



Case Study G: Fun and Laughter in Professional Development

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Pilot Group: **Participants from the PG Cert in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education**

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Professional Identity Group & Context

An invitation was sent to all (32) current participants in the PG Cert programme to become involved in the PDF pilot. Seven members of academic staff responded, from various academic disciplines: Engineering, Gaeilge, Medicine, Humanities, Business, Sociology & Political Studies.

The aim was to investigate how the PG Cert and the PDF could support each other and where the overlaps appear.

Approach taken by professional identity group to support the implementation of the PDF

Following the Kickstart workshop, the group agreed to meet every second week for one hour. We also agreed to look at each of the domains in turn, one per week.

The group gelled very quickly, although they didn't all know each other in advance, they had a common experience through the PG Cert which meant that they bonded very quickly. Working through the PDF, on top of the coursework for the PG Cert, although there were some overlaps, meant that the sessions were very intense. In contrast to the formal programme though, there were no formal deliverables or assignments. This brought an element of levity to discussions and participants were more able to relax and discuss in a supportive and informal environment. In particular, we found that we could laugh at our common experiences, using the sessions almost like therapy.

One participant in the group is a trained leader in Lego Serious Play (LSP) and she suggested running a LSP session to facilitate reflection – in particular for the first domain, the Self. This turned out to be a revelation for us all. Through building our environment in Lego, and then discussing our models in the safe space of the group, some very deep reflection was achieved.

We also organised a half day writing workshop, led by the participants. This was a simple matter of providing a room, and each member of the group brought along a laptop to work on their PDPs (Professional Development Portfolio).

Each person used their own preferred method to capture evidence for the portfolio, with some quite creative results. Nearing the end of the pilot, we shared some of these.

Enablers and challenges

The key enabler of this group was the friendship that developed between the participants, which brought and kept them together. Each member had already committed to the PG Cert in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education, but they further engaged with the PDF because they enjoyed coming together for further discussion and sharing of experiences.



Having the Lego Serious Play workshops were a great bonding activity for the group, encouraging a playful and creative atmosphere. Common themes were identified very quickly and each person was encouraged to talk about their values, approaches and challenges in relation to teaching.

The challenge for us all was time, but the members of the group had already put aside dedicated time for the PG Cert, so this was seen as part of the commitment to professional development.

In future it is likely that some of the PDF activities will be brought into the PG Cert programme, rather than running separate schemes.

Impact

The members of this group are now all champions of the PDF and, where possible, have continued to meet both socially and in relation to further professional development activities. Moreover, they have each indicated that they are willing to act as mentors for colleagues who would like to start working with the framework.