PhD candidate at Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran, is planning collaborations with Kristen Horan, Postgrad Support Officer, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, met with discussed 'Writing Across the Lifespan' with Ryan Dippre, Associate rofessor of English and Director of College Composition, University of Maine, Oronoe, Maine, USA and Alision Farrell, Teaching Development Officer, Centre for Teaching and Learning, School of Education, Maynooth University, and participated in an Erasmus+ research project application led by Thomas Mandl, Professor of Information Science, University of Hildesheim, Germany (project lead); universities involved in the project: Universiteit Antwerpen, University of Limerick, Universitait Innsbruck, Marlardalens Universität.

The RWC, at the behest of UL, also hosted **8 visiting scholars** this year from **the University of Tlemcen, Algeria, Tbilisi State University, Georgia, Technische Hochschule Ingolstadt, Germany, and the University of Cape Coast, Ghana**. Additionally, the RWC Director was shadowed by **Anna-Maria Kaim, Hochschule Bremen, City University of Applied Sciences, Germany**, for two weeks in March 2023 for the purposes of starting a writing centre in her own institution in Bremen.

The RWC once again hosted its **annual National Secondary** School Essay-writing Competition, judged by 6 PVA volunteers from across the disciplines. The three winners were **Chloe Ní Ghríofa, Laurel Hill Coláiste** FCJ, Co. Limerick (First prize) and Elsa Forrest, Ashton School, Co. Cork and Barry Murphy, St Brogan's College, Co. Cork (Runners-up). The awards were announced by **Dr. Patrick Ryan,** Associate Vice President Student Engagement.

The RWC Director Lawrence Cleary continues as **Chair** of the European Writing Centers Association, planning the 2024 EWCA Conference to be held at UL in June of 2024. He also continues to participate as **At-Large Board Member of the International Writing Centers** Association.