



UNIVERSITY of LIMERICK

O L L S C O I L L U I M N I G H

Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills (CWELL)

Progress Report

June 2015

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Director

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INTRODUCTION

Sustaining healthier communities and community capacity building is widely acknowledged as an important community development strategy. Its strength lies in its ability to empower community members as citizens to self-manage their lives and environment through acquisition of leadership skills and engagement in the building and enactment of a shared community vision. It supports the belief that when empowered to do so, all people possess valuable skills, strengths, assets and knowledge that can be contributed towards mobilising community vision into action.

Integrating health within strategies to improve community wellbeing is well recognised. In the Report Evaluation of the Building Healthy Communities Programme (Combat Poverty Agency, 2008) the need to promote the principles and practice of community development in improving health and well-being for disadvantaged communities, and to explore mechanisms for effective, meaningful and sustainable community participation in decision-making related to health is identified. At the European level, the EU Commission (CEC, 2006) refers to the need for universities to communicate the relevance of their activities by sharing knowledge with society and by reinforcing dialogue with all stakeholders. Nationally, the Hunt Report is the first major policy statement to give civic engagement equal prominence with the teaching/learning and research functions of higher education (Munck and McIlrath, 2011). According to this strategy, engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve (Hunt, 2010). This will enable higher educational institutes to become more relevant and responsive to their communities, and will also enrich their diversity and distinctiveness as institutions.

The implementation of an educational programme to support this development will contribute to the health and well-being of its population in line with the National Strategy for Service User Involvement in the Irish Health Service 2008-2013 (Department of Health and Children, 2008). A number of reports local to the Limerick region highlight the need for community education initiatives in skills/strategies to improve health outcomes. These reports include, Addressing issues of Social Exclusion in Moyross and other disadvantaged areas of Limerick City (Fitzgerald, 2007), A Vision for Moyross, Southill / Ballinacurra Weston and St. Mary's Park. Limerick (Blackett / Limerick Regeneration Agency, 2008), The Social Value of Community-Based Adult Education in Limerick City (LCEN, LCAES and Limerick Regeneration Agency, 2011) and How Are Our Kids? Experiences and Needs of Children and Families in Limerick City with a Particular Emphasis on Limerick's Regeneration Areas (IKOS & MIC, 2012).

In light of this, St Marys Community in partnership with the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences developed a co-authored Diploma programme in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL).

This project brings together community partners, university staff and students through practice-based, educational activities to work collaboratively and build capacity in well-being and lifestyle education within the local community, commencing in St. Mary's with the objective of future rollout in other disadvantaged areas. In summary, the proposed programme provides:-

- A route to pursue third - level education **through a community, co-authored programme** which addresses relevant content **on physical and mental health and personal and professional development**
- An approach to learning **which empowers** course participants to effect positive change in their well-being and life-styles within their own community.
- The provision of an **accredited first aid course**.
- The provision of an **accredited pathway** for further education,
- The provision of a pathway that builds **leadership capacity** within the community
- The programme offers a **flexible mode of delivery**, two years (full-time) or four years (part-time).
- It will strengthen local communities by **enabling and supporting course participants' engagement with the community** and promoting social inclusion through developing local projects in the area of health and well-being.
- Through **the practicum module**, this programme will incorporate **opportunities for other University students (Local/National//International) to support CWELL participants** to bring their practical projects to fruition within the community setting.

The overall aim of the proposed programme is to proactively address community health issues in a way that the building of healthy partnerships enhances existing strengths, fosters community resilience and leadership, contributing towards improving quality of life and the creation of healthy and sustainable communities.

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CWELL KEY MILESTONES

Key Activity	Date
Confirmation of committed support received from all departments in the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, University of Limerick	Sept 2012
Letter of support from St. Mary's Adult education Centre, Island Road, Limerick	March 2012
Commitment (Limerick City CDP) re; availability of premises to deliver the programme.	April 2012
Public Information session held in City Hall, Limerick with representatives from all the relevant local organisations.	May 2012
Residents information and feedback sessions (local Primary school)	May 2012
Meetings with individual stakeholders	Jan-May 2012
Nomination of community curriculum members	June 2012
Community leader identified	June 2012
Curriculum Group Established (phase one Community Members only).	June 2012
First meeting with community curriculum development members	June 2012
Meeting with full group (U.L and Community Representatives)	September 2012
Community workshops/information sessions	Sept. 2012-Feb 2013
CWELL programme approved	June 2013
Programme Launch	November 2013
Research Assistant appointed	January 2014
Ethical approval for evaluation granted	December 2013
Students selected	December 2013
Student orientation	January 2014
Programme Commenced	January 2014
Peer support network Established	January 2014
Semester One Completed	May 2014
Publication of first newsletter	May 2014
International Conference presentation	April /May 2014
Extern Examiner Visit	May 2014
Sponsored by Limerick City and County Council as entrant to IPB All-Island Pride of Place Competition 2014	May 2014
Semester Two Orientation	June 2014

New members Join management group	June 2014
Winner: All Ireland Irish Pride of Place Award	November 2014
Semester Two Completed	December 2014
Year two of the programme commenced	January 2015
Semester Three Completed	June 2015

PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM JANUARY 2013 – JUNE 2014

- Carmody, Conor, Community Representative
- Dempsey, Ciara, Research/administrative Assistant
- Duggan, Carmel, Community Rep
- Gallagher, Stephen, U.L rep, Psychology
- MacPhail, Ann, U.L rep, Physical Education & Sport Sciences Department.
- Mc Namara, Stephen, Community Rep
- O’Sullivan, Mary, U.L Rep, Education and Health Sciences
- Quillinan, Bernie, U.L Rep Nursing and Midwifery, Course Director
- Reidy, Geraldine, Community Rep, Co-course director
- Robinson, Katie, U.L Representative, Clinical therapies
- Tannehill, Deborah.



NEW MEMBERS TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM JUNE 2014

- Carlos, Juan , Representative, Limerick City, Community Development Project
- Cusack, Mary, Public health Nurse, Representative, King's Island Primary Care Centre.

PAST PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS 2012-2014

- Mc Grath, Deirdre, U.L rep, Medical School

PAST PROJECT MANAGEMENT TEAM MEMBERS 2012-2013

- Joe Kelly, Community representative
- Dolores Kelly, Community representative
- Sylvia Murphy, Nursing and Midwifery Representative, U.L
- Linda Butler, Education and Professional Studies
- Neil Kenny, Education and Professional Studies

CWELL LAUNCH

The CWELL programme was officially launched on Tuesday 26th November 2013. Over 250 invited guests and members of the local community attended the launch event which was held at King John's Castle. Minister for Housing & Planning, Jan O'Sullivan, officially launched the new CWELL programme. Entertainment on the night was provided by St Mary's Tin Whistle Group and St Mary's Prize Band.

See **CWELL Video** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqjg-wag0Bk&feature=youtu.be> for more details.





STUDENT SELECTION PROCESS

A series of workshops and individual information sessions about the Cwell programme and the application process were held in late November and early December 2013 in the Community Development Project (CDP) house in Verdant Place. These sessions were advertised locally and held at dates/times (including week-ends) to facilitate public attendance. Student interviews were held on the 13th December 2013.

Fifteen places were offered. Fourteen students (3 male and 11 female) accepted a place on the course. Thirteen students registered for the course. One student secured employment early in year one and indicated this as a reason for exiting the programme. Two students exited in year one. Ten students progressed successfully into year two of the programme.



OVERVIEW OF THE PROGRAMME

SEMESTER 1	ECTS	HOURS	SEMESTER 2	ECTS	HOURS
Mental Health 1 Well-being and Positive Mental Health Across the Lifespan	18	450	Managing Health in the Home and Community	18	300
Study Skills and Personal Development	12	450	Communication and Lifeskills	12	300
Total ECTS Credits Year I, Part 1 60					
Exit with Level 6 - Minor Award – Higher Certificate in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL) if desired					
SEMESTER 3	ECTS	HOURS	SEMESTER 4	ECTS	HOURS
Mental Health 2, Prevention and Management	18	450	Leading and Sustaining Change in the Community	18	450
UL Practicum 1	12	300	UL Practicum 2	12	300
Total ECTS Credits Year 2, Part II 60					
Exit with Level 7 - Minor Award – Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL)					

The CWELL is a two year programme will be delivered in a flexible and proactive manner, designed to meet the needs of students (See table 1 for programme outline). Specifically, the programme is concerned with empowering the individual to work towards wellness through a range of educational interventions. It will equip students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to become confident, creative, responsible and proactive individuals who are able to make maximum use of skills, knowledge and resources to achieve better health in their everyday lives. See (appendix one) for detailed programme outline, aim, objectives, modules and learning outcomes.



SEMESTER ONE 2014

In January 2014, an induction to the CWELL programme was organised on University of Limerick Campus. Classes took place EVERY Monday evening in the CDP house from January 2014 to December 2014. To date, the students have completed semester one and two modules See (appendix one) for details of these modules.-:

Lecturers on CWELL programme-:

Semester One

- Begley, Mary, Department of Nursing and Midwifery – September 2013 – December 2013. Study Skills and Personal Development
- Mc Mahon, Jenny, Education and Professional Studies – September 2013 – December 2013. Module EN3182 - Mental Health 1: Well-being and Positive Mental Health across the Lifespan and Module NS3062.

Semester Two

- Deirdre Mc Grath, Lisa Murphy, Andrew O Regan, Patrick O Donnell, Mark Dixon, Graduate Entry Medical School, GM30001-Managing Health in the Home and Community
- Katie Robinson, Department of Clinical Therapies. CT3001-Communication and Life Skills

Semester Three

- Bernie Quillinan, Department of Nursing and midwifery. PS3012- Mental Health 2, Prevention and Management.
- Ann Mac Phail/ Deborah Tannehill, Practicum 1, Department of Physical Education & Sport Sciences.

COURSE DIRECTOR/CO-COURSE DIRECTOR

The quality of the student experience is fundamental to the role of the Course Director and Co-Course Director in supporting students. Their main roles include:

- Managing and overseeing the academic elements of the programme and working closely with faculty, administration, Head of Department and other support structures available to students.
- Assisting in clarifying queries and concerns, helping students adjust to the University environment and supporting you to make the most of your potential while in UL.
- Acting as a source of advice and information on general student problems, including professional and personal problems, and in appropriate cases, makes referrals to other support structures such as the Writing Learning Centre, Science Learning Centre, Counselling Service etc.
- Making representations on behalf of students.

Bernie Quillinan is Course Director and Geraldine Reidy is Co-Course Director for the CWELL Programme.

In January 2014, a research assistant was appointed to evaluate the impact of the CWELL programme. (A summary of the research project is set out below in table 2).

AIM: To evaluate the impact of the CWELL programme taking into account specific outcomes, such as health literacy, application of knowledge to practice and personal and professional growth of programme participants (particularly the demonstration of leading and sustaining change).

ETHICAL APPROVAL RECEIVED DEC 2013

- **DESIGN:** Qualitative study - one to one interviews, timelines and focus groups
- **DATA COLLECTION :** over 2-yrs, at 4 time-points in each academic year

Time 1	Pre-enrolment Spring	Time 2	End of Spring Semester
Time 3	Beginning of Autumn Semester	Time 4	End of Autumn Semester

- **STUDY SAMPLE**
 - 15 students on the CWELL programme
 - 4 stakeholders from Programme Coordinator Group
 - 4 stakeholders from the Programme Steering Committee
 - 7 Practicum Students
 - 7 Module Leaders
- **DATA ANALYSIS:** Data will be analysed using the constant comparative method.

Summary of the Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL) programme research (June 2014)

Timelines 1 to 4 for year one have been completed and analyzed. The CWELL students have taken part in 9 FGDs and 6 interviews throughout the first year. The Project Coordinator Group have also partaken in 4 FGDs and the Steering Group have been involved in 3 FGDs.

The Module Leaders and Practicum Students will take part in FGDs for year 2.

CWELL Student Evaluations

Successes:

CWELL students have had a positive, supportive educational experience through the programme to date. They have experienced personal development e.g. increased self-esteem, self-confidence and socialisation skills. In the area of professional development, they have become more skilled in areas such as, presentation, communication, delegation and time management. The CWELL students have also developed academic skills e.g. researching, essay writing and referencing. Students also report increased awareness about their own mental and physical health and their ability to reflect on what they are learning and the application of knowledge to practice. There has been an acknowledgement by CWELL students that they were initially motivated to get qualification for the betterment of family and/or their employment situation. However, they are now doing it for themselves and to make a positive contribution to their community. They have noted the positive impacts the course has had on them as individuals and their families. Assignments were challenging for the students but they overcame this challenge as they progressed through the course.

Challenges:

Each of the CWELL student participants had previous negative educational experiences. As a result, these students found it difficult to ask for help with academic issues. The students were at different levels re personal development, academic ability and professionalism which presented challenges for them as a group. Initially they were overwhelmed by the workload expected of them. Other areas that presented challenges included Harvard referencing, structuring of sentences and essays, literacy levels, computer literacy and communication through emails.

Stakeholders Evaluations

Successes

Data from the stakeholders groups has also highlighted successes and challenges. Successes for the stakeholders included achieving key milestones such as, course accreditation, launch and implementation. To date the data gathered has highlighted the importance of community involvement in the development of the curriculum and the programme steering committee. It was also reported that through the CWELL structures and processes, different perspectives were considered. There has been an experience of joint learning for members, from both the university and the community.

Support from various departments was evident. There was recognition by the University of CWELL's success to date e.g. the addition of the CWELL programme to the EHS Faculty Board meeting. The supports in place for the students, including the practicum students supports in addition to the academic advisors, has been invaluable to the CWELL students

and their development. The flexibility and experience of the lecturers ensured that the needs of the students were responded to.

Challenges

Local community politics was seen as a challenge with the initial set-up phase of the programme, however, through maintaining open dialog with all stakeholders within the community, this challenge was overcome. Maintenance of steering committee members throughout the course delivery phase has been an on-going challenge. This has been attributed to the lack of terms of reference and knowledge of what would be expected of steering group members. However, it has also been noted that more clarity around this role posed difficulties at this stage due to CWELL being a pilot programme and the timeframe between programme approval and implementation.. There is recognition of an imbalance of workload with committee members, resulting in a few committee members undertaking a lot of tasks. Little acknowledgement by the University of the workload undertaken by University representatives for contributing to CWELL was raised as a concern. In addition, the time required to support CWELL, on top of an existing workload was also raised as a challenge.

STUDENT PLACEMENTS

INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM PLACEMENT ESTABLISHED

In Jan 2014, four international students first undertook a placement with the CWELL project. The following student reflections highlight some benefits to the students. Their role was to provide a peer support structure. An overview of the practicum module is provided in appendix two. The specific CWELL practicum brief is presented in appendix three.

"I felt that the support I provided came at a good time as many students were dealing with the flood, although it was during the flooding when I truly realized how strong, proud and supportive the St. Mary's community is. It was a great cultural experience and taught me a great deal about community involvement". **Sadie Scibo, Chicago, April 2014**



Chris Frappier , Canada, April 2014

"The Practicum experience has without a doubt positively shaped my time in Ireland. The people I have met and the opportunities I have had because of Practicum have made me a better student, a better teacher, and above all, a better person".

INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM STUDENTS Jan 2014 -May 2014

- Frappier, Christopher, International Practicum student - Canada
- O'Loughlin, Ryan, International Practicum Student- US
- Scibo, Sadie, International Practicum Student- US

- Stevens, Rachel, International Practicum Student – US

INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM STUDENTS SEPT 2014 -Dec 2014

- Humphrey, Jennifer, International Practicum student - Australia
- Clarke, Madeline, International Practicum Student - US
- Conroy, Cian, International Practicum Student – US

INTERNATIONAL PRACTICUM STUDENTS JAN 2015 – May 2015

- McNamara, Sheridan, International Practicum Student - US
- Khabushani, Joshua, International Practicum Student - US
- Waddell, Jordan, International Practicum Student - US
- Tignarelli, Lauren, International Practicum student - Canada
- Zacour, Anastasia, International Practicum Student - US

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK CO-OPERATIVE PLACEMENT

In December 2013, a co-operative placement was provided for one student. This is primarily an administrative position with additional duties including media engagement and student support among others. The student is provided with a shared office space in St Mary’s Community Development Project, Verdant Place, Limerick and is primarily supervised and supported by the Course Directors, and a Project Officer.

UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK CO-OP STUDENT

- Callan, Megan, U.L Co-operative student – December 2013 - June 2014
- Keyes, Jessica, U.L Co-operative student – June 2014 – December 2014
- O Sullivan, Ashley, U.L Co-operative student – December 2014 - June 2015

CWELL STUDENT SUPPORT STRUCTURES

In addition to University of Limerick, student supports, a peer assisted student support structure was established in January 2013. Following a number of consultations with CWELL students, a variety of individual and group supports were developed and implemented. The following services are provided by one student undertaking a co-operative placement with the University of Limerick and four International undertaking a placement as Practicum module.

These supports were implemented throughout the Semester on days and times convenient to course participants. Below are some of the supports offered.



Supports were offered on an individual or group basis. These included-:

HELPLINE

A student Helpline (which operated outside of class/work hours) was put in place at commencement of the programme.

DROP-IN CLINIC

A drop-in clinic is established in the CPD House, days and times were provided to all students during the first semester. This provided students with a chance to get one-on-one or group help from the student supports, regarding any difficulties they encountered with their studies.

SUGGESTION BOX

A suggestions box was set up in the CPD House which allowed students to contribute their ideas and opinions on what parts of course they find relevant and worthwhile, or if there are aspects they think could be improved. Students could propose ways to bring the group together socially, or to involve the community with the CWELL diploma. They could make suggestions anonymously if they so wished.

LIBRARY FACILITY AND SUPPORT

The librarian for the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences, Donna O’Doibhlin is available for CWELL students to contact her if they need any help with identifying resources for their projects or if they have a specific information query.

CWELL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The importance of the voice of the local community in highlighting initiatives, conducive to better health and well-being, which need to be strengthened or developed and sustained, is critical to the success of the CWELL programme and The relationship of the CWELL project team and the course participants with the local community is critical to the success of the programme. To this end, facilitating engagement between all key stakeholders underpins the philosophy of the CWELL programme.

In April/May 2014, the first issue of the CWELL newsletter was produced and circulated within the local community (appendix four). On the 25th April, a culture night was organised by the CWELL practicum students in association with members of the local community. Newsletters are produced bi-monthly.



You are invited to a
Culture Night
Featuring
Storytelling, Song and Dance
April 25th at 7pm
St Marys Community Centre
Light Refreshments Served

On January 20th 2015, the CWELL students hosted a World Café Event in their local Community. The purpose of the event was to capture local community opinions on what changes they would like to see with regard to improving health and well-being in their community. This information will inform CWELL students on their course project selections for 2015.

Three questions formed the basis of discussions for this event.

Question 1: If King's Island was one of the best places in Ireland to be born, grow up in and grow old in what would it be like?

Question 2: What changes need to happen to achieve this vision?

Question 3: What could we (CWELL students and you, the community) do to act on that vision to make it a reality?

Community Gathering
To get your vision of what our community, King's Island, could be

January 20th 7-9pm
The Absolute Hotel

This invitation is from; your friend/ neighbour/ family / Cwell students
All welcome
Tea/coffee, spot prizes

This is people in King's Island doing it for Kings' Island



CWELL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY – PROPOSED STUDENT PROJECTS

Set up an Outdoor Physical Activity Area in St. Marys Community

Project team members: Samantha Roche, Deirdre O' Driscoll, Gerardine Quinlivan & Anne Kiely

Establish a Parent, baby & toddler activity group

Project team members: Elaine Mc donnell, Bridget Cropper and tracey Lyons.

Develop Community Allotments in St. Marys Parish

Project team members: Majella Cosgrove, Gary Hyland and Christy Flanagan

NATIONAL AWARD WINNERS

In May 2014 the CWELL project was sponsored by Limerick City and County Council as an entrant to IPB All-Island Pride of Place Competition. The IPB Pride of Place Awards in association with Co-operation Ireland is an all-island competition that acknowledges the work that communities are doing all over the island of Ireland. The Diploma in Community Wellness Empowerment Leadership & Life Skills (CWELL) received a Special Award at the IPB Pride of Place Awards ceremony on the 15th November in Ennis, Co Clare.



The Judging panel paid tribute to the “uniqueness of the project, designed by the residents of St Mary’s Community in consultation with the University of Limerick. The overall objective of the programme is to improve the wellbeing of a disadvantaged area and promoting healthier lifestyles for the residents of the community. While it is early days of the project the judges concur that “it will be interesting to see the evaluation results when the project is completed in December 2015.”

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE PRESENTATION

Two members of the CWELL management team, Bernie Quillinan and Geraldine Reidy, have been invited to present the CWELL programme at the Community-Campus Partnerships for Health's 13th international conference, entitled "From Rhetoric to Reality: Achieving Authentic, Equitable & Transformative Partnerships"

Community-Campus Partnerships for Health (CCPH) is an organization that promotes health equity and social justice through partnerships between communities and academic institutions. Health is viewed broadly as physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being. Their presentation was entitled Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life skills (CWELL) – A Community-University partnership approach to programme development and implementation. This conference provided a dynamic forum to learn about skills and strategies used by others working in the international field of community health and well-being in the area of education and research.

Members of the CWELL team were also selected by public vote to present at the Institute of Public Health: Open Conference in the Titanic Belfast, on the 14th October 2014.

NATIONAL NETWORKING

At a landmark event in Dublin Castle on June 16th Presidents of Higher Education Institutions came together as leaders of higher education in Ireland, to publicly sign up to the 10 point Campus Engage Charter on Civic and Community Engagement. Under the charter the presidents underscore their commitment to the civic and community engagement role and responsibilities of their institutions.

The launch of an Irish Charter for Civic and Community Engagement builds on the pioneering actions taken by other countries including Australia, UK and the US, who have signed up to similar agreements at national level to support and strengthen the civic role and responsibilities of higher education.

Pictured at the launch of the Campus Engage Charter on Civic and Community Engagement, Minister for Education and Skills, Mr Ruairi Quinn TD with Elaine McDonnell, Student, University of Limerick and Geraldine Reidy, Co-Leader of the CWELL Programme, St Mary's Community, Limerick. Representatives of CWELL were invited to attend the launch. The programme was highlighted as an example of good practice of campus-community partnership in action.



CWELL – SUPPORTED BY HEALTHY IRELAND

UL's Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL) has been awarded the Healthy Ireland mark. Healthy Ireland is a new national framework for action to improve the health and wellbeing of our country over the coming generation. Healthy Ireland sets out four central goals for our health and wellbeing, and clear routes and strategies to achieve these goals, in which all people and all parts of our society can participate.



EXTERNAL EXAMINER

Dr. Beth Mc Kay is appointed as external examiner for the CWELL programme. Dr Beth Mc Kay is a Reader in the Division of Occupational Therapy at Brunel University in the United Kingdom. Dr Mc Kay has also experience in engaging in community health and well-being

External examiners are appointed as independent and impartial advisers by Academic Council to:

Consider whether or not the academic standard attained by a student is at the appropriate level for the grade or award recommended by the Examination Board for that student.

Review assessment methods and student performance and advise Academic Council whether or not students' attainment of the programme's learning outcomes has been fairly assessed.

Consider whether or not the programme of study meets the professional requirements of the discipline.

Provide a formal annual report to the University on how the programme and student attainment compares with accepted standards in the particular discipline.

Dr Mc Kay has met with students, lecturers and stakeholders to review the programme on three occasions in May 2014, December 2014 and June 2015.

FUNDING AND RESOURCES

Funding and resources to support the CWELL programme have been provided by:-

- Limerick City and County Council through Limerick Regeneration Social Intervention Fund (2013, 2014).
- Student fees have been supported by the following: Limerick City Community Development Project, St. Munchin's Community Centre, Kileely Court, Limerick, St Marys Adult Education, Limerick and Canon O'Malley, St. Marys Parish
- Programmes resources, teaching and student support structures are provided by the University of Limerick

2.0 AIMS/OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAMME

The aim of the programme is to bring together community partners, university staff and students, to help you address community health issues, through a range of educational interventions. It will enhance your existing strengths and develop your confidence and leadership skills, enabling you to contribute to improving the quality of life for you and your families and the creation of healthier communities. The programme structure will focus on three areas, (i) Mental health, (ii) physical health and (iii) personal and professional development. Within each of these areas, health and well-being issues related to the young person, middle age and older person will be addressed.

3.0 LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME

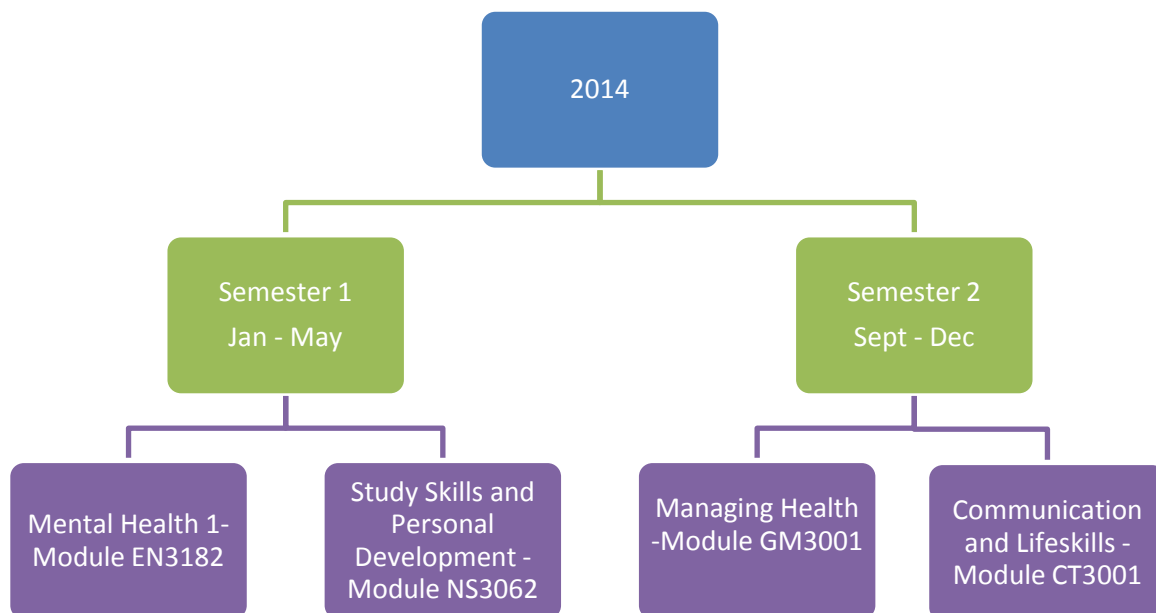
On completion of the programme the student will be able to:

- Identify life style choices that contribute to well-being and health across the lifespan.
- Demonstrate capacity to bring experience and knowledge to bear on real societal problems and challenges related to health and well-being.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the key principles of a healthy lifestyle
- Acquire the skills to explore new possibilities and opportunities to attain better health outcomes.
- Develop and apply activities conducive to positive health in a family/community setting.
- Demonstrate competence in written, verbal and digital communication skills at individual and collaborative levels
- Develop skills in reflection, creative and critical thinking, fostering personal and professional growth
- Participate in activities/projects which benefit health and well-being based on their own identified needs.
- Demonstrate an appreciation of the need to work collaboratively and accommodate diversity and difference.
- Demonstrate effective communication knowledge and skills to work effectively as a team member within a community setting
- Practice skills in reflection, enquiry, problem solving, creative and critical thinking in order to enhance interpersonal and professional growth.
- Demonstrate a commitment to the continuous development of own skills and learning and the ambition to drive improvements and positive change in the area of well-being and health.
- Demonstrate the ability to undertake independent learning activities

- Ascertain the issues within the local community which affect well-being and explore ways in which they can be addressed.
- Initiate a responsible, civically aware and engaged approach to actions orientated towards making positive contributions to healthier lifestyles within family and community settings.
- Demonstrate the ability to convey ideas clearly and effectively to a range of different stakeholders.

Year One

All modules are required modules. The first year will consist of four modules of lectures/seminars, practical assignments, and workshops/role-plays. The modules will run consecutively with two during semester one and two during semester two. Project or field work through practical application of knowledge will form part of each module. The modules will be closely integrated and each will support the other.



SEMESTER ONE MODULES

MODULE EN3182 - MENTAL HEALTH 1: WELL-BEING AND POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH ACROSS THE LIFESPAN

In this module, students will learn about the factors (e.g., psychological and social) associated with well-being and mental health problems over the life course from childhood to old age. An experiential and reflective approach will be fostered where students will explore different definitions of wellbeing, 'normal' mental health and common mental health problems. An overview of mental health and its features and factors which impact on mental health will be addressed including the negative effects of stigma and discrimination. Ways to reduce risks of developing mental illness will be explored. Social and community factors associated with the promotion of well-being and positive mental health will also be explored.

MODULE NS3062 - STUDY SKILLS AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The student will be supported to apply the skills-set acquired, which will include writing skills; oral presentation skills; Creating a portfolio; Preparing for PowerPoint presentations; Profiling different learning styles e.g. mind mapping, reflective logs; Learning to read academically i.e. scanning/skimming. The student will learn academic reading; note-taking; effective use of lectures and tutorials; basic research skills, and using sources of information. Students will learn about the conventions for writing academic assignments: argumentation, planning an essay, referencing as well as reflecting on the learning experience. Personal development will include career decision-making and preparation; the Job Search Process; Identifying and securing employment opportunities; CV Preparation including online job-hunting; Interview Preparation & Interview Techniques; Guidelines on CV applications & Cover Letter; Introduction to Interview skills. Managing finances, financial planning and budgeting will also be covered.

SEMESTER TWO MODULES

MODULE GM3001 - MANAGING HEALTH IN THE HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Students will learn about lifestyle choices and health, including: diet, physical activity, smoking, and substance use. Specific issues affecting physical health for particular groups and at various life stages will be considered including: child health, adolescent health, women's health, men's health and aging. Factors that impact on the health of people with

chronic illness and on their families and communities will be explored, including coping with reduced independence. Students will learn about the role and specific needs of the carer in managing someone with chronic illness. Students will develop skills in looking after an individual in an emergency situation (First Aid, Basic life Support/ Cardiac first response), injury prevention.

MODULE CT3001 - COMMUNICATION AND LIFE-SKILLS

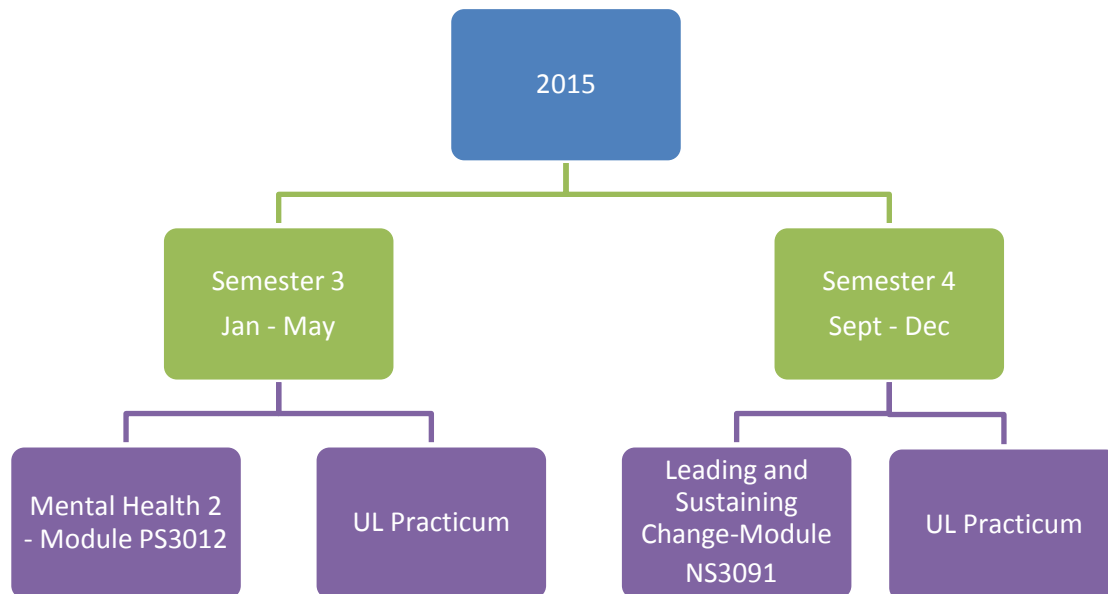
In this module students will learn about life skills, human communication, group theory and conflict. Students will have opportunities to develop skills in assertive communication, conflict resolution, team working, group facilitation, peer education, time management and decision making. Students will learn about the relationship between psychosocial competencies (self-awareness, self-esteem) and interpersonal relationships.

PROGRAMME OUTLINE

YEAR TWO

The second year of study will reflect the previous method of course delivery while the remaining module in semester one and semester two will be Practicum Module 1 and Practicum Module 2 respectively. In this regard, students will have an opportunity to undertake service learning as an integrated programme component.

Integrating service-learning through academic credit-bearing programmes can make the programmes more effective and meaningful because they can have a major effect not only on the target population, but also on other populations in the community. Such projects encourage students to apply what they have learned in the classroom in real-world settings.



SEMESTER THREE

MODULE PS3012 - MENTAL HEALTH 2: PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT

In this module, students will learn about the theoretical foundations underlying the management and treatment of mental health problems. For this, the role of social, psychological and biological factors in the prevention, management and treatment (e.g., social support and psychological resilience, cognition, attribution, stress-management, genetics, disease, brain anatomy and neurochemistry) of mental health will be taught to students. An experiential and critical reflective approach will be developed in students where they will explore the most effective methods of applying preventive and treatment measures to reduce the burden associated with mental health and to foster positive mental health.

U.L PRACTICUM 1

This module will focus on practical work. It will provide students with practical experience, generic skills development (such as applied research work, team work, problem-solving and project work) as well as the experience of being part of a multi- or inter- disciplinary team. It will enable them to apply the disciplinary knowledge that they have learnt to multi-faceted real-world problems. Students will: take part in problem identification and ideation; develop a deeper understanding of academic issues areas and problems in consultation with external

stakeholders; work towards solutions in collaboration; implement identified changes and evaluate outcomes. A reflective practice will underpin the student experience throughout.

SEMESTER FOUR

MODULE NS3091 - LEADING AND SUSTAINING CHANGE IN THE COMMUNITY

In this module students will learn about psychological and social theories of relevance to leadership, leadership styles, and the contexts where leadership occurs. Students will have opportunities to reflect on and develop their own leadership skills (e.g. conducting effective meetings, group facilitation, negotiation skills, needs analysis, community profiling). Students will learn about the benefits and challenges of community leadership and the qualities of effective community leaders. This module will include the principles of teamwork, and factors which may impede or facilitate change. Implementing change, project planning, implementation and evaluation will be addressed, along with supervision and delegation.

UL PRACTICUM 2

This module will focus on practical work. It will provide students with practical experience, generic skills development (such as applied research work, team work, problem-solving and project work) as well as the experience of being part of a multi- or inter- disciplinary team. It will enable them to apply the disciplinary knowledge that they have learnt to multi-faceted real-world problems. Students will: take part in problem identification and ideation; develop a deeper understanding of academic issues areas and problems in consultation with external stakeholders; work towards solutions in collaboration; implement identified changes and evaluate outcomes. A reflective practice will underpin the student experience throughout.

LEARNING, TEACHING AND ASSESSMENT APPROACHES

The programme provides a balance between structure and flexibility in the learning process, encouraging discussion and the fostering of opportunities for students to develop knowledge, understanding and critical thinking for application to practice. A full range of interactive strategies are used across the delivery of the programme. Lecturers will make students aware of the method that attaches to a given course.

These may include lectures, seminars, peer presentations, tutorials, small group teaching, enquiry based learning, problem based learning, observations, student-led sessions, role-play, workshops, online learning, audio-visual, interactive teaching and learning modalities and tutorial sessions.

Examples of these include all or some of the following:

- ◆ Community based activities
- ◆ projects and investigations
- ◆ Presentations
- ◆ multiple choice and other objective tests
- ◆ oral assessment
- ◆ realistic or problem-solving tasks
- ◆ assessment based on simulations or role play
- ◆ computer-assisted assessment
- ◆ portfolios and profiles
- ◆ negotiated assignments and learning contracts
- ◆ group assignments
- ◆ self, peer and co-assessment



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UL PRACTICUM
Building Research & Learning Communities

What is the UL Practicum?

The UL Practicum provides curriculum based accredited learning that deploys academic expertise in response to identified community needs, in the context of applied community projects, designed and implemented by collaborative teams comprising UL staff, community partners and students.

Who is eligible to undertake a practicum module?

Undergraduate and Postgraduate Students are eligible, in accordance with your home university's pre-existing course requirements. Details of our current projects are available overleaf. All UL Practicum placements carry 6ECTS credit weighting.



PART ONE PROJECT SET UP	PART TWO: PROJECT PLACEMENT	PART THREE: EVALUATION
Community oriented research principles and practice, training for team-building and collaborative work, project planning and project management	Curriculum based learning outside the university. Project fieldwork, carried out under the direction of the responsible academic for the project.	Reflective evaluation of the project outputs and process, recording insights and learning from the project.



I met a lot of interesting people, and I realized the people here are much more global than the United States because people from all over the world come to study here"
Ryan Franco, NJ, USA



The Practicum experience has without a doubt positively shaped my time in Ireland. The people I have met and the opportunities I have had because of Practicum have made me a better student, a better teacher, and above all, a better person".

Sadie Scibo, Chicago, April 2014

Current Practicum Projects

(all student placements 6 ECTS)

Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills

The CWELL project brings together community partners, university staff from education and health sciences and students through practice-based, educational activities to work collaboratively and build capacity in well-being and lifestyle education within the local community

Find us on Facebook,
watch us at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqjg-



Irish Identities, Immigration and Integration

This project works in collaboration with local immigrant groups. The aim is to identify what it is 'to be Irish' as understood by established immigrants. Practicum students will gain experience carrying out focus groups and doing interview work.

For an idea of what its about look at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MqxuCcDj_U

Voting Advice Application (VAA)

A VAA provides a short political quiz to ascertain your values and then positions you in relation to the values of all election candidates. VAAs can be used in national, local or European elections. This project works in collaboration with the Department of Politics and the *Irish Times* newspaper to provide information about political candidates to Irish voters. Practicum students on this project are involved in data collection, analysis and interview work with Irish politicians.

To find out more, look at: http://www.thejournal.ie/whichcandidate-limerick-voting-ul-1466331-May2014/?utm_source=shortlink



PRACTICUM STUDENT VOICES:

"Coming to Ireland has been one of the best choices I've made" *Michele Wright, McMaster University, Canada*

"I really enjoyed my time at UL—I've had the opportunity to travel to so many great places",
Anna McGill, East Tennessee State University, USA

**Peer mentoring – Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment,
Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL)
A community-university partnership model**

ECTS Weighting: 6 ECTS credits

Practicum Partners: EHS, UL and St Mary's Community, Limerick City

Academic Contact: Bernie Quillinan. E-Mail: Bernie.quillinan@ul.ie

Practicum Student Placements on this project: Four

Course Code: BR4304

Course Title: SPRING PRACTICUM

Introduction

The UL Practicum enables students to engage in faculty-designed bespoke research projects and civic engagement in collaboration with external community partners. Drawing upon the practical experiences gained in the community projects engaged in by staff at the department of politics and public administration and other like-minded initiatives in other departments and faculties, the UL Practicum is conceived of as mechanism by which staff and students across all of the university (ie in cross-disciplinary teams and projects) may: engage with practical problems; build the core values of the institution; communicate the relevance of university research; and transform learning.

Aims and Objectives

This module will provide students with practical experience, generic skills development (such as applied research work, team work, problem-solving and project work) as well as the experience of being part of a multi- or inter- disciplinary team. It will enable them to apply the disciplinary knowledge that they have learnt to multi-faceted real-world problems. Students will: take part in problem identification and ideation; develop a deeper understanding of academic issues areas and problems in consultation with external stakeholders; work towards solutions in collaboration; implement identified changes and evaluate outcomes. A reflective practice will underpin the student experience throughout.

Learning outcomes

- Develop the capacity to apply curriculum-based knowledge in a real-world setting.
- Develop competence to work effectively as a member of a multi-disciplinary team in collaboration with external community stake-holders
- Develop project work and problem solving skills
- Develop competence in conveying ideas clearly and effectively to a range of different stake-holders in different organizational and/or community or cultural settings

contexts.

- Explore issues of social responsibility, ethical practice and in sustainable community contexts.
- Develop the capacity to see new opportunities to address commonly identified issues/problems within the community
- Recognize the capacity of those outside their own area of expertise to deliver their own professional and/or experiential expertise into collaborative project work.

Course Structure

The programme comprises three key parts. The first part is preparatory and taken prior to the on-site project component; the second part comprises the project placement and associated practical and academic work; the third part is a mandatory *ex-ante* evaluation of the project by all partners to the work. Parts one and three are completed by academics, community partners and students together, in order to frame the project as a collaborative and collective initiative between equally valued and alternatively skilled partners. One to one supervision of the project work is carried out by the responsible academic for your project. The involvement of your Practicum Partners is contingent on the parameters of each individual Practicum Project and negotiated during the first part of the course in the general project set up.

PART ONE PROJECT SET UP	PART TWO: PROJECT PLACEMENT	PART THREE: EVALUATION
Community oriented research principles and practice, training for team-building and collaborative work, project planning and project management	Curriculum based learning outside the university. Project fieldwork, carried out under the direction of the responsible academic for the project.	Reflective evaluation of the project outputs and process, recording insights and learning from the project.

UL Practicum ‘Lectures’

The UL Practicum Programme brings together all project partners at the beginning of the project in order to foster a collaborative and cooperative partnership, which supports student autonomy and responsibility, enables the setting of realistic expectations for project outputs and outcomes, and provides an opportunity to negotiate the ways in which the project outputs will be delivered and disseminated in academic and non-academic forums and fora. A joint project evaluation at the end of the UL Practicum provides an opportunity for reflection about the lessons that have been learned, and the outputs that have been achieved.

Generic training for UL Practicum projects is provided throughout the project.

UL Practicum ‘Tutorials’

All UL Practicum students are invited to weekly meetings in order to keep in touch with other UL Practicum class mates; to share experiences and/or insights into collaborative partnerships; and to raise any issues of concern to students.

COURSE OUTLINE

The generic training and evaluation elements of this module are contained in Appendix One to this syllabus.

CWELL Practicum Project Overview: Peer mentoring – Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL). A community-university partnership model

Worldwide, higher education institutes are increasingly being asked to foster wider social roles through public and community engagement (HEFCE, 2008; HEA, 2011). At the European level, the EU Commission (CEC, 2006) refers to the need for universities to communicate the relevance of their activities by sharing knowledge with society and by reinforcing dialogue with all stakeholders. Nationally, the Hunt Report is the first major policy statement to give civic engagement equal prominence with the teaching/learning and research functions of higher education. According to this strategy, engagement with the wider community must become more firmly embedded in the social and economic contexts of the communities they live in and serve (HEA, 2011). Integrating health within strategies to improve community wellbeing is also well recognised. In the Report Evaluation of the Building Healthy Communities Programme (Combat Poverty Agency, 2008) the need to promote the principles and practice of community development in improving health and well-being for disadvantaged communities, and to explore mechanisms for effective, meaningful and sustainable community participation in decision-making related to health is identified. A number of reports local to the Limerick region highlight the need for community education initiatives in skills/strategies to improve health outcomes. These reports include, *Addressing issues of Social Exclusion in Moyross and other disadvantaged areas of Limerick City* (Fitzgerald, 2007), *A Vision for Moyross, Southill / Ballinacurra Weston and St. Mary's Park. Limerick* (Blackett / Limerick Regeneration Agency, 2008), *The Social Value of Community-Based Adult Education in Limerick City* (LCEN, LCAES and Limerick Regeneration Agency, 2011) and *How Are Our Kids? Experiences and Needs of Children and Families in Limerick City with a Particular Emphasis on Limerick's Regeneration Areas* (IKOS & MIC, 2012).

The overall aim of the CWELL programme is to proactively address community health issues in a way that the building of healthy partnerships enhances existing strengths, fosters community resilience and leadership, contributing towards improving quality of life and the creation of healthy and sustainable communities.

In November 2013, the Diploma programme Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills (CWELL), developed by the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences in the University of Limerick, in conjunction with St. Mary's Community, an underserved area, in Limerick City, evolved to enable both the community and UL staff and students to work collaboratively and build capacity in well-being and lifestyle education within the local community. The aim of the Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life skills (CWELL) programme is that St. Mary's community will be empowered through education, to better contribute to their own well-being and healthier life-styles. This project will bring together community partners, university staff and students through practice-based, educational activities to work collaboratively and build capacity in well-being and lifestyle education within the local community,

The CWELL programme requires a shared understanding about learning, knowledge acquisition and skill development. The underpinning pedagogical approaches are based on deep learning (Nelson Laird et al., 2008), inventive design (Heard, 2014) and a 'Community of Practice' model (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998).

Student's Role and Responsibilities

Through the practicum module, this programme will incorporate opportunities for other University students (Local/National//International) to support CWELL participants to bring their practical projects to fruition within the community setting.

Students on this Practicum project will be tasked with developing and recording a system of peer mentoring for students undertaking community based education.

In addition to the practical support provided by the Practicum students to Community learners, this project will produce valuable data on the learning needs and support requirements of the students undertaking this pilot programme. This work will provide the foundation for a student mentorship model for community learners from disadvantaged areas, which will inform future university practice.

Students will be involved with the delivery / servicing of the programme and by association gain invaluable experience and insight into the local community needs and resources. In addition, this module will provide a learning environment in which our students will be enabled to acquire and display graduate attributes that have been linked to employability and considered by employers as crucial for graduates entering careers in any field.

Activities will involve practical on-the-ground engagement with students from disadvantaged communities on the CWELL programme.

There are a number of elements to this:

- Provide the practical on the ground mentoring supports to student on the CWELL programme
- Contribute to the communication process Re: sharing information on relevant aspects of the CWELL programme with the wider community

Investigate opportunities within the local community (through voluntary organizations, support groups and networks etc.) for practical projects that may be undertaken by CWELL students in the course of their programme.

ASSESSMENT

You are required to submit an in depth analysis whereby you critically reflect on your experiences (focusing on the activities you were involved in), drawing on literature to support and demonstrate personal development (1,500 words+/- 10%).

Aim

The aim of the assignment is to provide the student with an opportunity to demonstrate reflective critical thinking, in relation to analysing experiences from their practicum placement, informed by literature, demonstrating **personal** and professional development.

Reflection is described as a purposeful activity that moves from description through analysis towards transformation. Reflection begins with revisiting an experience with openness, exploring the influences in how and why things happened the way that they did. Such a process aims to empower the individual to look beyond each experience with insight towards doing things in a better way. In this manner, the past informs the present going beyond the experience and guiding future personal and professional development. Johns (2013) suggests reflection helps in the development of a vision for practice enabling learning through the challenges in the world of practice. Reflective frameworks assist in this learning process.

Repeat Exam

Students who fail this module will not be eligible for a repeat exam. Students who fail a UL Practicum must repeat an alternative elective module offered by the university, subject to their own course board / home university approval.

Practicum Evaluation

At the end of your placement, you will be requested to complete an evaluation form on your practicum experience.

Our community partners will complete a final placement evaluation form on your contribution.

Initial Reading:

- Quillinan, B., Reidy, G. (2014) Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills (CWELL). Progress Report.
- Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills (CWELL) Programme Handbook for Students, 2014/2015 CWELL

- Diploma in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Life Skills (CWELL) Induction Booklet for Students, 2014/2015
- Principles of CWELL

For an overview of this project go to:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/cwellprogramme

Twitter: [@CWELLProgramme](https://twitter.com/CWELLProgramme)

Blog: <http://cwellblog.wordpress.com/>

Website: <http://www.ul.ie/ehs/diploma-community-wellness-empowerment-leadership-and-lifeskills-cwell>

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Johns ,C. (2013) *Becoming a Reflective Practitioner* 4th Ed Oxford: Wiley Blackwell

Lave, J. and Wenger, E. (1991) *Situated Learning: legitimate peripheral participation*, Cambridge, Cambridge Community Press.



In this Issue:

Student Spotlight:
Garry Hyland

CWELL Expresses Gratitude

Meet the team:
CWELL Contributors

CWELL Launch

Some of you might remember that **Meg Callan** all the way back in November, King John's Castle hosted the first official CWELL Launch. Guests were greeted at the door by lively music from the Tin Whistle Group who practice in St. Mary's CDP House and from there made their way to a packed room of visitors who came out to support the CWELL programme.

The keynote speakers of the night were Minister for Housing Jan O'Sullivan and Co-Directors Bernie Quillinan and St. Mary's own Geraldine Reidy. These passionate speakers expressed the important link between the CWELL programme and St. Mary's Park region.

On the 13th of January, the applicants who were successful in applying for the CWELL course came together for the first time as a group for a coffee evening. The students got to meet their classmates, their course directors, the research assistant and one of the student supports. There were ideas galore coming from the students on some of the potential projects they could undertake in the community.

The next week, all of the new students got the bus out to the University of Limerick for an Orientation Day. Although they don't have any classes on campus this semester, they will attend classes there in the future.

After everyone received their Student ID cards it began to finally sink in that they were actually UL students. It was a busy day and there was a lot to take in, but by the end everyone was very excited to get down to work for class the following Monday night.



Leaders of the CWELL Program pose for a photo at the Launch in King John's Castle.

Special Thanks to...

The CWELL project management team wish to acknowledge the tremendous support of individuals and organisations who help us continue in our mission to deliver a Diploma programme in Community Wellness, Empowerment, Leadership and Lifeskills. The programme aims to bring together St Marys community, university staff and students through practice-based, educational activities to work collaboratively and build capacity in well-being and lifestyle education within a local community.

The programme structure focuses on three areas, mental health, physical health and personal and professional development. Within each of these areas, health and well-being issues related to the young person, middle age and

older person are addressed. Specifically, the programme participants will be empowered through education, to better contribute to the promotion of health and well-being within the community.

In particular, a note of thanks to Limerick City Community Development Project (CDP), St. Marys Adult Education Centre, Limerick City and County Council, King's Island Youth and Community Centre, Northside Regeneration, Canon O'Malley of St. Mary's parish, Limerick and Kerry and Ken Gorman, University of Limerick. We are grateful to you all for your enthusiastic assistance which enables us to continue our work with St Marys Community.

Student Spotlight: Garry Hyland

Raychel Steven
Staff Writer

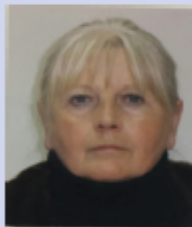
Garry is one of fifteen students in their first semester of the CWELL diploma programme. He is from St. Mary's and originally left school at age 12. He saw this course as a first step to bettering himself through education. When other people told Garry he couldn't do it, he knew that just wasn't true and he is here to prove it. Garry is very committed to completing this course which he describes as "hard, but very enjoyable." According to Garry, the most difficult part of the course so far has been the essay he is currently writing. He finds a great deal of his motivation comes from knowing he is able to make some-



Garry Hyland hard at work taking notes during Monday class.

thing of himself despite what anyone else might think. At the end of the day, when he's got his diploma in his hand he knows he will have the satisfaction of saying "I told you I could do it," to everyone who told he that he would never be anything. Garry believes this programme can have an effect on the whole St. Mary's community as well and that hopefully his success and willingness to get involved will show others that they can join in the learning no matter what their story may be. Garry is also looking forward to the next steps in his education after the diploma, there are many options once you get started. Garry's final words to the community were, "If I can do it, anyone can do it."

CWELL Contributors



Geraldine Reidy:

As a community activist working alongside with Conor Carmody and Carmel Duggan we welcomed the arrival of the CWELL programme to our community.

It is a unique opportunity to have the university at our doorstep. Working alongside University of Limerick staff and Limerick City CDP a programme was developed to meet the needs of

the people in St. Mary's. These requirements were defined by local people through focus group meetings, with the focal points being positive mental health, physical health and personal development across the lifespan.

Being a new project it has been a challenging time for all involved from the development to the delivery of the programme. The participants are close to finishing their first semester and although many challenges have arisen during the semester the students and the project management group have worked hard to overcome them.



Mary O'Sullivan:

I grew up in the parish from age 10 years and went to St. Marys Secondary School just off Nicholas Street and still have ties to the parish today. My aunt Laura and her family lived on the Island Road for many decades and I passed her house daily on my way to school. She now lives across the road from St. Mary's church. We lived in Corbally and I am a long time supporter of the Athlunkard Rowing Club. I want to see that the people of St. Mary's thrive and I think the students

on this programme have a deep commitment to that goal also. My vision for the programme is that students will be successful and use their skills in support of their own development and to benefit one or more groups in the community. The students will encourage others to get engaged in their community and show that with work and commitment you can further your education and help your community. St. Mary's has a deep history and I would like to see it have a great future.

Professor Mary O'Sullivan is the Dean of the Faculty of Education and Health Sciences at the University of Limerick. She is a Professor in the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at UL.

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