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<td>Author(s)</td>
<td>Higgins, Mary</td>
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<td>Publication Date</td>
<td>2015-11-23</td>
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<td>Item record</td>
<td><a href="http://hdl.handle.net/10379/5351">http://hdl.handle.net/10379/5351</a></td>
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APPLIED LEARNING
A Design Model for Further Education
in the 21st Century

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A thesis presented to the
National University of Ireland Galway
in fulfilment of the requirement for the award of
PhD (Learning Sciences)

School of Education
NUI Galway

July 2015
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AACES – Authenticity, Aestheticity, Creativity, Engagement, Sociality
AERA – American Educational Research Association
AL – Applied Learning
CALHE – Conference of Applied Learning in Higher Education
CAP – Course Assessment Planner
CAS – Common Awards System
CIBTAC – Confederation of International Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology
C&G – City and Guilds
DBR – Design-based Research
DES – Department of Education & Skills
ECDL – European Computer Driving Licence
EQF – European Qualification Framework
ESRI – Economic & Social Research Institute
FE – Further Education
FEI – Further Education Institute
FET – Further Education and Training
FETAC – Further Education and Training Awards Council
HET – Higher Education and Training
HETAC – Higher Education and Training Awards Council
ISLS – International Society of the Learning Sciences
ITEC – International Therapy Examination Council
IUQB – Irish Universities Qualifications Board
LS – Learning Sciences
MAP – Module Assessment Planner
NCVA – National Council for Vocational Awards
NFQ – National Framework for Qualifications
NQAI – National Qualifications Authority Ireland
PAL – Project for Applied Learning
PLC — Post Leaving Certificate Course
QQI – Quality & Qualifications Ireland
SEC – State Examination Commission
TAFE – Technical and Further Education
TCI – Teaching Council of Ireland
VCAA – Victorian Curriculum & Assessment Authority
VCAL – Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning
VCE – Victorian Certificate of Education
SLO – Single Learning Outcome
DECLARATION

I, the Candidate, certify that the work in this thesis is to the best of my knowledge and belief all my own work. I have not obtained a degree in this University or elsewhere on the basis of any of this work.

Mary Higgins
Student ID: 78900263
July 2015
ABSTRACT

Undertaken over four years, this research was both an investigation of the adoption of an applied learning approach for further education (FE) course delivery in the 21st century, and the development of an educational model that could be adopted by other, cognate FE learning institutions and organisations. An Irish further education college, its course offerings and teaching approaches provided the empirical context for this practitioner design-based research (DBR).

Learners, teachers and outside collaborating agencies and work experience providers acted as the principal design informants and participants for three iterative cycles of design-based research. Data were derived through observations, questionnaires, interviews and recordings of applied learning activities, both within the college, in classrooms and in specifically designed working environments, as well as in the wider community outside of the college including various workplaces.

Informed by a literature and policy review and the researcher’s own professional biography and experience as an educator in the college under study, an initial conceptual model of an applied learning environment for 21st century learning was developed. This AACES framework was based on five key design principles, including: authenticity, aestheticity, creativity, engagement and sociality. These principles provided the framework for identification and classification of applied learning activities within the college into five major operational types – Mobility Abroad for Knowledge and Experience (MAKE), Work Experience (WEXP), Collaborative Applied Learning Events (CALE), Real Environment Learning and Working (RELW) and Award Integration – Delivery and Assessment (AIDA). Along with the overarching AACES design principles, these activities provided the scaffolding for a rigorous, iterative, design process of three DBR research cycles. Cycle 1 of the study focused on three of the identified types of applied learning (MAKE, RELW and CALE) with 12 different award groups (approximately 200 students). Cycle 2 included a further type of applied learning (AIDA) with the
number of different award groups increasing to 19 (approximately 340 students). The final design cycle included all identified types of applied learning and involved 24 groups (approximately 430 students).

Corroboration of the elements of an applied learning environment through the design cycles together with the consideration of 21st century skills, informed the design, development and implementation of a robust model for applied learning in an FE college. The AACES principles and related andragogical activities: MAKE, CALE, RELW, WEXP and AIDA are now part of a maturing intervention in the school, which has sustained and developed beyond the lifecycle of this research, and continues to enhance significantly the ‘learning-by-doing’ ethos of the FE college. This research has demonstrated how applied learning can be deployed across an entire further education college, to augment students’ learning experience and teachers’ application of innovative andragogical practice. Using a similar, iterative DBR process, the AACES model can be adopted and adapted by other interested FE practitioners to augment their students’ engagement in 21st century learning, subject to the particularities and requirements of their respective educational contexts and settings.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Introduction

This thesis describes a research study in the field of practitioner design-based research (DBR), which has emerged as a predominant methodology for the development of models of innovative, transformative practice in ‘educational design disciplines’ such as the Learning Sciences (LS) and Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning (CSCL) (Stahl, 2014). This introduction provides the background to the study and the circumstances prompting its undertaking. Specifically, the study looks at the implementation of an applied learning (AL) approach by a vocational educational training (VET) provider in a Further Education (FE) college in Ireland to the delivery of its programmes. It examines how the college adapts to meet the challenge it has set itself of adopting this approach, through the use of experiential and problem-based learning, IT technology and media, amongst other interventions, while at the same time attempting to provide the students with 21st century skills and competencies, a necessity in this rapidly changing, technological world as indicated by P21 – The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2015). As is typical of research outputs in DBR, in addition to an effective locally deployable intervention, the development of a robust, transferrable model for AL in the FE sector is a key objective.

In this chapter, a definition of 21st century learning is followed by a consideration of ‘applied learning’ and the different educational contexts in which the term is used, and specifically the meaning of the term in the college where the research was undertaken. An introductory explanation of the Irish education system identifying the further education sector situates the research.

The 21st century challenge for students and educators is the topic of the next section and the chapter summary outlines the structure of this research undertaken in the quest to develop a model of AL for the FE sector.
1.2 Learning in the 21st Century

The 21st century is a time of rapid technological and global change and students need to be equipped with 21st century skills and be able to deal with these changes. According to Wagner (n.d. (b), p.3) ‘Effective communication, curiosity, and critical thinking skills ... are much more than just the traditional desirable outcomes of a liberal arts education. They are essential competencies and habits of mind for life in the 21st century’. The idea of acquiring a particular skill for a particular job that will provide an income for the rest of a person’s life is no longer a reality. Darling-Hammond (2010, p.33) indicates:

The notion that we could take all of the facts that a person needs to know, divide them into twelve years of schooling, and learn those facts and be done does not clearly equip young people for the future. Twenty-first century students need a deeper understanding of the core concepts in the disciplines than they receive now. In addition, students need to be able to design, evaluate, and manage their own work. Students need to be able to frame, investigate and solve problems using a wide range of information resources and digital tools.

Kay (2010, p.xx) comments that ‘[w]ith 21st century skills, students will be prepared to think, learn, work, solve problems, communicate, collaborate and contribute effectively throughout their lives’.

‘21st-century learning’, ‘21st-century skills’, ‘21st-century learners’ are just some of the phrases found in the literature (Leland & Kasten, 2002; Metiri Group, 2003; Seely-Brown, 2006, Dede, 2004; Wagner, 2008; Hallissy et al, 2013), indicating that there is recognition of a need for education to move forward and be cognisant of the changes required to serve the needs of people in this century and to acknowledge the need for new digital-age literacies to be included alongside core subjects in schools.

The 21st century is a technology and media-suffused environment. 21st century citizens are bombarded with information and increasingly rapid
technological changes and new multimedia tools. There is always something new to absorb and incorporate, and to be effective learners and workers, 21st century students need to develop digital-age proficiencies and acquire the learning skills that will enable them to learn future technologies. Schools and colleges now have the challenge to become environments for 21st century learning and teaching.

Hallissy et al (2013) launched a publication *Redesigning Education: meeting the challenges of the 21st Century*, in which they claim that

... the 21st century workplace is an ever-evolving environment where employers expect their workers to possess a wide range of skills and competences ... The core set of skills ... expected include being knowledgeable about the world, thinking outside the box, being smarter about sourcing information, having good people skills, an ability to solve problems, to work as part of a team and ultimately to become a lifelong learner (2013, p.5).

In the foreword to the publication the writers claim that

... a dynamic educational system is a fundamental ingredient of a vibrant, innovative and just society. Today, more than ever, the pace of change is breathtaking, relentless, and potentially liberating for all humanity (2013, p.4).

They proceed to advocate that the education community use their document ‘to reflect the challenges they are facing in remodelling their schools and classrooms’ (2013, p.4).

In the US, The Committee on Defining Deeper Learning and 21st Century Skills appointed by The National Research Council (2012) was tasked with defining, among other labels, the labels ‘deeper learning’ and ‘21st Century Skills’. They responded:

The product of deeper learning is transferable knowledge including content knowledge in a domain and knowledge of how, why, and when to apply this knowledge to answer questions and solve problems. (Sum-4)
They continued

We refer to this blend of both knowledge and skills as ‘21st century competencies’. (Sum-5)

It is no longer enough that students can learn facts. They also must learn the skills necessary for design, evaluation, management, investigation and problem solving.

Can an applied learning approach to teaching and learning help in this quest to develop 21st century competencies? In this time of rapid technological and global change, what are 21st century skills?

The idea of acquiring a particular skill for a particular job to provide a person with an income for the rest of their life as mentioned above, is no longer a realistic one. Schwartzman & Bouas-Henry (2009, p.19) raised the possibility that technological tools and applied learning could prove mutually beneficial, and wondered in what ways might collaborative and social networking tools from wikis to Twitter increase the sustainability of learning for today’s students.

This present study will address these questions while seeking to achieve its objective of the development of an applied learning model for further education, suitable for the 21st century and providing its learners with the necessary skills and competencies.

Having broadly outlined 21st century learning and its importance, this chapter now describes the context of this research, that of the further education sector in Ireland.

1.3 The Irish Education System

Fig. 1.1 summarises the Irish education system. The left hand side indicates the stages from early years education up to post-leaving certificate programmes, along with a corresponding age scale. It also shows the age range for compulsory schooling – between the ages of six and sixteen.
Chapter 1

The right hand side illustrates the choice of third level educational opportunities and corresponding programme durations.


Fig. 1.1 Irish Education System

1.4 VET and FET in Irish Education

The challenge of Vocational Education and Training is to provide learners with skills that are in demand in the labour market. It must also assist those with low skills/qualifications to gain further skills and knowledge in order to progress, be it directly into the workforce or into further learning. The Further Education and Training (FET) sector is part of Ireland’s VET provision.

Under the umbrella of Further Education & Training (FET) are Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) courses, apprenticeships, traineeships and second chance FET, which include a Back to Education Initiative (BTEI).

The recession in Ireland brought with it a sharp increase in the numbers of people wanting to access FET. This was due to the destruction of jobs and an escalation in unemployment and people seeking to re-skill or up-skill as a means of surviving the recession thus bringing a more diverse learner group (Sweeney, 2013). According to Linehan & Hogan (2008) Ireland had experienced a steady inflow of non-Irish to meet the demands of an expanding labour market during the previous decade of a booming economy. The FET sector was also looked to to provide a pathway for these immigrants.
to achieve suitable qualifications and possible re-entry into the workforce. This changing social and demographic landscape is mirrored in the FE college under discussion and posed challenges for the teaching staff.

Fig. 1.2 indicates where VET fits into Ireland’s education and training system.

![VET in Ireland’s education and training system](image)

**Fig. 1.2 Spotlight on VET in Ireland 2013/14 (Cedefop, 2014)**

The further education and training sector only became mainstream and awarded the same status as first, second and third levels on foot of a bill passed in July 2013, which was a significant reform in the Irish system. SOLAS
(An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna), the Further Education and Training Authority in Ireland, was formally established in October 2013 by the then Minister for Education and Skills, Ruairí Quinn: ‘SOLAS will be tasked with ensuring the provision of 21st century high quality Further Education and Training programmes which are responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of a changed and changing economy.’ (www.solas.ie) It is responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programmes. The delivery of coordinated FET programmes is now the responsibility of the sixteen statutory Education and Training Boards (ETBs) around the country formed from the aggregation of Vocational Educational Committees (VECs) and the integration of FÁS Training Centres. ‘An integral part of the mission of SOLAS is to strengthen the confidence of employers and of young people and their parents in the quality of VET provided through the ETBs’ (Sweeney, 2013, p. 13).

The PLC Programme is now normally referred to as ‘Further Education’ — above second level but not third level. It is the main alternative to higher education for young people who complete senior secondary education and is ‘the largest single initial training programme for a wide range of intermediate skilled occupations in the economy.’ (Sweeney, 2013, p.25) The FE sector provides participants with a combination of general studies, work experience and vocational studies in a wide range of disciplines such as business, computing and technology, multimedia, community care, sport and leisure, and horticulture. The FE sector in Ireland caters for learners who have just completed their Leaving Certificate (completion exam for second-level education) and adult learners or mature students, as mentioned above, who may be re-entering education, perhaps not having completed their secondary education, or who want to re-skill or up-skill in order to make themselves immediately more employable, or attain progression to Third Level education. Leaving Certificate completers are usually 17-19 years of age. There is no upper age limit for entrance to FE colleges. The FE sector also provides provision for certification from other awarding bodies such as the
International Therapy Examination Council (ITEC), the Confederation of International Beauty Therapy & Cosmetology (CIBTAC), and City & Guilds.

The PLC courses, usually consist of eight modules leading to a major award, and are commonly delivered on a full-time basis over one academic year by the VECs/ETBs and are certified at Levels 5 and 6 of the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

The NFQ (Fig. 1.3) is used to describe the Irish qualifications system and was proposed in the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act (1999) with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) being responsible for its development. It came into operation in 2003. It provides a structure aimed at simplifying the Irish qualifications system and consists of ten levels, based on standards of knowledge, skill and competence and incorporates awards made for all kinds of learning, wherever it is gained. Qualifications achieved in school (State Examination Commission (SEC)), further education and training (FET) and higher education and training (HET) institutions, Institutes of Technology and Universities are all included. The NFQ is linked to similar frameworks in Europe. There are two qualification frameworks at European level. The Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area, also known as the 'Bologna Framework', deals with higher education awards and The European Qualifications Framework (EQF), ‘a ‘lifelong learning’ framework to which the levels of national qualifications frameworks are referenced’ (www.nfqnetwork.ie). Fig. 1.4 (over) shows the comparison between the NFQ and EQF. The Irish FE sector receives certification at levels 5 and 6 of the NFQ, equivalent to EQF levels 4 and 5 respectively.
Fig. 1.3 National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ Network)

Fig. 1.4 NFQ and EQF Levels (NFQ Network)
At the time of introduction, the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC) awarded certification at NFQ Levels 1 to 6. In November 2012 the National Qualifications Authority Ireland (NQAI) completed an amalgamation with HETAC, FETAC and the IUQB (Irish Universities Qualifications Board) and a new integrated agency, Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), was established. FETAC, HETAC and the NQAI are now dissolved. HETAC and FETAC qualifications are now awarded by QQI at the same award levels.

The changeover from FETAC to QQI was a gradual process. Transition commenced during the present research and is still awaiting full completion. Hence there will be reference to both FETAC and QQI, and documentation from both shown below. Research work was carried out using FETAC module descriptors/syllabi. The biggest change to come with the changeover was that the responsibility for the provision of the content of the modules/minor awards moved away from the awarding body FETAC to the individual course provider. Where FETAC had before provided a full syllabus for a minor award, QQI provides a *Component/Minor Award Specification* for which the Provider designs the content which must then be approved by QQI before delivery may commence. This change does not affect the current research. Award and Component specifications only are available on the QQI website and are openly accessible. Course content for written programmes remains with the provider.

An example of a Level 5 Major Award in *Fashion Design 5M3865* is shown in Fig. 1.5. This was obtained from the QQI website, along with the *Component Specification* for one of its mandatory minor awards *Design Skills 5N0784*. Each of the associated minor awards for this major award are laid out in a similar fashion. All major awards are structured similarly. This figure is important in that it reflects the structure of both Level 5 and Level 6 awards and will help to guide further explanation of the design process.
Certificate Specification

Level 5

Fashion Design

SM3665

Certificate Requirements

This award was developed through the Common Award System. Any provider who wishes to offer this award must have their programmes validated by QQI before it can be delivered to learners. The provider should check the certificate specification for this award (see below) and its associated minor awards for validation requirements.

The total credit value required for the certificate is 120. This will be achieved by completing:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Credit Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5M3764</td>
<td>Graphic Arts</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5M3765</td>
<td>Digital Media Design</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5M3766</td>
<td>Fashion Design and Design Studies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5M3767</td>
<td>Textile Technology</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5M3768</td>
<td>Personal Care Programmes</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5M3916</td>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5M3769</td>
<td>A minimum credit of 15 from the following award(s)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5M3770</td>
<td>Work Experience</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5M3771</td>
<td>A minimum credit of 30 from the following award(s)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The remaining credit value of 15 can be obtained by using relevant component(s) from level 5. A maximum of 15 credits may be used from either level 4 or level 6.

Component Specification

Design Skills

Level 5

5N0784
As can be seen from above, in order to obtain certification for a chosen award the learner must complete a number of modules (usually eight), some of which are mandatory. During this research, the syllabi for the individual FETAC modules comprising a FETAC award were available from the FETAC website. Module content was presented as learning outcomes (as is also the requirement for QQI). This format may allow for choice of delivery mode and choice of course materials.

1.5 Applied Learning

The Literature Review of Chapter 2 reveals various explanations and definitions of AL deployed in various situations in different countries. Examples of all are investigated and discussed in detail, individually at first and then in relation to the understanding of AL in the present research. The deployment of applied learning elsewhere, such as Australia, US, Hong Kong, has been taken as the starting block to defining the underlying principles of AL and the first step in the development of a model for AL for FE in Ireland.
Here in this introduction, in order to situate the study, the researcher considers the term ‘applied learning’ in its simplest, most basic meaning – learning that is applied, and is in accord with Keller’s (n.d.) description in the following paragraph and the accompanying figure adapted by Keller, entitled *The Real World Relevance of Applied Learning*. This figure identifies the skills of communications, information, collaboration and management being called into play when students apply their knowledge to a real-life situation in an applied learning approach to teaching.

Why Applied Learning? ... There is a perception of a dichotomy between increasing academic rigor in the classroom and making education relevant to students. If we are to maximize student success in school, however, we must develop a unifying theory of teaching and learning that addresses both rigor and relevance. ...Relevance is directly related to a student’s understanding of how learning can be applied to life beyond school. Strategies for increasing relevance can range from simply telling students how a concept could be applied to challenging students to actually apply the learning to an authentic problem. That is, multidisciplinary, open-ended projects that fulfill a genuine need. It is the latter strategy that begins to describe the robust framework of Applied Learning.

![Fig. 1.6 The Real World Relevance of Applied Learning (Keller (n.d.))](image)
Applied learning, therefore, could refer to work-experience, co-operative education, experiential learning, problem-based learning, apprenticeships, occupational learning and internships, and partnerships, with the emphasis at all times on hands-on experiences. Applied learning can be considered as a mosaic of learning experiences and exposures to different learning contexts. This exposure to different types of learning is useful in a time of rapid change with the need for continuous updating of skills, knowledge and expertise for both work and life. This learning by doing, and learning where there is a need to learn approach of applied learning is similar in principle to the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education. In this child-centred approach it is assumed that every child has potential, has interests and is innately curious. This curiosity stimulates them to explore, to communicate, to seek answers. In the Reggio Emilia approach, the environment is recognised as having an important role to play in inspiring, encouraging and stimulating the child, and is referred to as the ‘third teacher’. (Danko-McGhee, 2009)

The rapid advancement of communications technology and easily resourced learning materials have caused change to the field of learning. Through an applied learning experience students could perhaps more easily become active, independent learners, able to source learning materials for themselves, apply what they are learning in a timely fashion and, at the same time, develop the skills, which have come to be termed ‘21st century skills’; critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration (Wagner, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2010; Hallissy et al, 2013).

1.6 Biographical Motivation

This research, attempting to answer the research question of the feasibility of developing a model of applied learning for further education, was undertaken for a number of personal and professional reasons. The researcher is a teacher in the FEI being studied, having undertaken her teaching practice there 28 years ago. She had also spent a year there as a
post-leaving certificate student of Secretarial Studies prior to attending University. Initially employed as a second-level teacher of Maths, Science and Technology, the researcher was working in the college during its period of transition from a mainly second-level school (phased out over five years) to a full FE college, and witnessed first-hand the problems that accompanied this transition. Teachers had to become familiar with new subjects/modules at a different level than heretofore and a completely different format of assessment and certifying body. The student cohort also changed from second level students, ages twelve to seventeen, to post-leaving certificate students aged eighteen and upwards.

The researcher also became involved in curricula development, standardisation and quality processes in a number of different subject areas through initial further education pilot projects with FETAC (formerly NCVA) since its establishment as an awarding body for further education. Through this involvement the researcher delivered in-service training for FETAC and became an external examiner and advising external examiner for FETAC.

The researcher is herself a lifelong learner, having completed various courses and achieved higher qualifications while continuing in her teaching position. Achieving a post of responsibility in the college led to involvement in the selection and initiation of new courses, and also to timetabling duties. Through these timetabling duties she became involved in the Project for Applied Learning. The Project for Applied Learning was initially proposed by, and given the moniker, PAL, by the then college Principal. In a discussion document on PAL he posed the following question to staff:

When students leave will they be equipped with the tools they need for the world they are going out into? They need to have a personal repertoire of skills. What are these skills?

- Their imagination
- Communication skills
- Technology skills
- Literacy and numeracy skills
- Others
He had proposed that the school adopt, where possible, an ethos of learning-by-doing and that students be given the opportunity to demonstrate their learning through assessment ‘events’. An ‘event’ would be an opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning. It could simply be a day on the college calendar when students could show project work for assessment, perhaps present oral presentations and skills demonstrations. It could include an event such as a Fashion Show or an Art and Design or Furniture Design Exhibition or a video-showing by some of the media classes. This proposal was very much in line with the researcher’s own personal educational philosophy - guided, student-centred, contextualised, learning by doing.

Her philosophy mainly reflects a flexible pragmatic constructivist approach, acknowledging that different kinds of knowledge invite different responses. The researcher sees constructivism, as does Perkins (1999, p. 11), as a ‘toolbox for problems of learning’. Perkins compares constructivism to a Swiss army knife with various blades for various needs, not all of them being required for every job. This was the approach adopted by the researcher to her own teaching especially since embarking on further education teaching - promoting a creative, active, learning-by-doing, learning with, and through others approach, while acknowledging that many approaches may be required for different types of knowledge. Engaging learners in activities/problem-solving that make connection with their own world, has more meaning for them. They can then identify the rationale or the need to learn.

The researcher, interested in the initial proposal, also saw a possible potential of extending the applied learning project to a bigger study: to investigate if the adoption of an AL approach in the college could enhance the ability of the college to deliver the core curriculum content as well as to enhance the experience of the students, develop students’ minds, connect their learning to their wider life projects, and to promote in them 21\textsuperscript{st} century skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, collaboration and technology integration. In commenting on how the world was changing and how the global economy,
‘with its emerging industries and occupations, offers tremendous opportunities for everyone who has the skills to take advantage of it’, Kay (2010, p.xvii) very strongly indicates the importance of 21st century skills:

Competency in 21st century skills gives people the ability to keep learning and adjusting to change. Twenty-first-century skills are the ticket to moving up the economic ladder. Without 21st century skills, people are relegated to low-wage, low-skill jobs. Proficiency in 21st century skills is the new civil right for our times.

Kay (2010) also mentions the importance of 21st century skills for successful transitions to college and workforce training programmes and he refers to the Framework for 21st Century Learning and the skills articulated by it – creativity and innovation, flexibility and adaptability, leadership and cross-cultural skills – for all students. He acknowledges that content knowledge alone is not enough anymore:

Knowledge and information change constantly. Students need both content knowledge and skills to apply and transform their knowledge for useful and creative purposes and to keep learning as content and circumstances change.

The researcher further wondered whether the gaining of 21st century skills might also be facilitated to some extent by the breaking down, where possible, of barriers across subjects/modules, believing that this would allow for deeper learning and more coherent knowledge-garnering with active participation by students.

Sawyer (2008, p.4) had identified a set of key findings that emerged from learning sciences research and which further encouraged the researcher:

- The importance of learning deeper conceptual understanding, rather than superficial facts and procedures
- The importance of learning connected and coherent knowledge, rather than knowledge compartmentalised into distinct subjects and courses.
The importance of learning authentic knowledge in its context of use, rather than decontextualized classroom exercises.

The importance of learning in collaboration, rather than in isolation.

Initial research on the subject of applied learning and a comprehensive review of the extant relevant research literature, did not reveal any previous study of applied learning associated with the further education sector. Some comments in the first issue of the *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education* (JAHE) (Schwartzman & Bouas-Henry (2009, p.3)) indicated a paucity of research in the area and led somewhat to the commencement of this particular study:

Many fruitful paths for scholarship on applied learning await exploration. Thus far, little attention has focused on the interface between applied learning and emerging educational technologies.

... Minimal attention, however, has been devoted to the role technology might play within applied learning.

### 1.7 Aim of Research and Research Question

The introduction of the concept of applied learning in the FEI, as proposed by the then Principal and explained above, began on a small scale. As referred to above, at this time also the term ‘21st Century Skills’ became ubiquitous in educational literature and equipping 21st century students with 21st century skills became a focus of learning institutions. Thus came the questions

1. Can Applied Learning be implemented successfully in a Further Education setting?

2. Is it possible to design an Applied Learning Model suitable for the 21st century providing learners with 21st century competencies?

In 2009, prior to the commencement of this formal research, a mini-pilot of applied learning was introduced by the school Principal and the researcher to determine if there was potential in the approach, and whether it merited
further investigation and development in the FE college. This first, small-scale introduction of an applied learning event – centred on a week-long ‘fashion fiesta’ - emerged as an overall positive experience for both staff and students and involved use of some of the latest ICT such as blogging, which led students to use non-traditional tools. While the students used the usual advertising strategies such as posters, flyers and advertisements in the local papers, they also embraced social media for making people aware of their event and also for reporting both during and after the event. The computer took on a facilitating role throughout and its use as a 21st century tool provided the students with opportunity for developing 21st century skills of collaboration and reflection amongst others. IT became an integral tool in the process and the event overall aided the students attain deeper learning in an authentic situation. The very positive responses from students, staff and the public to this exploratory applied learning pilot positively confirmed the researcher’s query as to whether there was potential for further study as outlined in Section 1.6 and she decided to commence her research; examining systematically the scaling-up in deployment of applied learning throughout the school, as a school-wide context for fostering and augmenting students’ 21st century learning, competencies and skills.

Following from the initial success of the small-scale pilot, the focus of the research developed and the research question became:

How can we create a sustainable AL intervention in the local further education college, while developing a transferrable AL design model to promote 21st century learning in further education in general?

1.8 Ethical Considerations

Data required for the completion of this research were obtained in the FE college where the researcher is a teacher with permission being given by the Principal of the college, the primary gatekeeper, to talk to students and colleagues, issue questionnaires, and make use of college marketing/promotion materials. The researcher was not a module teacher of any of the
students (adults) who took part. Ethical considerations are further discussed in Chapter 3 – Methodology.

1.9 Thesis Structure

Having defined the research question and given a brief outline of applied learning, Chapter 2 is a comprehensive literature review and sets out the theoretical framework, situating the research in the interdisciplinary field of design-based research. It commences with a review of the concept of applied learning, introduced briefly above (1.5), which differs from country to country and on the educational level being considered, and in so doing provides the working definition of applied learning for this research. Included also in the literature review is literature focussing on learning and teaching – learning theories, educational models and the skills indicated as being required by the 21st century learner. Curriculum design and the use of technology and IT support in learning are also outlined. This chapter concludes with the presentation of the theoretical framework providing the conceptual scaffolding for the research study.

The choice of design-based research (DBR) and its suitability for this practitioner research is discussed in Chapter 3 — Methodology and Design Research Context. The process of DBR and the various research/investigative tools used in this iterative design implementation are discussed along with possible limitations, challenges and how they are addressed, effectiveness and ease of rollout. From this review, the working definition of applied learning, and the themes arising from the literature review and theoretical framework of Chapter 2, emerges a model that later evolves into the AACES model. The AACES themes of Authenticity, Aesthetics, Creativity, Engagement and Sociality provide the research framework.

The practical manifestation of applied learning within the FEI is outlined within Chapter 3 also. Included here is an explanation of the current learning management framework including opportunities across the college for
collaboration and applied learning. Discussion of data collection techniques and data analysis through the use of the AACES model concludes this chapter.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 describe and report on the practical implementation of the three design research cycles with presentation and analysis of data, using AACES as an evaluative framework.

The Design Product – a Model for Applied Learning in an FE college – is presented in Chapter 7. The research question and the extent to which it has been answered is addressed and comprehensively discussed. Chapter 7 also outlines how this research fits into the current literature on applied learning and the role of applied learning in further education teaching, and concludes with an evaluation of the process and the result.

Fig. 1.7 illustrates the research narrative and thesis report structure. It gives a representation of how the research evolved, following initial literature review of the topic and defining of the research question, alongside the investigation and decision on possible research methodology. Informed by the literature review and the researcher’s own experience as an educator, the elements of an applied learning environment are proposed. These form the basis of the framework for identification of applied learning activities within the college, prompting a rigorous iterative design process of three DBR research cycles, corroboration of the elements of an AL environment (Authenticity, Aesthetics, Creativity, Engagement, Sociality) leading to the development of a robust model of AL for an FE college – AACES.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question &amp; Rationale (Chapter 1) + Literature Review &amp; Researcher’s Professional Biography and Experiences Inform Applied Learning (Chapter 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Themes of Applied Learning Inform an Applied Learning Environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Learning Environment Informs the Applied Learning AACES Framework Authenticity Aestheticity Creativity Engagement Sociality (Chapter 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AACES framework identifies activities in the FEI which define it as an Applied Learning Environment: CALE, MAKE, WEXP, RELW, AIDA (Chapter 3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AACES Framework + AL Activities + DBR Methodology Inform Research Design Cycles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Design Cycle 1 (Chapter 4)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Design Cycle 2 (Chapter 5)</td>
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<td>Design Cycle 3 (Chapter 6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The AACES Model of APPLIED LEARNING (Chapter 7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 1.7 Research Narrative
1.10 Summary

This study is a predominantly qualitative design study of the applied learning approach to teaching in a College of Further Education in Ireland. The main research question is — How can we create a sustainable AL intervention in the local further education college, while developing a transferrable AL design model to promote 21st century learning in further education in general?

The research seeks to explore if an applied learning approach can be used successfully to enhance the students’ learning experience in an FE college and if a transferrable applied learning model suitable for the 21st century, providing learners with 21st century competencies alongside core vocational knowledge, can then be developed?

From these queries, discussions on a number of associated topics developed such as real and relevant learning, enriching and enabling learning opportunities beyond the classroom, inspiring and motivating students to develop a range of knowledge, skills and competencies relevant to the world of work, innovative and authentic learning, learners learning to learn effectively and become reflective and creative thinkers who can problem-solve, and become and remain occupationally competent.

This chapter has described the background to the research and the rationale for undertaking it. It has briefly outlined the concept of applied learning and has given an insight into what is meant by 21st century skills in this context. It has situated this research in the further education sector of Irish education and identified the research question. The next chapter is a comprehensive literature review.
2.1 Chapter Introduction

A literature review is ‘... the comprehensive study and interpretation of literature that relates to a particular topic’ Aveyard (2010, p.1). The literature review should provide a critical account of literature in a particular area and situate proposed new research. As already stated, the topic of this research is applied learning and its suitability as a model of learning in the 21st century. This chapter reviews the existing literature on the concept of applied learning in education, and the relevance of applied learning to the needs of students in the 21st century, as it seeks to uncover underlying themes for the development of a framework for AL.

The underlying premise of applied learning is the idea of providing learners with learning experiences that involve solving problems based on real-life experiences. Through this approach students may come to appreciate the usefulness of adapting and applying what they learn in the classroom to the real situations and problems encountered in later life. An initial simple search in order to identify the provenance and development of applied learning presented a variety of definitions of applied learning in use in different parts of the world; all similar but subtly different in approach and application. Based in different educational settings and with different age groups, they all had the common theme of education and learning. Though none of the studies was based in the FE area of the present study, they nevertheless helped to shape and direct this study, once the meaning of applied learning at this specific educational level was defined. The review examined both academic works and policy documents originating from government departments of education, various college schools, school districts and individual schools. Many of the academic works reviewed were mobilised by initial policy documents, further driven by academic literature, and gave an important insight into how policy translated to practice in different contexts.
This literature review also investigates and discusses in detail the concept of 21\textsuperscript{st} century skills as introduced in Chapter 1. 21\textsuperscript{st} century graduates need skill sets that will allow them to become productive members of society who can apply their knowledge to analyse problems and propose solutions and be able to communicate effectively with others using the information tools and techniques of the 21\textsuperscript{st} century (Partnership for 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Skills, 2009, 2011, 2015; Lombardi, 2007; Wagner, 2008; Bellanca & Brandt, 2010).

The examination of theories of teaching and learning in a search for themes initially in the literature review provides the focus of the research.

The chapter continues with the presentation of the emerging theoretical framework informed by pedagogical and andragogical considerations, constructivism, problem-based learning, applied learning, and 21\textsuperscript{st} century skills and competencies. It is practically guided by the ontological framework of design-based research and mixed methods research methodologies at the design and implementation stages. Several themes emerged as underpinning principles of the framework – Authenticity, Aestheticality, Creativity, Engagement and Sociality – all of which are discussed.

\textit{2.2 Teaching & Learning}

\textbf{2.2.1 Pedagogy, Andragogy, Heutagogy}

Of these three terms, the first, pedagogy, is the most common in educational terminology. It is usually used with the meaning ‘teaching and learning’. From the Greek, the word means ‘to lead the child’, but it is used in the context of any teaching and learning and not just children. It is used at times to refer to the skills, methods and strategies a teacher might use to encourage his/her students to learn. Pedagogy does not refer to the content that is being taught but the method by which it is being taught (Bull, 2013).

A college of further education has a mix of school leavers and non-traditional learners. Many of these non-traditional learners are adult learners with significant life experience. This situation presents a challenge in itself as to a
teacher’s teaching approach. We are crossing from child to adult teaching or from pedagogy to andragogy as, in its broadest sense, andragogy from the Greek words meaning ‘man-leading’, is the process of engaging adults in learning. Pew (2007, p.17) says:

In Pedagogy, the educational focus is on transmitting, in a very teacher-controlled environment, the content subject matter. In Andragogy, the educational focus is on facilitating the acquisition of and critical thinking about the content and its application in real-life practical settings.

In the same article (p.17), Pew quotes Conner

Andragogy ... is the art and science of helping adults learn. In the andragogical model there are five assertions: 1) Letting learners know why something is important to learn, 2) showing learners how to direct themselves through information, 3) relating the topic to the learner’s experiences. In addition 4) people will not learn until they are ready and motivated to learn. 5) This requires helping overcome inhibitions, behaviors, and beliefs about learning (Conner, 1997-2004, 12).

Conner in her article ‘Introduction to Andragogy and Pedagogy’ refers to Eduard C. Lindeman and his comment in The Meaning of Adult Education (1926) that ‘[e]xperience is the adult learner’s living textbook’. She also refers to Knowles as building on the earlier work of Lindeman when trying to formulate a comprehensive adult learning theory in 1973 with his book The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species. Knowles, an influential figure in the adult education field, made the distinction between child and adult teaching and theorised his four principles of Andragogy, deriving them from five assumptions about adult learners. These are illustrated in Figs. 2.1 and 2.2 and discussed below.

Knowles believed that learners should be informed as to why things are important to learn – they should see the need. They should be directed as to how they could learn both from their past experiences and from adding new knowledge and sometimes they will need help in overcoming any inhibitions they may have about learning. Andragogy promotes the notion that the
teaching of adults needs to focus more on the process rather than on the content being taught and instructors adopt more of a facilitator than teacher role.

![Fig. 2.1 Knowles’ 4 Principles of Andragogy (Pappas, 2013)](image1)

![Fig. 2.2 Knowles’ 5 Assumptions of Adult Learners (Pappas, 2013)](image2)
A key attribute of andragogy is self-directed learning, which Knowles (1975, as cited in Blaschke, 2012, p.58) defined as a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. (p.18)

Hase and Kenyon (2001, p.1) suggest moving further away from pedagogy than andragogy and into the realm of heutagogy when examining ways of designing educational experiences for adults. They suggest that heutagogy, which they define as ‘... truly self-determined learning’, builds on humanistic theory and that it is ‘... appropriate to the needs of learners in the twenty-first century, particularly in the development of individual capability’. The teacher/instructor again acts as a facilitator but the ownership of the learning is with the student.

The pictorial below (Fig. 2.3) indicates the progression from pedagogy to andragogy and then to heutagogy, (Blaschke, 2012, p.60 (based on Canning, 2010, p.63)) showing the decrease in teacher input as the learner matures.

![Fig. 2.3 Progression from Pedagogy to Andragogy and to Heutagogy (Blaschke, 2012)]
Heutagogy is proposed as a theory for guiding distance education where educators are using newer technologies such as social media to deliver programmes (Blaschke, 2012). The chart below gives a more-detailed comparison between the three approaches to teaching and learning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
<th>Andragogy</th>
<th>Heutagogy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Children’s learning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Adults learning</strong></td>
<td><strong>Self-directed learning</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dependence</td>
<td>The learner is a dependent personality. Teacher determines what, how and when anything is learned.</td>
<td>Adults are independent. They strive for autonomy and self-direction in learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources for learning</td>
<td>The learner has few resources – the teacher devises transmission techniques to store knowledge in the learner’s head.</td>
<td>Adults use their own and other’s experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for learning</td>
<td>Learn in order to advance to the next stage.</td>
<td>Adults learn when they experience a need to know or to perform more effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of learning</td>
<td>Learning is subject controlled, focused on prescribed curriculum and planned sequences according to the logic of the subject matter.</td>
<td>Adult learning is task or problem centred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Motivation comes from external sources – usually parents, teachers and a sense of competition.</td>
<td>Motivation stems from internal sources – the increased self-esteem, confidence and recognition that come from successful performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of the teacher</td>
<td>Designs the learning process, imposes materials, is assumed to know best.</td>
<td>Enabler or facilitator, climate of collaboration, respect and openness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Fig 2.4 Pedagogy, Andragogy and Heutagogy Compared

With a student cohort in the research college aged 18 and upwards, the focus becomes an andragogical one. With the assumptions that adults need to know why they need to learn something and have immediate use for their new knowledge, and also that adults learn best through experiment and
problem-solving, andragogy infers more focus on the process than on the content. The educator becomes more of a facilitator to the adult learners than a teacher and needs to use suitable strategies such as role-playing, simulations and problem-based learning, to motivate, guide and empower them, as well as encourage reflection and self-evaluation. The two dimensions of andragogy according to Knowles - its assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners and the principles of andragogy arising from those characteristics are echoed somewhat in applied learning definitions. Applied learning ‘... advocates an approach that contextualises learning in a way that empowers and motivates students, while assisting them to develop key skills and knowledge required for employment, further education and active participation in their communities’ (VQA,2004).

2.2.2 What is learning?

UNESCO (n.d.) defines learning as:

a process that brings together personal and environmental experiences and influences for acquiring, enriching or modifying one’s knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, behaviour and world views. The major concepts and theories of learning include behaviourist theories, cognitive psychology, constructivism, social constructivism, experiential learning, multiple intelligence, and situated learning theory and community of practice.

Learning therefore can be analysed from many different points of view. According to Ambrose et al. (2010, p.3):

- Learning is a process, not a product
- Learning is a change in knowledge, beliefs, behaviours or attitudes
- Learning is not something done to students, but something that students themselves do

Lewin (1935) suggested that learning changes occur

- in skills,
- in cognitive patterns (knowledge and understanding),
in motivation and interest, and
in ideology (fundamental beliefs) (cited in Rogers, 2003, p.86).

Gagné (1985) identified five domains or types of learning outcomes:

- motor skills which require practice,
- verbal information - facts, principles and generalizations which when organized into larger entities become knowledge,
- intellectual skills - the 'discriminations, concepts and rules' that help in using knowledge,
- cognitive strategies - the way the individuals learns, remembers and thinks, the self-managed skills needed to define and solve problems,
- attitudes (cited in Rogers, 2003, pp.86-87).

Säljö (1979) interviewed 90 people about what learning meant to them. Their replies produced five qualitatively different conceptions with a sixth subsequently added (Marton et al, 1993). Learning was seen as:

1. A quantitative increase in knowledge, acquiring information or ‘knowing a lot’.
2. Memorising, storing information that can be reproduced.
3. The acquisition of facts, skills, and methods that can be retained and used subsequently.
4. The making sense of or abstraction of meaning. Learning involves relating parts of the subject matter to each other and to the real world.
5. An interpretative process aimed at understanding reality in a different way, learning involves comprehending the world by reinterpreting knowledge.
6. Developing as a person (added subsequently).

The constructivist mode of learning is defined as
- an active,
- constructive,
- goal-oriented and
- situated process that requires intensive mental activity and construction of meaning on the part of the learner (Dillemans et al., 1999 as cited in Virkus, 2003)).

According to Virkus (2003) in order to learn constructively there must be active seeking, processing and using of information, critical analysis and metacognition. The philosopher Phillips (1995) identified three distinct roles in
constructivism, which Perkins (1999) refers to as the active learner, the social learner and the creative learner. In a constructivist environment learners have an active role in their learning and knowledge-building, with emphasis on the construction of knowledge happening as the result of social, critical dialogue or collaboration between learners, or knowledge being created or recreated by the learners themselves, facilitating the learners with better retention skills, as well as a greater understanding and the ability to actively use the knowledge they gain. Proulx (2006) tells us ‘Constructivism asserts that our previous experiences serve as lenses through which we read the world’. This has particular resonance in the FE sector where many students are returning to education bringing with them life experiences that they often share with other students and their teachers.

Learning approaches are also classified as either deep or surface (Atherton, 20139(b), based on Ramsden, 1988, and see also Appendix 1). Deep learning occurs where the student wants to learn – the emphasis is internal. The student is able to identify evidence from argument and can organise and structure new information into a coherent whole. The student relates ideas and knowledge to previous knowledge and everyday experiences and can bring together knowledge from different educational courses. In contrast, surface learning comes from the demands of an assessment and not from within the student and information may simply be memorised without any reflection. Principles are not distinguished from facts and information/knowledge is not related to previous knowledge or everyday experiences.

Surface learning tends to be experienced as an uphill struggle, characterised by fighting against boredom and depressive feelings. Deep learning is experienced as exciting and a gratifying challenge (more often, at least!). Atherton (2013(b))

This concept of deep and surface learning derived from original empirical research by Marton and Säljö (1976), and was elaborated upon by Ramsden (1988, 1992), Biggs (1987, 1993) and Entwistle (1981), among others.

Fransson’s (1977) study — a study of the relationship between approach to learning and motivation to learn — concluded that:
If we want to promote a deep approach, we should above all keep in mind the students’ own interests at the same time as we should try to eliminate the factors that lead to a surface approach (irrelevance, threat and anxiety). Marton and Säljö (2005, p.54)

2.2.3 Conceptual Learning Frameworks – Bloom’s Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge

Bloom’s Taxonomy and Depth of Knowledge are two popular conceptual learning frameworks that look at the learning process from two different aspects. Bloom’s Taxonomy categorises tasks corresponding to thinking levels while Depth of Knowledge (DOK) focusses on the cognitive and thinking process. Both provide aid in the aligning of curricula and assessments and establishment of rigour.

Bloom’s Taxonomy was the result of a group research that sought to develop a logical framework for teaching and learning that would help researchers and educators understand the fundamental ways in which people learn, i.e. how people acquire and develop new knowledge, skills, and understanding. The Taxonomy, developed in 1956, is a classification system that defines different levels of human cognition and is often graphically represented as a pyramid with higher-order cognition at the top. The first three elements—Knowledge, Comprehension, and Application — represent lower levels of cognition and learning, while Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation are considered higher-order skills.

A revised version was released in 2001, designed to be more useful to educators. Three categories were renamed and all categories were expressed as verbs rather than nouns. Knowledge was changed to Remembering, Comprehension became Understanding, and Synthesis was renamed Creating. In addition, Creating became the highest level in the classification system, switching places with Evaluating. The Taxonomy has also been adapted for the digital age (see Appendix 2). Fig. 2.5 shows this evolution.

The Depth of Knowledge framework categorises tasks into 4 levels according to the complexity of thinking they require: level 1 tasks require recall of facts and no further cognitive effort; level 2 tasks usually require more than one
mental step and a student must make some decisions about his or her approach; at level 3 a student must be able to make choices, justify his/her choices and be able to plan; and level 4 tasks require the most complex cognitive effort with students being required to synthesise information from multiple sources and to have the ability to transfer knowledge. Fig. 2.6 below shows this concept and gives examples of suitable verbs to use having due regard to the learning context.

![Fig. 2.5 Evolution of Bloom’s Taxonomy](http://www.maxvibrant.com/images/education/blooms-taxonomy/evolution-of-blooms-taxonomy.png)
Learning scientists began experimenting with new models of learning and the OECD’s Centre of Educational Research and Innovation (CERI) worked on alternative models that would align more naturally with the key findings emerging from LS research. These key findings stressed the importance of learning deeper conceptual understanding, the importance of learning connected and coherent knowledge, the importance of learning authentic knowledge in its context of use and the importance of learning in collaboration (Sawyer, 2008). Learning scientists began to study non-school locations where learning can occur such as apprenticeships and the learning acquired in the home, the blending of formal school and non-school learning environments, and the creative economy – a learning society in which all workers must continue to acquire new knowledge throughout their lives (Sawyer, 2008).
2.3 Applied Learning – A Mosaic of Learning Experiences

2.3.1 Introduction to Applied Learning

The *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education* (JALHE) was first published in 2009, three years after the first Conference of Applied Learning in Higher Education (CALHE). In its first article ‘From Celebration to Critical Investigation: Charting the Course of Scholarship in Applied Learning’ (2009, p.3) Schwartzman and Bouas-Henry state:

> Applied Learning refers more to a spirit or movement in education than to a definitively bounded subject matter. It designates the kinds of pedagogical principles and practices associated with engaged scholarship, communities of practice, civic engagement, experiential education and critical pedagogy.

Though straddling a number of paradigms, applied learning falls in the main into the constructivist model of learning or education.

As indicated in the introductory chapter, the term ‘Applied Learning’ can have a different meaning in different contexts and the research has revealed relevant examples that will be discussed below. In some cases AL may be referring to a subject within a programme or to a specifically structured course of study, in other cases AL can be referring to an approach to teaching and learning, as in the strategies used by the teacher to encourage learning. In Australia the Victorian Certificate in Applied Learning (VCAL) is available as an alternative for those learners who may not have proven themselves to be achievers academically and are not interested in pursuing third level education and for them the VCAL route of applied learning is seen as an easier route to second level certification. In other countries there may be a practical subject or project called Applied Learning as part of a curriculum that could run variously for a number of weeks or months and may incorporate a group of topics. This is the situation in some areas in the US. In Hong Kong an applied learning subject may be taken as an elective alongside mandatory subjects during senior years of second level education and presented for certification.
The following sections investigate AL policy in the respective countries mentioned in an effort to define applied learning in the context of the research, to isolate elements and activities of AL, to identify what is meant by an applied learning environment, to develop a framework and produce a model.

2.3.2 Applied Learning — Australia

The Victorian Certificate in Applied Learning (VCAL) operates as an alternative to the VCE (Victorian Certificate of Education), which is the main benchmark for high school students in Australia, and ‘is an applied learning pathway that allows students to finish their schooling and integrate their learning with vocational and work-related preparation’ (Renshaw, 2012). VCAL was initially created as a response to ‘increasing participation rates in secondary schooling throughout the 1990s and early 2000s’ (Blake & Gallagher, 2009, p.67). A Ministerial Review of Post Compulsory Education and Training Pathways in Victoria (2000), also known as the Kirby Report, had highlighted poor senior secondary outcomes for many students. The VCAL was accredited in 2002 and introduced into 22 selected Victorian secondary schools and Technical and Further Education (TAFE) institutes and organisations. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) reports VCAL being delivered to over 22,000 students in over 400 locations in 2014 (VCAA, 2014).

The VCAA (2004, updated 2014, p.1) in promoting applied learning indicated that while in the 1990s the concept of applied learning was equated with ‘hands on’ or practical learning experiences, a broader definition had emerged that ‘... advocates an approach which contextualises learning in a way which empowers and motivates students, while assisting them to develop key skills and knowledge required for employment, further education and active participation in their communities’. This publication continues:

... current understandings of applied learning place equal importance on both theory and application, where the link between them is provided by the context. Thus, the theoretical
understandings and knowledge required to complete a task will be drawn out from the context, which also provides the opportunity to use and apply what has been learnt. (VCCA, 2014)

The VCAA information sheet also mentions that while the VCAL is a senior secondary school, post-compulsory qualification, the applied learning approach can be used in all levels of education and indicates that an applied learning approach underpins the success of many TAFE and Adult and Community Education programmes, and specifically mentions how applied learning is an important factor in the success of apprenticeships and traineeships.

Renshaw (2012) refers to active, hands-on, experiential, informal and non-formal learning, inquiry-based learning, project-based learning and service learning as all being strands of applied learning that link back to the discovery learning buzz of the 1960s. He indicates:

... in essence these terms appear to be a range of sub-categories of applied learning which can be blended in ways to create definitions of applied learning as they are applied in various contexts or for particular goals.

He gives a definition of applied learning as:

... learning that is applied to real world needs and challenges, which naturally require a combination of theory and application for individual, practical and academic growth in negotiated learning settings.

He considers applied learning to be best described as a ‘blend of different teaching approaches’. A definition of applied learning as being just ‘hands on’ or practical work was a concern to many educators, who saw the need to offer students access to important fields of abstract knowledge and theory.
The VCAL was first introduced in Victoria on a pilot basis in 2002 for years 11 and 12 of secondary education and made widely available from 2003. The VCAL interprets Applied Learning according to four broad concepts:

- real-world application,
- out of school contexts for learning,
- holistic student-centred learning, and
- negotiated learning for transition to independent and responsible adult-hood.

These concepts in turn underpin eight specific applied learning principles developed by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (2006, updated 2014):

1. Start where learners are at.
2. Negotiate the curriculum. Engage in a dialogue with learners about their curriculum.
3. Share knowledge. Recognise the knowledge learners bring to the learning environment.
5. Build resilience, confidence and self-worth – consider the whole person.
6. Integrate learning – the whole task and the whole person. In life we use a range of skills and knowledge. Learning should reflect the integration that occurs in real life tasks.
7. Promote diversity of learning styles and methods. Everyone learns differently. Accept that different learning styles require different learning/teaching methods but value experiential, practical and ‘hands on’ ways of learning.
8. Assess appropriately. Use the assessment method that best ‘fits’ the learning content and context.

These principles provide guidance to VCAL educators in the development of content for VCAL curriculum.

The VCAL has also been used to cater for the needs of at-risk young people. A report *Re-engagement, Training and Beyond* was the evaluation outcome of a community VCAL (CVCAL) education programme for young people run by the Brotherhood of St Laurence’s in Frankston, Victoria (BSL-CVCAL) in 2011.
In a research summary, Myconos (2012, pp.1-4) indicates that what the VCAL offered in a community setting has a ‘profoundly positive impact on “at risk” young people’. The summary also referred to the informal outcomes that emerged: ‘students’ improved outlooks, confidence, renewed interest in education, and improved emotional wellbeing’.

Blake and Gallagher (2009) mentioned the possibility of the marginalisation of applied learning as it is identified in VCAL. Renshaw (2012) queries the possibility of mixing and matching across VCE and VCAL where the streams making up VCAL could be offered under an expanded VCE system as specialised applied learning options rather than separating them as a specific course. Blake and Gallagher (p.4) state:

This would go a long way towards recognizing the value of applied learning as a valid and relevant approach to school-based learning, and could very well improve the broader skill sets of many students preparing for tertiary study in courses that are increasingly being called upon to feature applied learning objectives and techniques.

The VCAL is accredited at three levels: Foundation, Intermediate and Senior, with the three qualification levels catering for a range of students with different abilities and interests. Students can enter at the level to suit their learning needs and interests as well as goals and abilities.

Renshaw (2012) acknowledges the challenges the VCAL brings for teachers, one of which is the need to develop project management skills. He quotes Blake and Gallagher who say that teachers need to ‘value learning that encourages greater links between: “learning with the hands and learning with the mind”; learning as individuals and learning as teams and communities’ (2009, p.63).

A Graduate Diploma of Education (Applied Learning) (GDE(AL)) was established at Deakin University in 2005 in an attempt to address the challenges to teachers. The course is itself delivered using Applied Learning pedagogy, which aids pre-service teachers gain an understanding of applied
learning and how they might use it when teaching. (Deakin University, 2014) Christine Schulz (2012 p.2), a member of the teaching team, explains how she realised she had become an applied learning educator during the planning of lessons and identifying learning strategies and outcomes for delivery of her course sessions – ‘While I do not work as a VCAL educator, I am an Applied Learning educator with professional knowledge of the curriculum and pedagogy, along with experiences of challenges faced in development and delivery.’

The ‘VCE and VCAL Administrative Handbook’ together with monthly bulletins published by the VCAA provide much support for those delivering VCAL units. Numerous information sheets with information for all stakeholders such as students, parents and teachers and work providers on all elements of VCAL are continuously being updated. Some of these have been referred to above. Examples of some others, other than those on particular AL units, which are also available are – ‘Integrated VCAL Approach’, ‘VCAL Assessment’ and ‘I have been given a VCAL unit where do I start’.

In 2005, in response to the rapid growth in the uptake of VCAL the Victorian Applied Learning Association (VALA) was established offering ‘leadership, development and advocacy for educators of applied learning across all sectors’ (VALA, n.d.). A comprehensive definition of AL also appears on its ‘about’ page, together with its vision, mission and goals, one of which is ‘to champion the relevance of Applied Learning in the C21st Education conversation’.

VALA also produce a monthly electronic newsletter. The contents of February 2015 issue (shown in Appendix 3 along with the VALA homepage) is promoting an induction day for new teachers.

One significant publication from VALA has been a guide for first time teachers of VCAL – VCAL First. A guide for teachers new to the Victorian Certificate for Applied Learning (latest version 2013). It is a comprehensive document containing all information on VCAL (VALA, 2013).
2.3.3 Applied Learning – Hong Kong

‘The aim of education for Hong Kong is to promote students’ whole-person development and life-long learning capabilities’ is the welcome message from the Hong Kong secretary for education (Hong Kong Education Bureau, 2013). Where applied learning appears in the Hong Kong education system is at the senior secondary cycle stage and it is expected to encourage life-long learning. Applied Learning (known as ‘ApL’) courses are offered as electives commencing in Secondary 5, which begins the upper level of the second level education system. These courses complement the other senior secondary subjects being undertaken by the student by having elements of practical learning linked to broad professional and vocational fields. Fig. 2.8 shows the position of ApL within the senior curriculum.

![Fig. 2.8: Position of Applied Learning](image)

Under the NSS curriculum, Secondary 5 and 6 students may choose ApL course(s) as elective subject(s) according to their interest, aspirations and aptitudes.

- **4 Core Subjects**: Chinese Language, English language, Mathematics, Liberal Studies (45-55%)
- **2 or 3 Elective Subjects**: 2 or 3 subjects chosen from NSS elective subjects, Applied Learning courses or other language courses (20-30%)
- **Other Learning Experiences**: Moral and Civic Education, Community Service, Career-related Experiences, Aesthetic Development, Physical Development (15-35%)

Fig. 2.8 ApL within the Hong Kong Senior Curriculum (CDC & HKEAA, 2009)

Fig. 2.9 illustrates the Curriculum Framework for ApL.

![Fig. 2.9: Curriculum Framework of ApL](image)

Life-long Learning for Further Studies and/or Work

- Foundation Skills
- Thinking Skills
- People Skills
- Values and Attitudes
- Career-related Competencies

Different Vocational Fields as Learning Contexts

- Creative Studies
- Media and Communication
- Business, Management and Law
- Services
- Applied Science
- Engineering and Production

Fig. 2.9 HK Curriculum Framework for ApL (CDC & HKEAA, 2009)
The framework indicates the six areas of studies in which ApL courses are available. Through the development of foundation skills, thinking skills, people skills, values and attitudes, and career-related competencies, it was envisaged that following ApL courses would help prepare students for further studies or work, as well as life-long learning. Students would get the opportunity to become familiar with a variety of professions and trades depending on how many applied learning electives they undertook and be guided in their career aspirations. ‘It is intended that courses should stretch students’ potential talents with opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills, and values and attitudes in different contexts based on or approximating real life’ (Curriculum Development Council & the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (CDC & HKEAA), 2009, p.4) which also (p.2) indicates the curriculum aims of applied learning as:

- to enable students to understand fundamental theories and concepts through application and practice, and to develop their generic skills in authentic contexts; and
- to provide students with opportunities to explore their career aspirations and orientation for life-long learning in specific areas.

Students at all ability levels can take ApL courses as electives and students receive guidance and advice to help them make informed choices about their elective subjects after the junior secondary cycle, including the applied learning courses.

ApL policy was developed explicitly within an educational framework directed to enhancing the contribution of secondary schooling to lifelong learning, through making the senior secondary curriculum in Hong Kong more inclusive of student learning interests that are not strictly academic and using learning contexts and interests of a more vocational nature to engage students in active learning. (Bagnall & Wong Koon Lin, 2014, p.96)

Developmental trials of ApL policy took place from 2003-2009 and data from all stakeholders were collected (Bagnall & Wong Koon Lin, 2014). In Hong Kong it was not intended that the applied learning courses would provide pre-
vocational training but that they would help to achieve the five essential learning experiences as well as the specific generic skills that underpinned Hong Kong’s existing curriculum framework. These were moral and civic education, intellectual development, community service, physical and aesthetic development and career-related experiences; communication skills, critical thinking skills, creativity, collaboration skills, information technology skills, numeracy skills, problem-solving skills, self-management skills and study skills respectively. The curriculum framework for each area of study in ApL is characterised by the curriculum pillar ‘Career-related Competencies’ with the competencies being:

1. Understanding the context of the course within the wider area of studies;
2. Understanding and interpreting workplace requirements through practising the basic skills in an authentic or near authentic environment; and
3. Developing and applying conceptual, practical and reflective skills to demonstrate innovation and entrepreneurship.

Fig. 2.10 below illustrates —

![HK ApL Curriculum Framework including Competencies](CDC & HKEAA, 2009)
The design of ApL courses must include explicit learning activities related to the three proxies above, and must build on students’ prior learning in Key Learning Areas. Activities are expected to nurture the transferable skills which should be reflected in the expected learning outcomes of the activities. Fig. 2.11 shows the different approach taken to ApL than to other subjects in the senior cycle (CDC & HKEAA, 2009, p.7)

![Diagram of Design, Delivery and Assessment of ApL as Compared to Other NSS Subjects](image)

**Fig. 2.11 Approach to ApL versus Approach to other subjects**  
(CDC & HKEAA, 2009)

All aspects of the ApL curriculum and its integration are comprehensively documented and supported through the Education Bureau and the Examinations and Assessment Authority through their publications and websites. The Hong Kong Education Bureau has been responsible since the initiation of ApL in 2009 into secondary schools for organising and running professional development programmes on ApL for members of school management committees, principals, careers teachers, teachers, etc. with information on its website.

As mentioned above, the encouragement of lifelong learning was also an aim of the introduction of ApL in Hong Kong. Bagnall and Wong Koon Lin (2014)
presented a critical assessment of the ApL policy and its implementation from a lifelong learning perspective.

They used four identified goals of lifelong learning as the criteria for their evaluation of ApL as a contributor to lifelong learning (p.102):

1. Contributes to deepening students’ knowledge of particular fields of study (here, “field-specific knowledge”).
2. Increases students’ commitment to living their lives as lifelong learners (“lifelong learning commitment”).
3. Enhances students’ capabilities to engage fruitfully as lifelong learners (“lifelong learning capabilities”).
4. Broadens students’ horizons of understanding as to what fruitfully might be engaged with educationally (“lifelong learning horizons”).

Their data reveal that ApL ‘did provide the opportunity for a limited but significant contribution to lifelong learning for those students who engaged in it, ... contributed to the development of a range of generic skills’, and ‘presented a practical approach to learning’ (p.93). Their report concluded with:

Those contributions overall, though, were quite limited in extent, and there was no recognition of the need for a structured approach to developing lifelong learning commitment or capability through ApL policy.

Apart from ApL, another form of applied learning has been in place in Hong Kong for some time. The English Schools Foundation (ESF) founded in 1967 by the Hong Kong government also offer an applied learning pathway to those who have a specialised interest. This is offered through the English BTEC programme (see Section 2.3.5).

2.3.4 Applied Learning — US

In the US the literature review revealed the term ‘applied learning’ associated with education at a number of levels. Applied learning pedagogies in higher education include service learning, internships, study abroad and undergraduate research (Ash & Clayton, 2009). An applied learning strategy is also associated with the conceived weaker or disadvantaged student in
both elementary and secondary public schools. Applied learning projects are also incorporated alongside the mainstream curriculum in schools and may lie within one subject area or straddle a number of areas, and may run over a number of weeks or extend over a school year. These AL projects may arise unexpectedly from student interests or may be planned by the teacher. Some examples of applied learning in the US are discussed below.

In New York City The Applied Learning Performance Standards were developed in recognition of the knowledge and skills students develop from working on AL projects. The findings from two reports: the Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and the New York State Career Development & Occupational Standards (C-DOS) formed the basis of these Standards. (NYC Department of Education, n.d.)

Some background information to applied learning and the standards are also provided by the NYC Department of Education:

Working on applied learning projects offers opportunities to help students learn the kinds of things that people who get things done need to know: problem solving, communication, skills in accessing and using information, how to be self-managing, and how to work with other people.

. . . The Applied Learning Performance Standards were developed on the premise that these kinds of knowledge and skill are essential to active participation in the new and emerging forms of work and work organization and to being an active citizen in the twenty-first century.

There are five performance standards for Applied Learning as shown below in statement format (Fig. 2.12) and further illustrated in the accompanying diagram (Fig. 2.13).
Chapter 2

Fig. 2.12 New York City Applied Learning Performance Standards (NYC Department of Education)

The Applied Learning Performance Standards

There are five performance standards for Applied Learning:

A1 Problem Solving;
A2 Communication Tools and Techniques;
A3 Information Tools and Techniques;
A4 Learning and Self-management Tools and Techniques;
A5 Tools and Techniques for Working with Others.

Fig. 2.13 New York City Applied Learning Performance Standards (diagram) (NYC Department of Education)

It is also indicated in the Standards Document that the key to the effective use of the tools and techniques listed in the standards is to ‘harness them in a purposeful and integrated way in order to complete a meaningful task’ and ‘... that is the way they are best learned rather than taken out of context and treated in a piecemeal way as skills for their own sake’ (NYC Department of Education, n.d.). This is depicted very clearly in the diagram where it is
indicated that problems are solved using a combinations of skills from four different categories.

A second example from the US is from the Rhode Island Educational District (Rhode Island Department of Education, n.d.) where ‘Applied learning is a means for both student engagement and workforce development’. This educational district considers the success of applied learning as being dependent on three things, curriculum, instruction and assessment, being considered together in order to ‘infuse opportunities for students to acquire and practice skills needed for success as a student, as a worker and as a citizen’. It further indicates that applied learning ‘envelops a spectrum of activities that should be woven seamlessly into the curriculum’. In this district applied learning begins at the very beginning in the earliest grades. Partnerships with families, businesses and the community are encouraged as part of their applied learning programme so that students can gain ‘experiences in authentic, real-world problems that prepare them for these same issues in life beyond school’. Applied learning is also seen as encouraging both student responsibility and life-long learning.

‘Each student exiting a Rhode Island high school with a diploma shall exhibit proficiency in a comprehensive set of applied learning skills including communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, research, reflection and evaluation, and collaboration’ is a statement contained in the Rhode Island Board of Regents Secondary Regulations (2011, p.7) in reference to the performance-based diploma they offer which focuses attention on the integration of content knowledge and applied learning skills and which regards proficiency in these skills as a critical component of college and career readiness. Career and technical education programs of study including internships could afford students the ability to demonstrate their applied learning skills during their diploma. In the Rhode Island Diploma System applied learning has two interrelated goals: ‘to extend and transform what students learn and to enhance the role of students in their own learning’. These goals are depicted graphically in Fig. 2.14.
2.3.5 Applied Learning – UK

In the UK the term applied learning is found in relation to the Business and Technology Education Council (BTEC). This is both a school leaving vocational qualification, and a further education qualification. The qualifications are designed to meet the needs of employers, and indeed may be developed in conjunction with employers, and the applied learning programmes engage learners in practical, interpersonal and thinking skills. BTECs are undertaken in vocational subjects ranging from business studies to engineering. Examples of BTEC courses include Business Studies, Applied Science, Engineering, Information Technology, Media Production, Health & Social Care, Travel & Tourism and Performing Arts.

The term Applied Learning appeared in the Nuffield Review – an independent review of all aspects of 14-19 year-olds’ education and training in the UK, which was founded by the Nuffield foundation and continued for six years commencing October 2003. The Review’s Issues Paper 9 ‘Applied Learning, the case of Applied Science’ discusses the place of applied learning in meeting young learners’ needs and in particular the place of ‘applied science’. The report refers to “applied” or practical modes of learning.
Issues Paper 9 (p.6) also alludes to the saving of the perception of applied learning ‘... that applied learning in general and applied science in particular are seen as “vocational” and for the less able’. The Review disputes this and indicates applied learning should be seen as part of the general education for all (p.7). It concludes (p.8): ‘The learning experience of all young people would seem to be enriched where that learning grows through the contexts within the world about them and through its application in everyday and work-based situations’, thus pointing to the importance of authenticity in learning.

### 2.3.6 Applied Learning – FEI under study

In the Irish FEI where the current research is situated, applied learning is not a separate award nor is it a series of projects, either stand-alone or integrated. It is the learning-by-doing approach adopted throughout the college in the delivery of programmes to their learners.

Learning is contextualised through problem-based learning, in-house work experience in purpose-built ‘real’ workshops and salons, external work experience, project work in collaboration with outside agencies, and mobility abroad for work experience. Theory and practice are integrated to enable more independent learning. Experiences are real-life, making the learning more meaningful and leading to the learning of knowledge and facts, but also to the development of skills such as communication, problem-solving, accessing and using information, collaboration and self-management.

### 2.3.7 Applied Learning, Critical Reflection and Assessment

Ash & Clayton (2009, p.25) consider applied learning pedagogies ‘grounded in the conviction that learning is maximized when it is active, engaged, and collaborative’, with each one providing students ‘with opportunities to connect theory and practice, to learn in unfamiliar contexts, to interact with others unlike themselves and to practice using knowledge and skills’. The themes of engagement and sociality are strong for them. AL pedagogies share a design fundamental; that of the nurturing of learning through ‘a reflective,
experiential process that takes students out of the traditional classroom settings’. For Ash and Clayton critical reflection is the key to generating deepening learning through applied learning and they believe that without it students might ‘leave applied learning experiences with little capacity to turn learning into improved action’ (p.26). The students might take with them only a vague sense of the significance of what they have experienced or what they have learned and they might ‘miss the opportunity to learn about their own learning processes – to develop the meta-cognitive skills required for lifelong, self-directed learning the applied learning is so well suited to cultivate’ (p.27). Assessment within the FETAC/QQI system encourages critical reflection by the student through the use of reflective journals in project work and the doing and reporting on skills demonstrations. In applied learning students are encouraged to critically evaluate and document their experiences and performances, both to generate deeper learning and foster improvement. According to Ash & Clayton (2009, p.28)

.. the designer of applied learning opportunities is best understood as a reflective practitioner herself – one who engages in the same critical reflection that she expects of her students – thereby improving her thinking and action relative to the work of generating, deepening, and documenting student learning in applied learning.

2.4 21st Century Skills

Ongoing technological advancement has brought with it requirements for changes in education. Today’s students are likely to have several, and possibly quite different, careers in their lifetime. Learning does not cease at the end of school or college. Learning in the 21st century requires knowing how to learn in order to keep up with change. According to McCoy, Chief Executive of IBEC ‘Our millennials already have multiple careers, in more complex employment structures, with greater demand for flexibility, autonomy and direct engagement on their terms of employment’ (in O’Brien, 2015). He comments that estimates would suggest that current students will hold an
average of 10-12 jobs by the age of 38 and that 60% of them will be employed in jobs that do not even exist at present. He highlights the need to prepare students with ‘skills to work in hyperconnected, constantly evolving, digital workplaces’.

In the US, The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) was founded in 2002. The Partnership ‘recognizes that all learners need educational experiences in school and beyond, from cradle to career, to build knowledge and skills for success in a globally and digitally interconnected world’ (P21, 2015(a), p.9). P21 represents over 5 million members of the global workforce and brings together leaders from business, government and education from the US and abroad ‘to advance evidence-based education policy and practice and to make innovative teaching and learning a reality for all’.

P21 developed ‘a vision for student success in the new global economy’ (P21, 2015(b), p.1). Its publication: The Framework for 21st Century Learning (2015(b), p.1) ‘describes the skills, knowledge and expertise students must master to succeed in work and life; it is a blend of content knowledge, specific skills, expertise and literacies’.

The key elements of 21st century learning according to P21 are represented in Fig. 2.15. The graphic indicates both 21st century student outcomes (as represented by the arches of the rainbow) and 21st century learning support systems (as represented by the pools at the bottom). P21 views all the components as fully interconnected in 21st century teaching and learning, though they appear distinct in the graphic. The indicated student outcomes are the skills and knowledge that the learners need to master. P21 (2015(b), p.2) indicates ‘Today’s life and work environments require far more than thinking skills and content knowledge. The ability to navigate the complex life and work environments in the globally competitive information age requires students to pay rigorous attention to developing adequate life and career skills’.
The diagram shows that P21 advocate that US schools must align classroom environments with real world environments by fusing the 3Rs and 4Cs. The 3Rs include: English, reading or language arts; mathematics; science; foreign languages; civics; government; economics; arts; history; and geography and the 4Cs include: critical thinking and problem solving; communication, collaboration; and creativity and innovation. As the 3Rs serve as an umbrella for other subjects and core content, the 4Cs are a shorthand for all the skills needed for success in college, career, and life.

Technology, allowing constant access to information and the opportunity for social interaction, may perhaps provide opportunities for engagement and collaboration leading to creativity and innovation in thinking, which may prepare students better for life in the 21st century. The concept of 21st century learning and pedagogy is illustrated in Figs. 2.16 and 2.17. Fig. 2.16, though labelled at its source as six design principles of 21st century secondary education, could equally be applied to a further education sector.
Schwartzman and Bouas-Henry (2009, p.3) gave their insights on applied learning when they said ‘[a]pplied Learning ... designates the kinds of pedagogical principles and practices associated with engaged scholarship, communities of practice, civic engagement, experiential education’.

Fig. 2.17 depicts a framework for the concept of 21st century pedagogy from the perspective of the teacher and various pedagogical components. It illustrates several core components associated with applied learning – problem and project-based learning, real-world problems and relevant tasks. It mentions a collaborative and an interdisciplinary approach to teaching and acknowledges the enabling technologies now available. It points out the need for higher order thinking skills as the modern learner needs to be able to sort through, analyse and evaluate all the information available from multiple sources, to determine credibility and relevancy for their specific purposes.
Fig. 2.17 21st Century Pedagogy (TeachThought, 2013)

Fig. 2.18 depicts the 21st century classroom. It initially defines 21st century skills – ‘a combination of cognitive processes and the technologies that enable individuals to leverage these processes for the greatest impact’ – and continues with a definition of the 21st century classroom – ‘one that is student-centred, project based and focused on creating life-long learners’. It identifies the 21st century skills/competencies under four categories; research and information fluency, problem-solving and critical thinking, collaboration and communication, and creativity and innovation, and indicates the changing role of the teacher where they become more of a facilitator, and the changing approach now expected from the learners, that is that he/she becomes active in their own learning. Real-world, authentic tasks are stressed and the student must be provided with opportunities to communicate and collaborate, not just with others within the classroom, but also beyond the classroom. Students need to become familiar with digital tools and technology and have a need to use them.
2.5 Constructive alignment – Applied Learning and 21st Century Skills

‘Relevant and Applied Curriculum’ for the learner is also one of the six design principles’ requirements for 21st century learning shown in Fig. 2.16. Assessment features in both Fig. 2.16 and Fig. 2.17. In Fig. 2.16 the term ‘informative assessment’ is used and in Fig. 2.17 in the 21st century pedagogy illustration, reference is made to assessing using ‘relevant tasks’ with ‘clear, transparent goals and objectives’. Together all these point to constructive alignment, a learning and teaching principle devised by Biggs. Biggs coined the phrase ‘constructive alignment’ in 1999 and its basic premise is that what the learners need to know must be supported by the correct use of learning activities and assessment tasks. The learning activities, the intended learning outcomes, and the assessment tasks in a course/programme must be properly aligned. The teacher aligns the planned learning activities with the learning outcomes and the students construct meaning from what they do to learn. Students need an encouraging, engaging and supportive environment in which to carry out the required learning activities. This is illustrated in Fig. 2.19.
The FETAC module/minor award descriptors are the starting point for the delivery of a FETAC award in a college of further education. The award descriptors are presented as a combination of single learning outcomes (SLOs), preceded by a general statement of intent for that module, and followed by an identification of the assessment tools that must form the assessment process. The teacher must develop well-designed and appropriate learning activities and assessment criteria to enable the learning outcomes. This is an appropriate scenario for the application of Biggs’ Constructive Alignment as shown in Fig. 2.20.
2.6 Associated Learning Theory

The theoretical underpinnings of the Applied Learning philosophy is constructivist. The basic premise is that learning is an active, constructive process and the learner is viewed as the information constructor. Learners connect new information to prior knowledge and create their own representation of reality. Individuals learn by interacting with their environments, interpreting those environments and then constructing meaning from their interpretations. Sawyer (2006(a), p.2) stresses the importance of students actively participating in their own learning: ‘Educated graduates ... need to learn integrated and usable knowledge rather than the sets of compartmentalized and decontextualized facts emphasized by instructionism.’ Constructivist models of learning stress cooperative, collaborative work and non-traditional explorative methods so that students can begin to learn for themselves, and see the relevance of their learning to their daily lives.

Dewey (1933, 1938), a proponent of curriculum topics being integrated rather than isolated, believed that more meaningful learning resulted from students working together. He considered learning to be individual growth (a social experience) with this growth being fostered through hands-on activities connected to real-world issues and problems.

Vygotsky (1978) considered learning an intersubjective, cognitive, knowledge-building process and his scaffolding theory was based on the idea that learners build on what they already know and they can be supported in their learning through this premise. He believed in learning through experiencing the environment first hand. Vygotsky’s Social Development Theory (1978) argues that social interaction precedes development. Vygotsky focused on the connections between people and the sociocultural context in which they act and interact in shared experiences and he talked of ‘tools’ such as speech and writing being used to mediate their social environments. He believed that the internalisation of these tools led to higher thinking skills.
Bruner (1969), a believer in discovery learning, felt that students are more likely to understand and remember concepts they discover for themselves. He saw the role of teachers as facilitating discovery through suitable learning environments.

Merrill (2002) spent some time reviewing instructional design theories and identified five first principles for learning. He argued that learning is promoted and best facilitated when new knowledge is activated by previous knowledge, is integrated into the world of the learner, is demonstrated to the learner, is applied by the learner, and when the learner is engaged in solving real problems.

2.7 Evolving Conceptual Framework

The Further Education Institute discussed in this present study embraces a wide interpretation of Applied Learning and has four underpinning themes/principles. The Project for Applied Learning (PAL) at the Institute –

1. Emphasises the relevance of what is being learnt to the ‘real world’, outside ‘the classroom’ and makes that connection as immediate and transparent as possible.

2. Involves students and their teachers in partnerships and connected with organisations and individuals outside the school environment. These partnerships provide the necessary ‘out-of-school’ context for students to demonstrate the relevance of what they are learning.

3. Takes into account the students’ personal strengths, interests, goals and previous experiences. Working with the whole person involves valuing skills and knowledge that may not normally be the focus of the more traditional school experience. It also means taking into account differences in learning styles and ways of learning.

4. Acknowledges that moving students out of the classroom to learn also means helping them to make a shift to become more independent and responsible for their own learning. (GTI College Prospectus 2010-2011, p.5)
Effective applied learning at the college is sought both in the process and the product, in what is achieved and in how it is achieved, the theoretical understanding and the designed product.

From exploratory research, the PAL at the FEI, and the literature review on the subject of applied learning (especially the examples from other countries such as the US and Australia) a number of common themes were identified – collaborative learning, learning by doing real tasks, and engaging students more in their own learning by providing situations where they see a need to learn and by allowing creativity in their approach to tasks. A conceptual framework describing what an applied learning experience is, and what kind of an environment promotes this type of experience, began to emerge. An applied learning experience as mentioned above is considered by the researcher to be one that is variously Authentic, Aesthetic, Creative, Engaging and Social and takes place in an environment of Authenticity, Aestheticty, Creativity, Engagement, and Sociality. The researcher termed this the AACES Theoretical Framework of Applied Learning. What follows is a systematic review of these themes.

2.7.1 Authenticity

Lombardi (2007) refers to the shortness of the half-life of information and how individuals can expect to progress through multiple careers in their lifetime and how important authentic learning may become in a rapidly changing world. She considers authentic learning as a learning that ‘... typically focuses on real-world, complex problems and their solutions, using role-playing exercises, problem-based activities, case studies, and participation in virtual communities of practice.’ (p.2). Lombardi also refers to the authentic learning environments as ‘inherently multidisciplinary’, similar to the real world. For her, ‘authentic learning intentionally brings into play multiple disciplines, multiple perspectives, ways of working, habits of mind, and community’ (p.3). Lombardi comments on the importance of authentic activities in the development of skills:
Students immersed in authentic learning activities cultivate the kinds of ‘portable skills’ that newcomers to any discipline have the most difficulty acquiring on their own:

- The *judgment* to distinguish reliable from unreliable information
- The *patience* to follow longer arguments
- The *synthetic ability* to recognize relevant patterns in unfamiliar contexts
- The *flexibility* to work across disciplinary and cultural boundaries to generate innovative solutions.

Learning in the environment is the main mode of instruction for apprentices with the apprentice becoming an active participant in his/her own learning. The development of technology has also brought the possibility of simulated, near-real working/learning environments in certain disciplines. These simulated environments can also provide the learner with authentic activity.

Koschmann et al (1996, p.91) included a principle of authenticity as one of their six principles of effective learning –

Learning is sensitive to perspective, goals, and context, that is, the learner’s orientation, goals and experiences in the learning process determine the nature and usability of what is a learner; instruction, therefore, should provide for engagement in the types of activities that are required and valued in the real world.

Eales, Hall and Bannon (2002, p.34) refer to the definition of authenticity as offered by Brown, Collins and Duguid (1989):

The activities of a domain are framed by its culture. Their meaning and purpose are socially constructed through negotiations among present and past members. Activities thus cohere in a way that is, in theory, if not always in practice, accessible to members who move within the social framework. These coherent, meaningful, and purposeful activities are authentic, according to the definition of the term we use here. Authentic activities then, are most simply defined as the ordinary practices of the culture.

Herrington describes a model of authentic learning that was created to support courses and units using authentic learning and authentic e-learning.
Her model is based on nine key elements that can be used to design authentic learning environments. See Fig. 2.21.

**NINE ELEMENTS OF AUTHENTIC LEARNING:**

1. Provide *authentic contexts* that reflect the way the knowledge will be used in real life
2. Provide *authentic tasks and activities*
3. Provide access to *expert performances* and the modelling of processes
4. Provide *multiple roles and perspectives*
5. Support *collaborative construction of knowledge*
6. Promote *reflection* to enable abstractions to be formed
7. Promote *articulation* to enable tacit knowledge to be made explicit
8. Provide *coaching and scaffolding* by the teacher at critical times
9. Provide for *authentic assessment* of learning within the tasks.

Fig. 2.21 Nine elements of authentic learning (Herrington, n.d.)

Herrington considers an authentic learning environment can be a classroom and that ‘authentic’ does not necessarily mean real. ‘As a pedagogical model, authentic learning means that realistic tasks set in academic settings can challenge students to think and solve problems just as professionals do in the real world’. She proposes considering the types of tasks and their settings in a matrix with the **authenticity of the task** on one axis (from authentic to decontextualised), and the **setting** on the other (the classroom/university to the real setting) as in Fig. 2.22 below (also Appendix 4).
Authentic learning should be followed by authentic assessment. In the Authentic Assessment Toolbox, Mueller (2014) defines an authentic task as ‘An assignment given to students designed to assess their ability to apply standard-driven knowledge and skills to real-world challenges’ and he states four major reasons why authentic assessment should be used:

Authentic Assessments
- are direct measures,
- capture the constructive nature of learning,
- integrate teaching, learning and assessment, and
- provide multiple paths for demonstration.

It is important that students realise the ‘messiness’ of real life, and class planning needs to go beyond the classroom. Authentic tasks and exercises expose students to this ‘messiness’ and should provide the students with the confidence required to deal with real, and sometimes ambiguous, situations that they will encounter outside of the somewhat protected learning situation. In this way, authentic tasks and learning provide the ideal opportunity for the learner to construct useful transferable knowledge. Students become aware that real-life tasks do not neatly align themselves into separate disciplines that can be tackled and accomplished in isolation. Real-life tasks cut across disciplines and need to be accomplished collaboratively, in a collaborative environment that will empower the learners. The FETAC/CAS open syllabi of single learning outcomes, or SLOs,
with no specified method of delivery allow much scope for authentic learning and assessment.

2.7.2 Aestheticity

The Oxford Dictionary informs that the word aesthetic has a Greek origin, coming from the word aistheta – ‘perceptible things’. The Education Department at the University of North Carolina defines aesthetic education as

Education that recognizes the interconnectedness of body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Enabling students to express perceptions, feelings and ideas through reflective shaping of media including paint, clay, music, spoken or written works and bodies in movement.

Austring and Sørensen (2012) define an aesthetic learning process as

... a learning method where you transform your impressions of the world into aesthetic form expressions through aesthetic mediation in order to be able to reflect on and communicate about yourself and the world.

Further, they argue that:

As the aesthetic learning process is always relational and developed in interaction with the surrounding culture, the participants in the aesthetic activities can develop cultural identity and social skills. Add to this that the individual can share its inner world with others through aesthetic activities in the potential space and in this way create balance between its inner and outer world, realize itself and develop individual and collective identity. Last but not least aesthetic activities strengthen the joy of life, and they are an arena for development of imagination and creativity — society’s most important resources.

They believe that ‘[a]esthetic practice can be a knowledge process, in the proper sense of the word a way of understanding reality’ (2012, p. 91).
Research on aestheticity in learning has ultimately led back to Dewey and his writings on art and aesthetics. Experiencing things intensely through all the senses by fully engaging and realising was for Dewey an aesthetic experience.

In order to understand the esthetic in its ultimate and approved forms, one must begin with it in the raw; in the events and scenes that hold the attentive eye and ear of man, arousing his interest and affording him enjoyment as he looks and listens: the sights that hold the crowd—the fire-engine rushing by; the machines excavating enormous holes in the earth; the human-fly climbing the steeple-side; the men perched high in air on girders, throwing and catching red-hot bolts. The sources of art in human experience will be learned by him who sees how the tense grace of the ball-player infects the onlooking crowd . . . the zest of the spectator in poking the wood burning on the hearth and in watching the darting flames and crumbling coals. (Dewey, 1934, pp.4-5).

Dewey was a proponent of learning through experience. According to Pugh & Girod (2007, p.10) there was another aspect to Dewey’s work associated with the complement to this – experience through learning – and they believe his work provides insight into how learning concepts can foster enriched experience both in the classroom and in everyday life. They intimated that ‘Dewey’s aesthetics provide a conceptualization of what it means to engage in a particularly meaningful and transformative experience, and his writings on ideas provide insight into the role that the learning of concepts may play in such experience’.

Uhrmacher (2009, p.1), using Dewey’s ideas as a framework, as well as aesthetic theory, attempts to reveal ways to provide the opportunity for students to have aesthetically engaged learning experiences. He develops a number of themes in his article and claims that ‘... the upshot of providing aesthetic learning experiences is likely to include student satisfaction, an increase in perceptual knowledge, episodic memory retention, meaning making, and creativity and motivation.'
Robinson refers to the importance of aesthetic experiences in his *Changing Paradigms* (2008) Ted Talk. For Robinson ‘An aesthetic experience is one in which your senses are operating at their peak. When you are present in the current moment. When you are resonating with the excitement of this thing that you are experiencing, when you are fully alive’. He adds that we should be waking children up to ‘what they have inside of themselves’.

### 2.7.3 Creativity

Creativity is a common theme for Robinson. He believes in natural creative potential and that education should allow this creative capacity to develop. He distinguishes creativity (the process of having original ideas) from innovation (putting ideas into practice) as in note 12 in Uhrmacher’s article mentioned above. In that same article Uhrmacher (2009) provides his own ideas on creativity and innovation. He believed that creativity should be ‘a personally referenced criterion’, something new for the person who is carrying out the creative work but not having to be ‘new for the world’. When something was being brought ‘new into the world’, he considered it innovation. According to Robinson, developing these innate creative capacities involves a balance between teaching skills and understanding, and promoting the freedom to innovate.

Robinson was Chairman of the UK National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE) that produced a report — *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education* in May 1999, within which creativity was defined as ‘Imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value’, and creative education was defined as ‘forms of education that develop young people’s capacities for original ideas and action’ (p.5). The report commented on the potential of creativity and its impact on individuals when they find their own personal creative strength, indicating that that creativity can occur anywhere, in all aspects of everyday life, indicating that everybody has the ability to be creative. According to the report, while creativity is possible in all aspects of everyday life, ‘serious creative achievement relies on knowledge, control of materials and
command of ideas’ (p.6). The report acknowledged that creativity can also have an effect on self-esteem and achievement and indicated that creative education should encourage innovation while maintaining a balance between teaching knowledge and skills.

Robinson (2013) again encouraged innovation in schools, indicating that schools should feel free to innovate without being penalised – ‘Too much prescription is a dead hand on the creative pulse of teachers and students alike’. For Robinson, an appetite for discovery is what drives creativity for the learner. He believes that if students are motivated to learn, when they want to achieve something, they will acquire the skills to do so and will continue to improve their skills as their creative ambitions expand. Robinson believes that not all skills in a field have to be mastered before creative work can get started, but that there is ‘a growing mastery of skills and concepts’. ‘Focusing on skills in isolation can kill interest in any discipline’.

‘Creativity is part of what makes us human’ and ‘Creative works give us insight and enrich our lives’ are two comments from Sawyer (2006(c), p.3). He gives an insight into how scientists have discovered that explaining creativity requires understanding of individual inspiration and also of social factors like collaboration, networks of support and education. Creativity, according to Sawyer, is not a burst of inspiration but is mostly conscious hard work that results in the product. He talks of hard work peppered with mini-insights rather than a single moment of insight and also comments that creativity is almost never a solitary activity but fundamentally social and collaborative (p.259). Sawyer acknowledges Csikszentmihalyi as the person who introduced him to the field of creativity research and refers to him when indicating ‘Creativity is one of the most positive, life-affirming traits of humanity, and people in all walks of life report that they feel at their peak and in flow when they are being their most creative.’ Sawyer (2006(c), p.10)

Cremin et al. (2009) perceive creative teaching as a support to enhance learners' personal curiosity and desire to learn, and to take risks to become
more engaged with their learning experience as well as with the world around them.

2.7.4 Engagement

Being ‘engaged’ can sometimes be difficult to define and indeed when referring to student engagement, it can often be easier to describe students’ behaviour when they are disengaged. Disengaged students appear bored, disaffected, unmotivated and generally uninterested. Newmann (1986, p. 242) indicates students are engaged when they ‘devote substantial time and effort to a task, when they care about the quality of their work, and when they commit themselves because the work seems to have significance beyond its personal instrumental value’. It is generally believed that engaged students are more likely to perform well academically as learning is improved when students are interested and motivated.

Dewey (1934) believed that students needed to be actively involved in their education and that educators should provide situations where students would wish to become engaged. Eisner (2005) suggests that educators ought to focus on the degrees of engagement that students show in the classroom. Teachers want their students to become engaged learners. A review on available literature on engagement carried out in 2004 by Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (p.87), while mentioning some areas where further research needs to be carried out, indicate that ‘Engagement is associated with positive academic outcomes including achievement and persistence in school; and it is higher in classrooms with supportive teachers and peers, challenging and authentic tasks, opportunities for choice, and sufficient structure’.

Uhrmacher (2009) suggests the six themes of connections, active engagement, sensory experience, perceptivity, risk taking, and imagination, which teachers can draw upon to help students attain engaged learning experiences.
Csikszentmihalyi (1990) talks of a ‘state of flow’ when someone is fully immersed or engaged in an activity. When students are motivated they lose themselves in the task and become fully engaged with achieving the task. Robinson (2013) discusses the idea of engagement leading to creativity and to the ‘aesthetic experience’, as mentioned above.

In the 21st century creating learner engagement is often sought through Information and communication technologies. Wang and Kang (2006) coined the term ‘Cybergogy’ as a descriptive label for creating engaged learning online and developed a model of Cybergogy for Engaged Learning (Fig. 2.23).

Fig. 2.23 The “MM” Model: Cybergogy for Engaged Learning


The instructors can use this model to profile each learner and then design tactics to engage individuals accordingly, a process we call “customized engagement”. As a consequence, learners will not only have the opportunity to accomplish their learning goals, but also will be actively involved in the learning process.
2.7.5 Sociality

That social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognition is a major theme in Vygotsky's theoretical framework of Social Development Theory (1978). The second aspect of his theory is known as the More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) where the MKO is any person who has a higher level of ability or understanding than the learner in terms of the task, process or concept at hand. The MKO could be a teacher, a friend, or perhaps even an electronic device. The third aspect of his theory is The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which is the zone where learning occurs as it is the zone between what is known to the learner and what is unknown. See Fig. 2.24 below.

![Diagram of Zone of Proximal Development](image)

**Fig. 2.24 Zone of Proximal Development (University of British Columbia)**

This Social Development Theory premises that the learner must have an active role in her/his learning – the learning experience is a social construction of knowledge. Vygotsky's theory feeds into collaborative learning, where group members with different levels of ability can learn from one another. In the FEI being studied it is indeed the case that groups formed for any particular purpose will have different levels of ability and life experiences, due to the variety in age and previous educational attainment of its student cohort.
The idea of social interaction and cognition is also behind the idea of ‘Communities of Practice’ (Lave & Wenger, 1998) where groups of people share an interest for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly with one another sharing ideas and strategies. Learning then is often an incidental outcome from this social process as an individual becomes an active participant in a ‘community’. Lave and Wenger also used the terms ‘situated learning’ and ‘legitimate peripheral participation’ which they explain as ‘... learners inevitably participate in communities of practitioners and that the mastery of knowledge and skill requires newcomers to move toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community.’ (1991, p.29)

2.8 The AACES Theoretical Framework

The five defined themes of an applied learning experience (as defined by the researcher), which also identify an applied learning environment, are summarised in Table 2.1. Alongside the themes are the associated learning theories and their chief proponents.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEMES &amp; DEFINITIONS</th>
<th>CHAMPIONS</th>
<th>ASSOCIATED THEORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Authenticity</strong></td>
<td>Lave</td>
<td><em>Experiential Learning Theory</em> <em>(Dewey 1938)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bruner</td>
<td>Posits that learning is unintentional and situated within authentic activity, context and culture.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Authentic Learning</strong> <em>(Herrington et al., 2010)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive Apprenticeship</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>‘Learning methods that are embedded in authentic situations are not merely useful; they are essential’. <em>(Brown, Collins &amp; Duguid, 1989)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aesthetically</strong></td>
<td>Dewey</td>
<td><em>Experiential Learning Theory</em> <em>(Uhrmacher, 2009)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Robinson</td>
<td><em>Theory of Aesthetic Learning</em> <em>(Uhrmacher, 2009)</em></td>
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<td>Uhrmacher</td>
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*In education, the term *authentic learning* refers to a wide variety of educational and instructional techniques focused on connecting what students are taught in school to real-world issues, problems, and applications. The basic idea is that students are more likely to be interested in what they are learning, more motivated to learn new concepts and skills, and better prepared to succeed in college, careers, and adulthood if what they are learning mirrors real-life contexts, equips them with practical and useful skills, and addresses topics that are relevant and applicable to their lives outside of school. (Glossary of Education Reform)*

*Education that recognizes the interconnectedness of body, mind, emotions, and spirit. Enabling students to express perceptions, feelings and ideas through reflective shaping of media including paint, clay, music, spoken or written works, and bodies in movement. (University of North Carolina, n.d.). An aesthetic learning process is a learning method where you transform your impressions of the world into aesthetic form in order to be able to reflect on and communicate*
**Creativity**  
The tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others. (Franken (1994) p.396)  
‘….all creativity includes improvisation, collaboration, and communication.’  
Creativity is one of the most positive, life-affirming traits of humanity, and people in all walks of life report that they feel at their peak or in flow when they are being their most creative (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990)’ in Sawyer, 2006, p.10.

| Robinson Sawyer | Csikszentmihalyi | **Action Theory of Creativity** (Sawyer)  
Creativity is fundamentally social and collaborative ... it involves preparation, training and hard work ... the process is more important than the product (2006, p.257) |

**Engagement**  
Student engagement refers to the degree of attention, curiosity, interest, optimism, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in their education. Generally speaking, the concept of ‘student engagement’ is predicated on the belief that learning improves when students are inquisitive, interested, or inspired, and that learning tends to suffer when students are bored, dispassionate, disaffected, or otherwise ‘disengaged.’ (Glossary of Education Reform)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Csikszentmihalyi</th>
<th>Dewey</th>
<th>Newmann</th>
<th>Uhrmacher</th>
<th>Robinson</th>
<th>Eisner</th>
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| **Engagement Theory**  
Experiential Theory |

**Sociality**  
‘Collaborative learning redefines the learning experience as a social construction of knowledge’ (Vygotsky, 1978)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vygotsky</th>
<th>Kalakowski</th>
<th>Lave</th>
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</table>
| **Zone of Proximal Development.** (Vygotsky, 1978)  
Social Development Theory (Vygotsky, 1978)  
Social Constructivism  
Communities of Practice  
Social Learning Theory |

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Table 2.1: Theoretical Framework Summary – AACES
2.9 Summary

This chapter summarised the orienting theoretical foundations and framework that informed the work undertaken in this thesis in the development of a model of applied learning for an FE college. It sought to define the underlying design themes which would identify both an applied learning experience and an applied learning environment (Table 2.1).

The five themes of Authenticity, Aestheticity, Creativity, Engagement, and Sociality were identified. These themes are not distinct in themselves, but are intrinsically linked. Commenting on one theme can draw in one, if not more, of the others. According to Sawyer (2006) when we are engaged in the act of being creative, we feel we are performing at the peak of our abilities. Creative work gives us insight and enriches our lives.

Herrington, Reeves, Oliver and Woo (2004) suggest that learning environments be authentic in order to better engage students, while Herrington and Herrington (2006) posit that learning activities should get students to become active participants in their own learning process and to work collaboratively to solve problems and achieve learning. Lombardi (2007, p.2) points out authentic learning environments are ‘inherently multidisciplinary’.

Robinson (2001) believes that ‘Being creative involves doing something’, and that creativity is possible ‘... whenever human intelligence is actively engaged’ (p.113). He also refers to the experience when you are involved in an engaging and creative experience as a multimodal, holistic, fully realised ‘aesthetic experience’ (Robinson, 2010, 5, p.53).

The next chapter, Chapter 3: Methodology & Design Research Context, initially describes the methodology used in this research and outlines the reason for its choice. It proceeds to elaborate on the context of the research and the design process ahead of Chapters 4, 5 & 6, iterative design cycles 1, 2 and 3 respectively.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY & DESIGN RESEARCH CONTEXT

3.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter provides an explanation as to the initiation of the research, why and how it began and how it progressed. It includes a description of the research methodology employed in this study to address the research question of the possibility of developing an appropriate transferable model of AL for the FE sector suitable for the 21st century.

The researcher examined a number of research methodologies before deciding which methodology would provide the most suitable framework for the research. The rationale for the research approach chosen is discussed and possible limitations of the chosen methodology addressed. A description of research activities and research techniques/methods employed for data collection and data analysis throughout the course of the study is included as is the issue of trustworthiness of the data and subsequent analysis.

A mixed methods methodological approach was taken to the study; an exploratory design with mainly qualitative investigative techniques with an initial pilot project, and DBR. DBR is typically used in educational research and aims ‘to bring together practice and theory in creating effective design solutions’ (Hall, 2004, p.8).

3.2 Research Context

This mainly descriptive qualitative research grew from a vocational interest in whether the introduction of an applied learning approach for the delivery of certain curriculum requirements in a Further Education college was successful in providing a useful and positive experience for the students involved. This interest was prompted by a suggestion from the college Principal that such a practical approach to the delivery of programmes be tested where feasible. Initial investigation revealed a paucity of existing prior research on the topic of applied learning, as the term is used here, or on
teaching methodologies in the specific FE sector. Affirmative initial response from an introductory study in the college, mainly through observation and casual conversation with both staff and students, confirmed the possibility of extending the investigative research to the bigger question of designing a model for this particular approach to course delivery for use in the FE sector of Irish education.

As an educator, the researcher is involved in the process of instruction and learning, in this rapidly evolving 21st century context, and is aware of the challenges being faced by students. Influenced by the book 21st Century Skills Rethinking How Students Learn (Bellanca, J. and Brandt, R. 2010) and the researcher’s own constructivist teaching approach, as well as a growing conviction that learning by doing enhances the learning experience of FE students, the researcher extended the research question to become — How can we create a sustainable AL intervention in the local further education college, while developing a transferrable AL design model to promote 21st century learning in further education in general?

3.3 The Educational Setting

3.3.1 Background – the College

The FE Institute was opened on its present site in 1938 as a Technical School following the approval from the Department of Education in 1933 of financial assistance for the building of a new school. It had originated in 1894 at a different site with the aim ‘to furnish instruction in the principles of science and art applicable to industries’ according to an article by a local historian (Kenny, 2009, p.108). The article also mentioned the school’s special feature of having a navigation and seamanship department to train those who wanted a career at sea. It later became known as a Vocational School and also offered students the opportunity to prepare for academic examinations (Group Certificate, Intermediate Certificate, Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate). Its migration to a Post-Leaving Certificate, Further Education College began in the early 1990s as the result of declining numbers at second-
level. The school initially introduced a small number of Post Leaving Certificate courses (PLCs), as they were initially called, or Further Education which is the term now in use, alongside its second-level school, and the College became a provider of NCVA (National Council for Vocational Awards) Levels 2 and 3. These became FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council) Levels 5 and 6 awards at a later date. These are situated on the Irish National Framework for Qualifications (See Chapter 1) as Common Awards at levels 5 and 6.

The FEI in the study caters for approximately 1200 learners annually in its day school, providing courses in 8 broad categories – Applied Health & Social Sciences, Art & Design, Fashion, Hairdressing & Beauty, Media, Computing & Engineering, Business, and Sport. The FEI also operates an Adult Education or ‘Night’ College, catering for approximately 400 learners per term and offering some of the same certification as the day college, as well as providing general interest, uncertified classes. The majority of the courses in the day college are one academic year in duration. Fig. 3.1 is a listing of the awards on offer.

3.3.2 College Accommodation and Location

The college consists of a main college building with two smaller locations nearby. The main building contains classrooms, computer suites, a lecture hall, in addition to specialist salons and studios, and has car-parking facilities. The second building (5 minute walk) again contains the same mix of facilities on a smaller scale, and the third building (3 minute walk) is a video recording studio, affectionately known as ‘The Shed’.

Located at a busy junction close to the centre of Galway City, the college is an imposing building on the edge of one of the city’s oldest residential areas and is often used as an easily identifiable landmark.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Applied Social Studies</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nursing Studies</td>
<td>Certificate in Health Science &amp; Complementary Therapies</td>
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<td>Diploma in Health Science, Sports Nutrition &amp; Personal Training</td>
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<td>Advanced Certificate in Drawing &amp; Visual Inquiry [FETAC Level 6]</td>
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<td>Digital Marketing &amp; Entrepreneurship</td>
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<th>Digital Media: Radio &amp; Journalism</th>
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<td>Music &amp; Composition</td>
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<td>Studio &amp; Live Sound Production</td>
<td>Film &amp; TV</td>
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<th>Strength, Conditioning &amp; Injury Prevention</th>
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<th>Construction Technology: Renewable Energies &amp; Engineering</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electronic Technology</td>
<td>Computer Aided Design and Architectural Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture Making &amp; Design</td>
<td>Advanced Certificate in Architectural Technology &amp; Design</td>
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Fig. 3.1 Listing of current courses in the FEI
3.4 Methodology Selection

Methodology is a structured approach to arriving at an answer to a research question. It is the development of the process of inquiry that the researcher can follow in an attempt to investigate and find answers to research questions. The context of this research is a ‘live’ Further Education College in which the researcher is a teacher, as well as being part of the management team as one of seven assistant principals. As an assistant principal, the researcher had the position of ‘timetabler’ in the FEI during the earlier, active research years of the study and as such was involved in all areas of the college from a curriculum point of view.

Any research methodology adopted required suitability for an educational environment where students attend, in the main, for one academic year. It would require flexibility in allowing for easy revision as indicated by unfolding research to occur in a timely manner. There are approximately 70 teachers employed in this FE college during the course of an academic year. Some of these teachers have gone through the transition from second level to further education level (mentioned in Chapter 1) and have already undertaken the onerous task of reskilling. Therefore, any selected methodology would require sensitivity towards the current practices in both teaching and assessment, of already very busy teachers, and allow for adaptability and perhaps alignment with, and adoptability to, those current practices.

The college caters on a yearly basis for approximately 1200 further education students, attending 40 courses, ranging over eight departments during the day. It also caters for part-time students through its Part-Time Education & Training Programme during the evenings and weekends. Also, through its applied learning projects, the college has developed some important community partnerships. A qualitative method of research would provide opportunity for active participation from those associated with the college, be they teachers, students, community groups, service users, who wished to participate and provide data through their own personal experiences. Data
collection could be mixed within a qualitative study – open-ended questionnaires for teachers and students, student journals, individual teacher and student interviews, observation notes from attendance at events. These multiple data sources would provide triangulation, along with the views of an Advisory Panel, set up by the researcher and consisting of college management and colleagues involved most heavily in the identified applied learning experiences in the college and interested in the concept. This advisory panel could also provide opinion on research data evolving as the research was in progress. Triangulation ‘is one strategy that can help speak specifically to concerns associated with the multiple, sometimes blurred roles taken on by design researchers’ (McKenney, Nieveen & van den Akker, 2006, p.85).

The methodology selected would have to aid both in creating and enhancing an applied learning environment in which to practice applied learning and also provide design guidelines to other colleges who might want to adopt this approach in the future. A real-world educational environment is very often a messy setting, as mentioned earlier, with many dependent variables and any methodological approach chosen would have to accommodate this by being flexible and adaptable and allowing for interventions and therewith change.

Anderman (2009) acknowledges that research methodologies can be classified in many different ways and he provided the table (Fig. 3.2) below where various methods are briefly described and then compared and contrasted. Design experiments examine the effects of educational interventions while the interventions are being implemented with the intervention being changed as the situation is continuously re-evaluated. Anderman also comments on a limitation of this method:

... the changes in instruction that occur across iterations are often confounded with greater teacher familiarity with the approach as a whole. This can be problematic, because it hinders researchers’ abilities to make causal inferences.
While acknowledging this limitation, design experiments was considered the most suitable methodology for the current educational research. Analysis of data resulting from observations, questionnaires and interviews, could be carried out as an inductive process in a pragmatic constructivist manner – looking for consistencies, patterns and themes. This approach to the analysis of data would allow for change and was considered suitable for the DBR methodology in an educational setting where there were a lot of unknowns and where it was not obligatory for staff to engage. DBR with mixed methods was the methodology of choice. Appendix 12 shows an example of the analysis.

### 3.4.1 Design-Based Research

DBR is frequently traced back to 1992 when both Ann Brown and Alan Collins introduced the concept of conducting educational research and subsequent design in the context of real-life settings. DBR is iterative in its approach. Evaluation of the design is formative in that the data may require the researchers to refine the initial design theories and, in turn, to develop a more detailed design intervention accordingly (Collins, Joseph and Bielaczyc, 2004). Design research has the potential to help develop more effective educational interventions, and to offer opportunities for learning during the

[t]he goal of DBR is to use the close study of a single learning environment usually as it passes through multiple iterations and as it occurs in naturalistic contexts, to develop new theories, artefacts and practices that can be generalised to other schools and classrooms.

Rowland (2007, p.14) indicates that DBR has ‘the intention of better connecting theory to practice and more directly influencing educational innovation’ (p.14) and acknowledges that ‘it succeeds in bringing research closer to practice’ (p.21).

According to Duignan (2009, p.71) advancement of understanding emerges from the iterative evaluation and refinement of interventions over time and he referred to the ‘context-specific intervention design principles of design-based research.’

Cobb (1999) indicates that it is through intervention that models evolve and through subsequent refining and testing that effective models are developed and can be deployed in other contexts. The Design-Based Research Collective (2003, p.7), in referring to DBR, comments ‘Models of successful innovation can be generated through such work – models, rather than particular artefacts or programs, are the goal.’

Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc (2004) investigating the theoretical and methodological issues associated with design research, describe DBR as a progressive refinement approach to design in the real world rather than in the laboratory, developed as a way of carrying out formative research where a design is constantly reviewed and revised. While they acknowledge design research as a powerful tool, they also identify (p.16) the challenges it brings with it, including:

- Difficulties arising from the complexity of real world situations and their resistance to experimental control.
Large amounts of data arising from a need to combine ethnographic and quantitative analysis.

Comparing across designs.

They refer (p.20) to Collins (1999) who compared laboratory studies of learning to design experiments in terms of seven aspects of their methodology:

1. Laboratory settings vs. messy situations – Design experiments are set in the messy situations that characterize real life learning, in order to avoid the distortions of laboratory experiments.
2. A single dependent variable vs. multiple dependent variables – In design experiments there are many dependent variables that matter, though the researchers may not pay attention to them all.
3. Controlling variables vs. characterizing the situation – There is no attempt to hold variables constant, but instead the goal is to identify all the variables, or characteristics of the situation that affect any dependent variables of interest.
4. Fixed procedures vs. flexible design revision – Design experiments ... start with planned procedures and materials which are not completely defined and which are revised depending on their success in practice.
5. Social isolation vs. social interaction – Design experiments are set in complex social situations such as a classroom.
6. Testing hypotheses vs. developing a profile – In design experiments the goal is to look at many different aspects of the design and develop a qualitative and quantitative profile that characterizes in practice.
7. Experimental vs. co-participant design and analysis – In design experiments there is an effort to involve different participants in the design, or order to bring their different expertise into producing and analysing the design.

In 2004 the JLS published an issue dedicated to DBR (Issue 13). Barab was one of the authors of the introductory article in that issue ‘Design-Based Research: Putting a Stake in the Ground’. Here Barab and Squire, acknowledge the lack of a methodological toolkit for the advancement of new theory in respect of how people learn and see the necessity for such an evidence-generating toolkit if new theories are to be accepted. Barab and Squire saw the potential of DBR as a methodological toolkit, but posed a
number of questions on issues such as core focus, context, researcher bias, for addressing by the LS community if any claims coming from the application of DBR could be accepted to others.

DBR has been criticised for being little more than formative evaluation. According to Barab and Squire (2004, p.5), formative evaluation methodologies are about improving the value of a particular designed artifact or a process for carrying out design, whereas DBR is concerned with using design in the service of developing broad models of how humans think, know, act and learn, essentially contributing to a larger body of theory. In carrying out their own design work as applied researchers, Barab and Squire had as their goal ‘to directly impact practice while advancing theory that will be of use to others’ (p.8), and see DBR as having a pragmatic philosophical underpinning where the value of a theory ‘lies in its ability to produce changes in the world’ (p.6).

Di Sessa and Cobb (2004) argue that DBR should involve theory work, and that the design platforms should be treated as contexts through which theory can be advanced. This type of work is iterative and produces what they refer to as ‘ontological innovations’ (p.9).

The joint role of researchers as designers and researchers is an issue in DBR and Barab and Squire raise the possibility of the ‘associated threats to validity’ (p.10) that can be brought about by the researcher being intimately involved from conceptualising and designing to implementing and researching of a certain pedagogical approach, and intervening where required. It is through this intervention that models evolve and through subsequent refining and testing that effective models are developed and deployed in other contexts according to Cobb (Cobb et al, 1999). Barab and Squire (2004) warn of the responsibility of the design-based researcher to remember that claims are based on researcher influenced contexts (p.10). They also acknowledge the challenge to DBR of generating robust theory that can maintain its robustness even when variables are being changed during the design process (p.11).
Barab and Squire acknowledge that as a community, design-based researchers must work to conceptualise and inquire about the material, social and cultural contexts through which their work takes on meaning.

Hoadley, in an interview conducted at the AERA International Convention in 2006 made the following comments

Conclusions drawn from DBR are just as strong as those drawn from summative research. One of the characteristics that distinguishes formative and summative research is whether or not the intervention is perceived to be final and well understood and I think one of the things that DBR calls into question is whether an intervention is ever final and whether it is possible to understand an intervention well apart from its context of implementation. So if one were to introduce the same intervention in a different context would it produce the same results or not. That is an open question that DBR would try to answer but wouldn’t presume it was done once and for all. What was thought to be summative might turn out to be formative after all.

From the comments above, it can be concluded that DBR is a methodology that can deal with situations where flexibility is required, does consider practice and theory and is capable of producing a model as an outcome. The methodology is suited to the present research, where the introduction of an AL approach is being examined in the naturalist context of an FE college, providing mainly courses of one academic year in duration, and where the success or otherwise of interventions needs to be addressed in a timely manner.

3.4.2 DBR Summary

Design experiments are set in real-life learning situations, there are many dependent variables and there is no use of controlling variables. DBR does not test a hypothesis but develops a qualitative and quantitative profile that characterises the design in practice, and welcomes input from participants at all stages. Fig. 3.3, from Amiel and Reeves (2008, p.34,) compares DBR and
traditional predictive research where a new technique is put to the test in a controlled environment.

Amiel and Reeves explain (p.35):

The outcomes of design-based research are a set of design principles or guidelines derived empirically and richly described, which can be implemented by others interested in studying similar settings and concerns. While the ultimate objective is the development of theory, this might only occur after long-term engagement of multiple design investigations.

![Diagram of Predictive versus design-based research](image)

Fig. 3.3 Predictive versus design-based research (Amiel & Reeves, 2008)

Considering the research requirements and with knowledge from a literature review, DBR became the methodology of choice to approaching the research question of how to develop a transferrable AL design model to promote 21st century learning in further education.

The research was guided by two main models for design research. The first of these was a set of guidelines to the process from Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc (2004, p.33) which provide a good overview of the process and is reproduced in Fig. 3.4. The second was a model for educational design research developed by McKenney & Reeves (2012) and based on DBR’s iterative develop-
ment of products, both proximally and distally. Proximally, the research informs a product that is internally-focused and specific. Distally, the research informs a manifestation of a product which is externally orientated and could be informative to others. This generic model is diagrammatically illustrated in Fig. 3.5 and shows two main outputs resulting from a three-phase process. The practical output (Maturing Intervention) is the proximal one mentioned above. The distal perspective is manifested through the theoretical output (Theoretical Understanding). The squares represent the 3 phases of research and development activities, the rectangles are the two main outputs, and the triangle represents the interaction.

Fig. 3.4 Guidelines for carrying out Design Research.
(Collins, Joseph & Bielaczyc, 2004)
3.4.3 Validity and Triangulation

In order to address any possible issues of threats to validity in the use of DBR, the researcher prioritised triangulation of data through the use of multiple data sources in this predominantly qualitative study. She consulted throughout the project with knowledgeable colleagues in her FE college workplace who acted in a supportive informal way, facilitating clarification where necessary, and with her university graduate research committee who provided opinion on evolving survey data from the three iterative research cycles, thus ensuring objectivity and robustness in the research at all times.

3.4.4 Ethical Considerations

With regards to ethical considerations, permission was sought from management to undertake this research and from the outset the researcher made a clear distinction between obtaining information for her role as ‘timetabler’ in the school and that of researcher. Where comments on applied learning came from staff members through casual conversation rather than through arranged interview, their permission was sought at all times to use those comments with the same anonymity guaranteed as for interviews. As invitation was an open one by the principal to the teaching staff
to embrace the idea of applied learning in their own work, all staff members were given an opportunity to comment. Surveys of students (adults) and teachers undertaken by the researcher were all anonymous with the groups of respondents chosen according to the activities being examined during a particular DBR cycle. As research is a common undertaking, and particularly action research, in an educational environment, staff are accustomed to being asked to contribute to various surveys and questionnaires. No ethical issues arose with regards to the present research.

3.5 The Research

3.5.1 Initiation of Research

This research commenced due to an interest inspired in the researcher by encouragement from the then Principal to all staff to adapt where possible a ‘learning-by-doing’ approach to curriculum delivery. As mentioned previously, the Principal mooted two interlinked ideas — the idea of having assessment events for students, and the idea of Applied Learning — for thought and discussion by the staff. These were not totally new concepts to the staff as, being a Technical School in the past, there was a legacy ‘learn-by-doing’ ethos. Also, for example, the Art and Furniture Design departments already had an assessment event where the students show-cased their work at an End of Year Exhibition, and project-based learning (where learners have to apply their learning to a particular task) was very much to the fore in both these departments.

The suggestion of a ‘Fashion Fiesta’ as a concept was brought by the Principal to the group of teachers involved in various fashion awards in the college. The Fiesta was envisioned as an opportunity for students to present their coursework for assessment in a new manner than heretofore.

The first Fashion Fiesta took place in May 2009, a culmination of work from the academic year 2008/2009. The fashion-themed week included as its highlight a fashion show where students had their work modelled, or indeed
some students were both designer and model. Hair and Beauty Departments provided the hair styling and make-up for the show, which successfully took place in the FEI Fashion Studio, transformed from a teaching studio for the event. Four different course groups were invited to be involved. Students were not obliged to display their course work for assessment in this manner but the majority were interested in taking part. Elements of assessment from a number of the students’ practical course modules were displayed. Some of the modules providing elements for assessment were Fashion Design, Fashion Styling, Retailing, Merchandising, Garment Construction, Embroidery and Design Skills. The Fiesta provided scope to those students studying Event Production as there were a number of elements to the Fashion Week that needed to be organised and managed — the Fiesta launch, Live Windows, the catwalk show, static shows of moodboards and displays of project work. Figs. 3.6 and 3.7 are photographs from the event. Fig. 3.6 is an example of a ‘Live Window’ display which offered opportunity to the students to provide elements of assessment for the styling, designing and merchandising modules in particular. Fig. 3.7 shows two shots from the catwalk. The shot on the left shows a student with her design being modelled by one of her classmates. In the background are some moodboards on display. The shot on the right shows a student wearing her own creation. In the background is the audience.

The show proved popular with students, teachers and parents, and students were pleased overall with the opportunity to showcase their work to their parents, teachers and fellow students and experience their responses.

Following the overall success of this applied learning fashion event, staff were asked to consider whether an applied approach could be utilised in other departments within the college with other courses. All staff were encouraged to look at the modules they were teaching and see if an alternative, applied approach would be appropriate to their own work. The Principal also stressed the need to consider the range of knowledge and skills possessed in abundance by many categories of people in the real world and how we could
perhaps access and utilise those skills to upskill our own staff and improve our curriculum for the benefit of our students. The Principal sought suggestions for opportunities for real-life work and learning for as many of the Institute’s students as possible. This initiative became the Project for Applied Learning in the college and was given the acronym PAL. The term Applied Learning first appeared in college literature in 2009.
Chapter 3

These events led the researcher to the consideration of PAL as a potential research study. The apparent paucity of research in the area further strengthened the idea of PAL as a topic of study. The following possible research question as mentioned in Chapter 1, was proposed:

*How can we create a sustainable AL intervention in the local further education college, while developing a transferrable AL design model to promote 21st century learning in further education in general?*

Permission was sought from college management by the researcher to take on this project as a PhD research study and an application was submitted for a research place. This present research commenced November 2010 with the proposed process as set out below (section 3.5.2).

3.5.2 Overview of Proposed Process of Research Study

Arising from the discussion document mentioned above, further discussion with college management, initial research into AL and the identification of examples of AL within the college, a planned process for the exploratory study was designed and is outlined below:

Phase 1 Applied Learning Project – Exploratory Study

- Encouraging the adoption of a ‘learning-by-doing’ policy where possible during course delivery and assessment in an effort to encourage student engagement and student retention throughout all departments in the college.

- Examining specific approaches to teaching and learning already in operation in various diverse areas of study within the college and identifying the challenges associated with each approach.

- Examining collaborative approaches to programme delivery and how these are facilitated by the use of a Learning Management Framework, already in use in some areas of the College and fully explained later in this chapter.
• Investigating the merits of the EU-sponsored Leonardo da Vinci student mobility programme where students are funded to spend up to 4 weeks abroad on work experience.

• Examining the increasing need for students to acquire general skills such as research, critical analysis, communication, presentation.

• Identifying possible benefits to students of an applied learning approach.

Phase 2 Applied Learning Project – DBR Cycles

• Cycle 1 – informed by initial research

• Cycle 2 – informed by Cycle 1 through research, review, observation, interviews and surveys

• Cycle 3 – informed by Cycles 1 and 2 through research, review, observation, interviews and surveys

Phase 3 Applied Learning Project – Findings, Conclusion.

3.6 Identification of Applied Learning Experiences in the College

This research is initially a review of how learning and teaching is already taking place in the college, identifying and categorising present learning activities, seeing where activities complement one another, looking at possibilities of both within-department and across-department collaboration in a quest to establish a model of AL suitable for use in this educational environment, which could be transferable to other similar environments, and also perhaps provide a scaffolding for transfer to not-so-similar ones.

Commencing with an overview of all courses and looking for similarities, the first obvious example of applied learning occurring in all departments is Work Placement. All FETAC/QQI awards require a component of work experience. During the duration of the present research, as mentioned above, a changeover was taking place and modules/minor awards were being upgraded and both the ‘old – W20008’ and ‘new – 5N1356’ modules were in operation in different awards. The purpose as outlined in both work
experience modules is given below and, as can be seen, is updated considerably in the new version.

W20008
Purpose: The module is designed to meet the needs of learners undertaking a wide range of Level 5 further education and training courses. Work Experience is a planned experiential learning activity and is an integral part of an educational process. It involves learners preparing and planning for work, working under direction in a specific vocational area and reviewing and evaluating that work. The experience of work enables learners to develop work skills, evaluate employment opportunities and cope with changing work environments.

5N1356
The purpose of this award is to equip the learner with the relevant knowledge, skill and competence to participate in the workplace for a limited time, carrying out work-related tasks independently while under general direction.

Learners will be able to:
1. Examine work organisations and personal career opportunities in a particular vocational area, to include consideration of work-related issues and needs
2. Analyse key challenges and opportunities facing a particular vocational area
3. Summarise the basic rights and responsibilities of employees and employers in a particular work, organisational or institutional context, to include health, safety and welfare at work, equality legislation, union representation and regulations relating to pay
4. Compile a personal and vocational skills audit and career plan for a specific vocational area, to include goals and action points for the period of work experience
5. Present relevant work experience material, to include a CV or personal statement, letter of application, evidence of job-finding skills, skills checklist, statement of learning goals, contractual arrangements
6. Participate effectively in work experience, to include observation of good timekeeping, working independently while under general direction, meeting deadlines, personal presentation, communication, adherence to health, safety and other relevant regulations
7. Demonstrate effective communication skills in the workplace, to include personal, interpersonal and technological communication skills
8. Reflect on workplace experiences, to include feedback by supervisor(s) or mentor(s) on personal performance and challenges such as conflict, criticism, meeting new people and learning in relation to quality management

This work experience requirement is usually achieved through a two-week block, or one-day a week for 10 weeks, in a suitable local placement where students get experience on the job – WEXP. (This was the abbreviation for this module already in use on timetables in the college.)

This work experience requirement can also be achieved through the mobility project, newly commenced in the college, where students can travel to undertake work experience in another country for up to four weeks. Funded by the European Union under the Leonardo da Vinci project title, this is a second example of AL in operation; Mobility Abroad for Knowledge and Experience – MAKE. (This was the acronym given the project on application for funding to Léargas.)

As previously mentioned, the FEI houses some specialist facilities that allow the required work experience element of awards as well as practical requirements for other modules be fulfilled through in-house, real environment work. The researcher decided to continue with the use of acronyms in order to more easily facilitate the development of a model and assigned the acronym RELW (Real Environment Learning & Working) to this element of AL.

The use of a Learning Management Framework (explained in more detail later) for delivery management is encouraged in all departments and where a small group of teachers has the responsibility to deliver the curriculum for an award to a class of students, all teachers are aware of cross-overs between
modules. Delivery of a major award curriculum may then be a more collaborative effort, more integrated and project-driven, allowing greater understanding of the subject matter. Assessments may then also be integrated, more applied and more work-like tasks than if each module/minor award required for a major award was treated as ‘stand-alone’. Within the present research this approach is identified as the fourth type of applied learning in the FEI and given the acronym – AIDA (Award Integration – Delivery & Assessment) by the researcher.

Collaborative learning/assessment events is the fifth and final type of applied learning identified and explained above with the Fashion Fiesta example. This allows groups of students to collaborate and display skills learnt, and products designed and made during the course of the academic year. For identification purposes within this research it has been termed Collaborative Applied Learning Events – CALE. An ‘assessment event’ (normally simply referred to as an ‘event’) is an authentic opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning. Events can be very diverse. The Beauty Department may put on an event such as a pop-up salon providing manicures and pedicures with donations perhaps going to a specified charity. This allows the students not only to be assessed on their specific skills in manicure and pedicure but also in their organisational, marketing and customer care skills, covering SLOs across a number of the modules for their award. Business students could be given the opportunity to show not only their marketing skills, but also their presentation and communication abilities through an assessment event where all marketing group projects are presented formally to an audience of their peers and teachers.

These five types of learning activities taking place in the FEI, occur within the identified applied learning AACES framework/environment and lead to the realisation of AACES in context. See Fig. 3.8.
3.6.1 Work Experience (WEXP)

Work Experience is a mandatory minor award for all FETAC/CAS major awards. The WEXP we are referring to here is work experience in a local business or industry, either local to the college or local to the student’s home town. Other options for fulfilling this requirement are the MAKE project, which only caters for a small number of students and also the collaborative events (CALE) and working in the real environment studios in the college (RELW), explained further below.

Students are encouraged to seek work experience for themselves in a suitable placement immediately when they commence their course. In order to facilitate this task, many of the courses are run over four days with the fifth day being available for work experience. Work experience may also be done in separate one week blocks and this may often suit students not living locally but who may obtain work experience in their home town and avail of college breaks to fulfil the placement requirement. Some students may have a mixture, for example, one day per week for five weeks and then one block week. Some others may satisfy the requirement by having a mixture of WEXP,
CALE and RELW. An example of where this might occur could be sound media students, where they might spend a week on work experience with a suitable company, could be involved in sound for the Fashion Event or Art Exhibition and might complete their mandatory work experience requirement by working in the sound studio in the FEI during a ‘Sessions’ recording.

3.6.2 Mobility Abroad for Knowledge and Experience (MAKE)

Funded by the European Union and administered in Ireland by Léargas, a not-for-profit organisation that operates under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills (Léargas translates as ‘Insight’), the FEI initially applied for, and was first granted funding in 2010 for this student mobility project intended to enable students to experience the language and culture of another European country and to do this through work-based learning or work experience. It fitted compliantly into the criteria as identified by this research on AL in the FEI and fulfilled the criteria of the FETAC/CAS Work Experience Module. Placements were sought to suit the curriculum being undertaken by the students and also keeping in mind specific interests of the students.

MAKE participants were identified through a selection process with attendance and vocational interest being two of the criteria, and an interview where they were given an opportunity to outline how they would benefit were they given the opportunity to participate. All participating students were made aware that it was their responsibility to ensure completion of their course work for all other modules either prior to or after return from work experience. The experience of MAKE was only available to a much smaller number of students than those eligible to apply and a strict selection process was adhered to.
3.6.3 Real Environment Learning & Working (RELW)

3.6.3.1 RELW – HAIRDRESSING

There are two hairdressing salons situated in the main building of the FEI. These salon facilities, while serving as teaching/learning rooms, also operate as working salons and are open to the public on certain days and at certain times for treatments and appointments, thus providing an AACES environment with authentic, engaging and social learning for the students, and the opportunity to deal with clients and manage and time appointments and treatments as required in the workplace.

The hairdressing rooms cater for four class groups – three groups working towards a Hairdressing Award at FETAC Level 5 and DES Junior Trades, and another group who have completed level 5 and are now working towards their Senior Trades exams. Run by the senior students, the salons contain a reception desk and individual workstations along with basins, storage and laundry. The salons are known collectively as the CONCEPT Hair Studio and developed from a one-roomed operation in 2006 when the first hairdressing course commenced in the college, bringing with it the need for delivery of a practical curriculum. Fig. 3.9 shows the salons in operation.

Fig. 3.9 (a) CONCEPT Hair Salon

Fig. 3.9 (b) CONCEPT Hair Salon
3.6.3.2 RELW - Beauty & Complementary Health

Two beauty rooms cater for six class groups in total — two Beauty Therapy Level 5 (L5) groups, one Makeup Artistry L5 group, one Complementary Health L5 group, and two Year 2 groups; one following a Diploma in Beauty Care and the other following a Diploma in Holistic Treatments. These salons operate collectively under the name Poise and are open to the public, again on certain days and at certain times, thus providing an AACES environment for the students with the opportunity to deal with clients. Fig. 3.10 shows students working on fellow-students during practical classes.

![Fig. 3.10 POISE Beauty Salon](image)

3.6.3.3 RELW – FEI Radio

Located in the main FEI building is the purpose-built FEI Radio Studio, catering for a Sound Production module, a component of a number of FETAC Awards in the Media area. It is used by students to produce and record radio documentaries as part of their course work.
For a two-week block during the academic year, usually in February, the studio becomes the FEI radio station — a temporary online radio station streamed live for four hours a day for a week on gtiradio.com. The project involves a week pre-production and a week on air. The station is managed and operated collaboratively by a group of 8-10 students from the Music, Sound, Journalism and Multimedia courses under the supervision of subject teachers. Operating the radio station involves all of the identified AACES themes for AL through having to create a schedule, develop and maintain a website, production of content and programming including jingles, stings, planning and conducting interviews both on the phone and in-studio. Programmes include news, current affairs, entertainment and music. Interviewees for the programmes are drawn from across the student body and beyond and include well-known figures from local and national politics, representatives of non-governmental organisations, sportspeople, etc. Feedback from students involved in the station, through informal communication, was very positive, with students often describing it as being the best experience they had had during their year in the FEI. Fig. 3.11 shows the purpose-built studio incorporating the sound-proofed booth and associated equipment and students investigating its operation. (See Appendix 5 for running schedule used for the broadcast during the work experience block weeks.)
3.6.3.4 RELW – Sessions Studio

The Recording Studio is a hub of activity at all times, catering as it does for FETAC minor awards required in a number of major awards in the Media area. One use is documentary-making where the subject of the documentary may be a local band, first recorded playing in the studio followed by members of the band being interviewed in the Radio studio, thus providing authentic studio work for the students. This studio may also be used to record sound effects by the students for use in their radio documentaries or audio effects for an animation project where they would have to produce and sync audio with their animation file.

Fig. 3.12 (a) shows the purpose-built and professionally laid-out and equipped recording studio. This picture was taken towards the beginning of the year when students are being introduced to the facilities. Here a group of students from the Music course perform in the studio while a student from the Sound course is being trained in the use of the recording equipment by her tutor. This not only leads to authentic and engaging learning but also provides an opportunity for sociality and collaboration among the different groups and allows them to work together in a team.

Fig. 3.12 (a) Recording Studio
Fig. 3.12 (b) Recording Studio

Fig. 3.12 (b) shows the outside of the studio which is differentiated from any of the classrooms nearby by being painted black and having large grey signage. This adds to the RELW experience for the students, despite being located on a college premises.

3.6.3.5 RELW – ‘shed’ video recording

The Shed is the location for multi-camera, studio-based shooting by both Film & TV and Media students of scenes for the short films they are required to produce as part of their FETAC Film minor award. Film and TV students who choose to do in-house work experience often film a music video partly in the shed and in other locations. The band may be recorded performing and then shots/sequences from other locations are overlaid during the editing process. Fig. 3.13 shows a recording being done with the tutor as director and the students as lighting and sound crew.

The approach on all the media courses is to get students immediately engaged and working with the equipment and having a need to learn by way of early assignment work.
3.6.3.6 RELW – Fusion Furniture Workshop

Three custom designed workshops combine under the umbrella of Fusion Furniture where students learn the skill of furniture making and design, and where designs are brought to life using native hard-woods. Students create unique and inspirational furniture items for home/commercial use. Furniture making and design students also use Fusion Furniture when they are collaborating with some of the other groups in the college in the manufacture of props for applied learning events.

Fig. 3.14 shows the workshop which becomes transformed into a studio for the end of year event – a display of the students work from throughout the year. This show is open to public with some pieces being for sale. This event works not only as an assessment event but as a showcase for the students and an opportunity to promote their skills.
3.6.4 Collaborative Applied Learning Events (CALE)

As mentioned previously, in 2009 the then Principal introduced the idea of AL and the idea of having assessment events at a staff meeting. The end of year exhibition from the Art and Furniture Departments, where the students show-cased their work, was such an event and already an annual event in the college calendar. The Principal now introduced the idea of an event for the Fashion Department, a department delivering awards in Fashion Design, Fashion Retail and Fashion Industry Practice, and the Fashion Fiesta – a fashion extravaganza organised, produced, managed and presented by the students from the fashion departments was initiated. The Fiesta commenced as a week-long event, with a launch, speakers from the world of fashion, live windows, and culminated in a Fashion Show. It was realised very quickly that input was required from some of the other departments within the college such as the Beauty, Hairdressing, and Media Departments.

The idea of having assessment events grew within the college, perhaps not in as visible a manner as the Fashion Fiesta, but equally as effective in some
individual departments such as Business and Computing. In these smaller group events, a particular class or group of classes pursuing the same award would have an event day. This was facilitated by the fact that overlapping of, perhaps, content, or assessment or both, within the modules of their award was recognised from the outset (further explanation is found in Section 3.6.5). This allowed for a collaborative delivery of content followed by a collaborative assessment event, thus facilitating constructive alignment and allowing for a more authentic, engaging and social assessment process.

An example of this is in the computing area where a number of groups are studying for the Information Technology Award. One of their modules – Communications – requires that they undergo an interview and that they also make a presentation. One of their other modules – Web Authoring – requires that they develop a website. A further module – Work Experience – requires them to undertake a study of their vocational area and to show the findings/outcome of their study. One collaborative brief for the students, can allow them to demonstrate all skills and competencies achieved across the modules through one, more realistic, work-like task. In this case, the students undergo a vocational area study and produce their findings in the form of a website. They then present the website and its contents to their teachers and fellow students, and respond to questions from their teachers regarding the development of the site and their vocational area. Scheduling an event day in the form of class presentations where all students are present is very much an AL ‘event’ for the students and prepares them to a greater extent for the workplace than small, individual assessment tasks could.

3.6.5 Award Integration – Delivery & Assessment (AIDA)

AIDA is the acronym, devised by the researcher and applied throughout this research, to the collaborative approach to curriculum delivery for a class group, from its specific team of module teachers and developed from what was known as a Learning Management Framework (LMF) already in operation
within the college (devised by the researcher but not as part of the present research).

3.6.5.1 The Learning Management Framework (LMF)

The LMF was already in operation in some areas of the college before this present research commenced. It was the product of research for a Master’s Thesis submitted by the researcher (Higgins, M. 2005, unpublished) and was a framework used to develop a more integrated teaching approach of a curriculum required for a specific major award. A response by the researcher to being tasked with the delivery of a number of new modules, for a new award, to the same class group was the initiating prompt for this course delivery process which later, as it was introduced across the school, was given the acronym LMF. While planning for course delivery it became apparent that there was overlap in SLOs among the group of modules required for a specific award certification. The Award Descriptors (NCVA/FETAC) outlined the requirements for a particular award, the total number of modules required for award achievement, the mandatory modules, and available optional modules. Fig. 3.15 gives a diagrammatic representation of the LMF along with a short explanation of the LMF tools.
Chapter 3

**MAP**
The MAP for a specific module is a sheet containing the SLOs for the module and makes provision for individual teachers to assign the most appropriate form of assessment to the SLOs and schedule assessment activities to best enable student learning. It allows for comparison of modules for a particular class by the class teacher team and makes obvious where overlaps occur and where delivery and assessment may be consolidated. The activities identified for each module are then scheduled by the teacher of that module using the Course Assessment Planner.

**CAP**
The CAP is a tool available within Microsoft Outlook (e-mail application). It assists teachers of each course plan collaboratively the complete assessment of that course and avoids imbalance with regards to deadlines etc. The CAP for a particular course is accessible only to teachers of that course. Teachers can add new assessment tasks and also attach assessment briefs or further notes to the task.

**Assessment Tracker (Tracker)**
The Tracker provides a template for recording assessment results. All the modules and their specific assessment are identified horizontally along a sheet. Student names and numbers are arranged vertically on the left-hand side. Assessment results may be entered for each assessment task and the total achieved for each module is automatically calculated. This result is also converted into the equivalent grade.

**LEARNING MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (LMF) AND TOOLS**

Fig. 3.15 Outline of the Learning Management Framework
NCVA/FETAC Module Descriptors for the awards being pursued provided the starting point for this teaching/learning framework for the researcher at that time. Each and every Module Descriptor consisted of the SLOs for that module, the type of assessment required, and marking sheets for assessment. From this module descriptor a corresponding Module Assessment Planner (MAP) was devised. This consisted of the Module SLOs and the identified assessment instruments for each SLO.

![Module Assessment Planner (MAP A)](image)

Fig. 3.16 LMF Development Overview

This was indicated in more detail on the left hand side of the GTI-LMF illustrated in Fig. 3.15, as was presented to the staff at the time. The right hand side of Fig. 3.15 indicates that alongside the MAPs preparation is the course plan with the Course Assessment Planner (CAP) detailing the order of delivery of the curriculum and assessment dates. Results of assessment feed into the Assessment Tracker (a spreadsheet tracking the progress of a group of students) once the award criteria are fulfilled, the student will receive their award.

Physically, the MAP contained the SLOs for that module with columns provided to indicate overlap with other modules and to assign the most appropriate form of delivery and assessment for the SLOs and schedule assessment activities to best enable student learning (Figs. 3.17, 3.18).
Module: A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLOs</th>
<th>Overlap</th>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Illustrated lecture &amp; in-class resource exercise.</td>
<td>Within written assignment.</td>
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<td>10.1.2 As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td>As above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.3 Module D, Unit 1, 10.1.4</td>
<td>Illustrated lecture &amp; in-class resource exercise.</td>
<td>Within examination written paper.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 3.17 Development of Module Assessment Planner for Module A

A matrix of all SLOs required for a specific Award along with the required assessment instruments could then be formulated collectively using the MAPs for all modules. The combined MAPs for a full Award could then provide the scaffolding for the Course Assessment Planner (CAP) (Fig. 3.18). As mentioned above, this system was initially devised by the researcher in the course of teaching a number of different modules to the same class group. With very minor adjustments, the LMF components (MAP and CAP) are adapted to a situation where a number of teachers are involved in the delivery of a full award and where each module is a particular teacher’s overall responsibility. Some elements of a particular module might be delivered by some other teacher from the group where overlap was identified and where perhaps the other teacher might be the most qualified to deliver. Fig. 3.18 includes a column for documenting this. MH is main teacher with responsibility for Modules A and B, MB is main teacher with responsibility for Modules C and D and DM is main teacher with responsibility for Module Z.

3.6.5.2 The LMF and AIDA Element of Applied Learning

The CAP was completed with the addition of assessment events that could overlap not only a number of SLOs within a certain module, but also span across a number of modules. The CAP now becomes a visible representation
of a complete Award syllabus. It identifies the modules required for the full award and the SLOs for all those modules. The overlap between modules becomes obvious and possibilities for a more streamlined and collaborative approach both to the delivery and to the assessment for a specific award by a specific teaching group becomes evident. Any issues needing attention in order to facilitate an applied learning approach to delivery and assessment may also be identified here.

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<th>Delivery</th>
<th>AL Issues</th>
<th>Assessment and Date of Assessment</th>
<th>Associated Assessment ‘Event’</th>
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/ ...
This study also asks if the students can attain 21\textsuperscript{st} century skills through this applied learning approach. The starting point is an identification of what 21\textsuperscript{st} century skills are in the context of the courses available in the college. Once SLOs or tasks are identified that will allow students develop those skills, these can also be incorporated into the module assessment planner or MAP (as shown below in Fig.3.19) and, subsequently to the CAP matrix in the same way as the applied learning issues.

### 3.6.5.3 THE EXTENDED LMF INCLUDING 21\textsuperscript{ST} CENTURY SKILLS CRITERIA

<table>
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Fig. 3.18 Course Assessment Planner Development including Applied Learning

Fig. 3.19 CAP incorporating 21\textsuperscript{st} Century Skills

Fig. 3.20 on the next page shows an overall view of the LMF for a particular award.
The LMF in some cases led to a slight reduction in overall delivery time for awards as, once an award was mapped in this way it could be seen where overlaps occurred and where there was overlap, module teachers could plan a collaborative delivery approach, followed by collaborative assessment over a number of different modules. Any reduction in delivery time facilitates the planning and collaborative processes.

Looking at the delivery of a major award through the LMF further identified possibilities for applied learning and assessment events that are real, span across a number of minor awards and lead to a situation where the combination of the SLOs is much more than their individual sum and the outcome for the student is real, authentic experience (Fig. 3.21).
3.7 Data Collection

From the outset of the study it was decided that a mixed methods methodology offered the advantage of using multiple ways to explore the research question. This could overcome potential weaknesses of any single design as data collection could involve any available technique and could allow for different perspectives at various levels. Interpretation in a mixed methods situation is continual and can influence stages in the research process. Mixed methods research is useful in generalising qualitative data and can position research in a transformative framework. This is particularly advantageous when applying DBR. Some of the weaknesses associated with mixed methods research are the time factor and possible discrepancies between different types of data but these weaknesses were considered minimal relative to the strengths of the design. The methodologist John Creswell (2003, p.211) suggested a systematic framework involving four decisions which need consideration –

1. What is the implementation sequence of data collection?
2. What method takes priority during data collection and analysis?
3. What does the integration stage of the finding involve?
4. Will a theoretical perspective be used?

In the present study, methods of data collection evolved as needs arose during the course of the DBR research, thereby falling into the concurrent triangulation strategy, one of six strategies suggested by Creswell. General observations were the most informative in the early stages – observations of what was happening in the college at that time, which events and activities were taking place, which approaches were being taken to teaching and learning. Alongside the observations being made and documented, informal discussions were also taking place with teachers, individual students, class groups, management, outside agencies, collaborators and work experience providers. During the DBR cycles survey questionnaires were developed and both students and teachers were invited to participate. Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Survey questions were of two types –
statements that participants ranked on a Likert scale of Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, and open-ended questions giving participants scope to provide more personal comments.

Events were attended, student Blogs and Facebook pages put up by students and teachers during the course of their activities were visited. YouTube clips featuring student work and photo galleries of work done and events were viewed.

Assessment materials in the form of briefs given and student work, along with work experience reports and student event reviews were read and analysed. All analysis of qualitative data sought evidence for the five identified applied learning themes.

Table 3.1 indicates the multiple methods of data collection used throughout the research, during its different stages. It was a very time-consuming process but using a minimum of two methods at every stage allowed for confirmation, cross-validation and corroboration, and also allowed for the overcoming of any weakness in a particular method.
Chapter 3

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<th>Initial Investigation</th>
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<th>Cycle 2 11/12</th>
<th>Cycle 3 12/13</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Data Collection

3.8 The Design Process and Participants

Fig. 3.22 below presents a diagrammatical view of the design based research used in this study into the use of AL in an FE College delivering FETAC/QQI and other awards.
All five elements of applied learning were in progress for the duration of the research but as illustrated here, Cycle 1 concentrates on three of the five identified applied learning activities – MAKE, CALE and RELW. Cycle 2 continues with those same three elements and adds a fourth – AIDA, and the final cycle research includes examples of all five identified elements.

![Diagram showing three cycles with AIDA, MAKE, CALE, RELW elements]

AIDA: Award Integration – Delivery & Assessment
MAKE: Mobility Abroad for Knowledge & Experience
WEXP: Work Experience
CALE: Collaborative Applied Learning Events
RELW: Real Environment Learning & Working

Fig. 3.22 Phased Study of the AACES Framework through DBR

The college provides for approximately 40 awards each year and not all identified elements of AL fit with the delivery and assessment of every award. Some awards like those in the fashion, and art and design areas lend themselves to large visual events like exhibitions and shows, while integration in delivery and assessment across modules and collaborative subject group events fit better for others such as information technology and business. Table 3.2 below gives an indication of the various class groups partaking in the different applied learning activities during the time of the research study.
Table 3.2 Class Groups Involved in DBR Process

3.9 Summary

This chapter provided the context and the rationale for this research, the research process and progress, and the use of DBR as the research methodology. It explained and summarised the activities of the research process. It outlined the LMF already in existence and specified its essential component parts – the MAP and the CAP. All elements of applied learning in the FEI were identified and categorized. The chapter has indicated how the LMF tool could enable the introduction of applied learning in certain areas and also produce some scaffolding for an emergent model.

The awarding body and therefore associated terminology has changed since the LMF was first designed (2004) with the term Module being replaced by
Minor Award, and a Major Award being achieved by the successful completion of a specific combination of minor awards. Before this a Major Award was simply referred to as a Course or an Award. The LMF now reflects the new award format. The Module Assessment Planner becomes the Minor Award Assessment Planner while still retaining the acronym MAP. The Course Assessment Planner is now strictly the Major Award Assessment Planner but as both teachers and students still refer to the ‘Course’ the students are following and teachers refer to the ‘Course’ they are teaching, this will remain as the Course Assessment Planner and retain the acronym CAP.

The LMF, specifically the MAP tool, suggests a starting point for model development with the next three chapters describing in detail the three iterative design cycles of the DBR process deployed in the development of a model for applied learning.

This chapter summarises the researcher’s rationale in choosing DBR and mixed methods qualitative techniques to interrogate the research question posed. It also illustrates how DBR reflects the researcher’s own constructivist philosophy of teaching and learning since DBR demands an active construction of knowledge based on the DBR research cycles. As Proulx (2006) says:

Being informed by constructivism sets a fertile ground for enriching knowledge creation and implies an important reframing of teaching intentions, one that brings the teacher to be sensitive to learners’ learning processes in a student-learning-process-centered classroom.
CHAPTER 4: INTRODUCTION TO ITERATIVE DESIGN AND DESIGN CYCLE 1

4.1 Chapter Introduction

This chapter introduces the iterative design cycles of the DBR undertaken to investigate the impact of the introduction of AL within the FEI and continues with a full description of Design Cycle 1. The pilot cycle observed three of the five types of AL identified by the researcher as being in operation in the AL AACES environment in the FEI in Chapter 3. In the second cycle these same three types of AL were again observed following some changes, and a fourth type included. During the third and last DBR cycle all five identified types of AL were observed following further changes brought about as the result of previous feedback. The AACES framework emerging from the literature review, educational theories, the research question, and 21st century skills requirements, provided the background for these ‘develop, implement, evaluate’, iterative cycles of DBR and the lens through which each cycle was evaluated.

Fig. 4.1 AL in an AACES Environment (see Fig. 3.8)

Data resulting from the multiple methods of data collection, both qualitative and quantitative, used during the research cycles (see Table 3.1) were interrogated and analysed at the end of each cycle. The analysis informed changes for the following cycle and initial commencing tasks. Both confirming/positive and disconfirming/negative evidence of the impact of adopting an AL approach to curriculum delivery and assessment was sought at each stage,
along with the efficacy of the AACES framework in providing a suitable environment for AL in the college.

The reporting format for the three cycles of DBR is the same and is summarised here:

1. Activities of cycle
2. Discussion and evaluation of cycle
3. Review and analysis of cycle using the AACES framework as the lens
4. Suggested changes for following cycle
5. Summary of cycle

4.2 DBR Cycle 1

DBR Cycle 1 took place during the academic year 2010/11. Three of the five types of AL identified in Chapter 3 – MAKE, CALE and RELW were observed during this cycle. The acronym MAKE was already in use as the working moniker for the Leonardo da Vinci project in the college. The researcher provided the acronyms for the other two types of applied learning specifically for this research report. These three types were chosen for the first DBR cycle, they being the most visible in the college. Each type was exemplified by one example.

Twelve students from the L6 Art Group – Drawing and Visual Inquiry (DAVI) – went to Finland on work experience for three weeks and were our MAKE (Mobility Abroad for Knowledge and Experience) group. Our second group was from the CALE (Collaborative AL Events) category and they consisted of
the participating students from the fashion classes, and the RELW (Real Environment Learning & Working) group was the third example of AL reviewed in the college this academic year. The RELW group comprised students from the Hairdressing and Health & Beauty areas who operated from their respective in-house salons – CONCEPT and POISE.

4.3 Activities Cycle 1

4.3.1 MAKE Cycle 1

The objective of this European Union-run Leonardo da Vinci mobility project (see www.leargas.ie) was to enable students experience the language and culture of another European country and to do this through work-based learning or work experience. Referred to by the acronym MAKE, it fitted into the criteria as identified earlier for AL within the FEI. This first group of 12 Art students were placed in Finnish colleges, museums, art-centres, etc., some individually and some in pairs, and they made great use of both their working and non-working time, managing to travel around to visit one another and share experiences and view one another’s workplaces. It was an engaging and social activity and also fitted the AACES framework in its authenticity, aestheticity and creativity.

While away the students kept other students and teachers informed through email and their blog. It was a first for the majority of them to use this form of communication. Some of the comments from their blog are reproduced below. (All comments are reproduced verbatim.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First GalwaytoFinlanders 2011</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What a fantastic experience. I have left Finland with mind full of ideas, and a huge respect for the Finnish people. It was quite surreal to be positioned up north, and what an amazing landscape!</td>
<td>It’s unusual for an artist to gain insight into the workings of a Gallery, what happens behind the scenes, how much work is involved in presenting art to the public. For me this was the most valuable thing I have learned here, how much time and effort is put into giving people access and education about art. Jo, April 8.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maggie, April 11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

123
I took part in printing classes to learn a technique called ‘image on’. It is a printing technique that combines photography and printing…..really interesting and right up my street. I think it as helped me to decide that I definitely want to do printmaking next year. I was in my element!
Dee, April 7

our work experience at the boat museum is going well. We agreed on a few jobs with our supervisor Göran, like sorting digital media, photographs, producing slideshows, recording sound for the arctic seal hunter exhibition, painting sign boards for the museum, helping with ideas for the new website, and a few more things.
Yvonne & Gosia, March 29

Sarah and Sari (from the college in Seinäjoki, SEDU) visited us on Saturday so we didn’t plan a weekend away. We met Göran and Gustav of the boat museum and had a very interesting and stimulating cultural exchange (a four hour conversation), touching on anything from Art to Viking ships, on our Leonardo exchange programme and why Sarah chose Finland as destination, on education systems and boats in Galway, Hamburg, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Mazury in Poland, mentioning particularities and differences… and after that we showed Sarah and Sari around the boat museum, leading them all the way through the piles of snow at the fisherman’s hut.
Yvonne & Gosia, March 29

4.3.2 RELW – Cycle 1

The two hairdressing rooms and two beauty rooms in the main college premises provided the in-house setting for the RELW element (identified in 3.6, 3.6.3) of AL. The hairdressing rooms cater for four class groups as described in Chapter 3, with the Hairdressing Year 2 group providing the services and operating the hair studio along with their teachers. They follow
a curriculum leading to a Senior Trades Award awarded by the DES. Specific aims or out-comes for RELW are collaboratively devised by the hairdressing teaching group (not just the hairdressing teacher) based on the vocational syllabi requirements and the needs of other adjunct modules that could potentially be met by this teaching approach. Fig. 4.3 shows a portion of the CONCEPT salon with just four workstations in view during a preparatory training opportunity. Students are working with one another as clients.

Fig. 4.3 CONCEPT Hair Salon

The POISE Beauty Therapy Salon provided the hands-on, authentic work experience for the five student groups studying variously for certification from FETAC, ITEC and CIBTAC –

- Beautician Receptionist – FETAC, ITEC
- Makeup Artistry – FETAC
- Beauty Specialist – ITEC, CIBTAC
- Complementary Health Therapy – FETAC, ITEC
- Holistic Massage & Reflexology – ITEC, CIBTAC

Being ‘employees’ enables the students to enter their chosen career fields with not only the required certification, but also with confidence in their ability to deal with clients in an authentic environment.

Fig. 4.4 Poise Beauty Salon
‘It provides great experience.’

Still taken from video made by Media students as part of year portfolio.

Figs. 4.4 and 4.5 show two shots of the beauty salon at a time when students are practising their ‘Facial’ skills on one another. The salon is laid out in ‘training mode’. The stills were provided by some students from the media department who were putting together a marketing video for the college as one of their assignments for media production.

Informal communication with the RELW clients of both CONCEPT and POISE revealed many of them to be from the local area, who knew the college quite well and were happy with the service they received. They praised the students and on questioning by the researcher indicated no worry about being treated by students and mentioned the unobtrusive presence of relevant teachers. Many of the clients had become regulars and bemoaned the fact that the service was not available during the summer months and while the next batch of students were in training.

4.3.3 CALE – Cycle 1

The ‘Fashion Fiesta’ took the form of a fashion-themed week that was launched in the Galway City Museum with a showcase of students’ work in March 2011. During the week a static exhibition of portfolio material from Design to Styling, to Pattern Drafting was positioned in an open area in a nearby shopping centre in the city centre. It was a busy thoroughfare and an ideal venue for a static exhibition. Talks from people in diverse areas of the fashion industry took place during the week as did various ‘Live Window’ displays. The week culminated in a fashion show held in the shopping centre.
Four different groups from the Fashion Area were involved – Fashion Design L5, Fashion Design L6, Business Fashion L5, Fashion Industry Practice L6. Each group was following a minimum of eight modules/minor awards with an overlap of modules occurring in some cases. A list of the modules/minor awards is shown below for the Fashion Design L6 Award and the Business Fashion L5 Award as an example of the types of modules these groups were studying. The groups had both Communications and Work Experience which are termed general studies in contrast to the rest which come under the umbrella of vocational studies. Scope for applied learning activities came from both types of studies.

The theme for the week was Victorian Circus and this theme filtered into the Assessment Briefs, where feasible, for as many modules of the students’ awards as possible.

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<tr>
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<td>Fashion Buying &amp; Retailing</td>
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<td>Design</td>
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<table>
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<td>Book Keeping Manual &amp; Computerised</td>
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</table>

Table 4.1 Examples of Fashion Awards and Associated Modules

Table 4.2 presents Section 10, the single learning outcomes (SLOs), from the Module Descriptor from Event Management. It indicates very clearly the applied nature of the module.
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<thead>
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<th>SLOs</th>
<th>Module: Event Management</th>
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<td>LEARNING OUTCOMES</td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>The Event Proposal:</strong></td>
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<td>10.1.1 Identify the essential parts of an event proposal</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10.1.2 Plan a feasibility study for an event proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.1.3 Carry out market research for an event proposal</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.1.4 Identify the client’s objectives, needs and expectations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.1.5 Ensure value for money for the client</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.1.6 Prepare and present the budget for a special event, including projected costs, cashflow and sources of revenue</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.1.7 Demonstrate good presentation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.1.8 Identify suitable sales, marketing, advertising and PR techniques for a special event, with creative and innovative elements in the event and the event proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.1.9 Discuss the events industry in Ireland and abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.1.10 Identify what makes one event proposal distinct from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Event Management and the Human Resource</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2.1 Develop management and leadership skills in the events environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2.2 Demonstrate knowledge of employment legislation; prepare a job description and a contract for temporary employment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2.3 Select staff, volunteers, suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2.4 Plan induction and training for staff and volunteers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2.5 Draft a WBS (work breakdown schedule) with delegated duties and clear deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2.6 Identify networking opportunities in the events industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2.7 Demonstrate good time management, meeting skills, negotiation skills and conflict resolution skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.2.8 Co-ordinate staff, contractors, volunteers, suppliers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Quality Assurance, Risk Planning and Evaluating an Event</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.3.1 Identify legal requirements in event planning in Ireland, eg planning permission, electricity, hygiene, room capacity; insurance, Local Authorities, health and safety</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.3.2 Draft sample contracts for a special event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.3.3 Carry out a risk assessment and demonstrate a knowledge of quality assurance and event risk management</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.3.4 Address security concerns at a special event</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.3.5 Keep effective records and event documentation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.3.6 Deal with payment of suppliers and feedback meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.3.7 Plan a post-event evaluation and assessment of an event, based on primary research e.g. attendance and guest feedback, questionnaires, surveys</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.3.8 Critically evaluate the success of an event, using different event evaluation techniques</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10.3.9 Report an event’s success to the client</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.3.10 Introduce revisions to future event programmes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Prepare a post-event evaluation report

Staging an Event – The Event Itself

Produce an event and co-ordinate various elements such as guest list; crowd management; signposting, registration and admission process

Plan logistics for the event and a logistics checklist for the event, made up of all operational activities

Co-ordinate the involvement of guests and participants, achieving interaction and ambience, with ice-breakers, music and entertainment where necessary

Co-ordinate guest speakers and performers, the running order, contingency, sound and lighting systems

Demonstrate organisational effectiveness and effective management of staff, volunteers, suppliers

Demonstrate efficiency and good planning in providing for catering, clean up, toilet and first aid facilities

The Different Special Events Environments

Identify the specific resource requirements (legal requirements; cost requirements; human resource requirements) for various types of special event e.g. private parties, cultural events, community arts events, festivals, themed events, corporate and business events, sporting events, celebrity events, fund raising events; public consultations; children’s events; conferences; seminars; open days; government and political events; exhibitions and conference management

Know how to market and publicise more than one of the different special events

Understand the role of the special event in establishing and maintaining corporate identity, brand management and the role of the special event

Table 4.2 Event Management Module

Table 4.3 below shows section 11, the Portfolio of Assessment for the Event Management module, along with the percentage value for its assessment task. Tables 4.2 and 4.3 together show the scope for the CALE element of applied learning in this module alone, and how such a collaborative event could fulfil FETAC assessment criteria while providing the students with the opportunity of hands-on, authentic, creative learning.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>11.1</th>
<th><strong>Portfolio of Assessment: Event Management</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project:</strong></td>
<td>The internal assessor will devise a project brief that requires candidates to present an event proposal. The presentation will be recorded and the visuals aids and background notes to the presentation will be submitted as part of the project. Candidates will identify the client’s needs and expectations and set objectives accordingly. Candidates will show evidence of completed feasibility studies and market research, in addition to a strategy to promote and market the event. Candidates will demonstrate good presentation and research skills, using creativity and innovation in their presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collection of Work:</strong></td>
<td>The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of an understanding of quality assurance, contingency planning, record keeping and one of the following: 1. Detailed structured budget, 2. Event contract, 3. WBS (Work breakdown Structure), and 4. Detailed feasibility study. The collection will include a quality assurance document for an event and one other piece of event documentation, taken from the above outlined list (1-4). Both documents will be based on a locally devised event.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment:</strong></td>
<td>The internal assessor will devise a brief that requires the candidate to produce a post event evaluation document, based on a locally devised event. The document will communicate clear objectives; value for money to the client; evidence of gathering and analysing feedback, an understanding of good record keeping and human resource management. The learner will include a critical self-appraisal; appraisal of the planning process and appraisal of event management theory.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| % | 30% | 30% | 40% |

Table 4.3 Assessment for Event Management module

An overview of the Fiesta in the words of a student involved is shown in Table 4.4. This comprised her ‘Introduction’ for a post-Event evaluation (see section 11.3, Table 4.3) as part of her work portfolio for the ‘Event Management’ module (Table 4.2), a component part of her Fashion Industry Practice Award. (All qualitative data, survey results and samples of student work are reproduced verbatim at all times throughout this report.)
Fashion Fiesta was a great success and in order to achieve this, a great deal of organisation went into this event. It began with a great launch including fashion talks in the museum by ex footballer Paul Galvin turned fashion guru. Level 5 fashion business students collected money in aid of ‘Voices for Galway’ up Shop Street using buckets and a model dressed in a designer’s creation generating awareness about our event.

The exhibition of our work was on display in Eyre Square Shopping Centre the week before and left up throughout the Fashion Fiesta week. Giving the general public a taste of what’s to be expected in the show. A comment board was erected so we could follow up on what people thought.

The Fashion Fiesta week kicked off on the 4th of April where it started with rehearsals for the models, Youth Ballett West and the Dj in Eyre Square Shopping Centre at 7pm. This included GTI teachers and the Fashion Industry Practice class to go over any fine details needed to be included.

On Tuesday the 5th the Fashion Industry Practice class of 2011 met at 8:30 am in Yeats to be briefed on the tasks for the day and given the props to be used. This included the Live Window display’s which took part in Anthony Ryans, Brown Thomas, Swamp and Remus Uomo. We were allocated a window and put into teams. The windows were dressed and a dancer from Ballet West performed in the windows as we got feedback from the passing public. All the FIP class were in t-shirts advertising who we were and what were about, Fashion!!!

On the Wednesday 6th of April a fashion talk was held in the museum by designer Sarah O Neil a past student whose collection is in Zebra. The press came along and took shots for the newspapers including The Galway Advertiser and The Galway Independent advertising our event some more.

On Thursday the 7th of April at 8:30 am FIP met at GTI were we discussed the big day ahead. Certain jobs had to be completed within a time frame therefore we started immediately on our tasks. It was a long day of organisational skills and time keeping. The show started on time and went well. The second show was cancelled due to higher management upset with the capacity of
the event. In the end the show went off with a bang and we attracted a big audience and awareness for our chosen charity ‘Voices for Galway’. All collections and clothing were seen in the first show so not having the second show didn’t effect us. We set out to hold a big Fashion Fiesta and we did. A success!!

Youth Ballett West – a local ballet company
Anthony Ryans, Brown Thomas, Swamp, Remus Uomo, Zebra – city centre shops

Table 4.4 Excerpt 1 from student’s work in Event Management

This excerpt shows a depth of engagement from this student with the Fiesta week and an indication of aesthetic learning in her description at times. Her report continued with Objectives, Value for Money, Feedback, Human Resource Management, Self-analysis, Conclusion and Appendices. The Appendices included a picture from cat-walk rehearsals, where this student, also a part-time model was putting some of her fellow-students through their paces, as well as pictures of the decorated venue, the entertainment during the show and the show itself. She also included a project management chart. The complete assignment is in Appendix 6.

Figs. 4.6 and 4.7 below show images from the day of the fashion show.

Fig. 4.6 Models en route to show 2011 Fig. 4.7 Flash Mob in Shop Street.
Models were drawn from the college’s own student cohort with some outside friends of the designers. The majority were novices and, as mentioned above, were coached by one of the FIP students who worked as a part-time model and proved herself a wonderful asset in the production of the event. She elicited the following comments from a teacher and a fellow student.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.5 Excerpt 2 from student’s work in Event Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You were totally organized and professional. Your experience with fashion shows really came through. You did so much thorough preparation and organization, from the model casting to the running order, and the creative planning on how and where the models should walk etc. You really did a fantastic presentation earlier in the year showing your vision and planning for the event and you pulled it all together really well on the day. I was REALLY impressed. Well done. (Teacher) Andrea, you were the one!!!;-) I am impressed with the amount of work you put into the fiesta. On the day you were visible and i received help from you any time i asked. You also guide a models in a very professional way. Thanks... (Fellow student)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The event raised money for a local charity as did the launch of the Fiesta. It also engaged the public by its novelty and sociality evidenced by the number of people who stood and watched the flash mob as it travelled to its destination.
Fig. 4.9 Behind the Scenes Cycle 1 (student work)
Fig. 4.9 shows pictures from the hair and beauty salons earlier in the day of the fashion show. Hairdressing, Makeup artistry, Beauty and Design students working collaboratively for the final event of this week-long Fashion Fiesta.

![Fig. 4.9 Pictures from the hair and beauty salons earlier in the day of the fashion show. Hairdressing, Makeup artistry, Beauty and Design students working collaboratively for the final event of this week-long Fashion Fiesta.](image)

4.4 Discussion and Evaluation Cycle 1

Evaluation of the first cycle of design research took a number of forms, but predominantly took the form of observation by the researcher accompanied by informal discussion with teachers and students and informed by the AACES framework that had emerged from the review of the literature and theoretical framework. It was felt that this approach would be the most suitable for the initial cycle as it was the least intrusive and could probably yield the best and most reliable results. It seemed particularly suitable to the RELW element where in-house work experience had been an integral part of the students’ learning since the individual courses began and was the original ‘applied learning’ in the college before the PAL commenced. The researcher did not want either students or teachers to feel they were being tested as PAL was an initiative, a suggestion, and not a mandate for staff.

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher and issued to the fashion groups at the end of the academic year. This was done as the fashion groups do not operate from the main FEI building and the researcher had less
opportunity to meet these students informally. This review questionnaire and its associated data analysis are presented in Table 4.6. The survey was perhaps a little too late in being disseminated as assessments for these groups of students usually take the form of project work and skills demonstrations throughout the year rather than end-of-year exams and some students had already finished up after submitting their work.

The outcomes from this analysis were considered in conjunction with all other data obtained during DBR Cycle 1 to inform changes/interventions required for the second cycle of research.
Students were being asked if the description of their course in the FEI’s marketing material and website course descriptors reflected what they experienced. All 26 responded with four (15%) of those being undecided.

In total 54% either agreed or strongly agreed, and 31% disagreed.

This question related to the student’s expectation of the course content and its suitability for a Level 5 Award. All 26 responded with eight (31%) being undecided.

46% were in agreement or strongly in agreement and 23% disagreed. This, I think, reflected the mixed student cohort, from school-leavers, returners, those from outside of Ireland, and those working in the area at present.

Fifteen of the 26 respondents agreed that the course was well structured with a further four strongly agreeing making a total of 73%. Five students were not in agreement (19%) and two (8%) were undecided.
This question sought to elicit the effect of the content in getting students to consider their subject matter more deeply. All respondents answered this question with 35% being in agreement. 27% strongly agreed making a total of 62% (16) thinking critically. Six (23%) were undecided with four (15%) not being stimulated.

84%, 22 of the respondents, found the content developed their interest in their course further, with 10 agreeing and 12 strongly agreeing to the statement. Only one person disagreed and three were undecided.
Responses to this question showed 13 disagreeing and three strongly disagreeing with the statement – 62% in total of the respondents were not expecting the workload. 35% in total had expected it and only one (4%) was undecided. This question should have been stated more clearly; as to whether they found the workload greater or less than expected.

93% (24) of the 26 respondents found the course format in the FEI different than what they had experienced in previous education. Unfortunately the phrasing of the question does not allow the respondent to indicate whether this was positive or negative. One respondent was undecided and another disagreed.

Responses were mixed with two respondents omitting comment on this statement. Eight and nine students respectively disagreed and agreed and a further four strongly agreed. This amounted to a total of 55% in agreement, 33% disagreeing and three (13%) being undecided.
21 (81%) in total agreed that they had to take more responsibility for their own learning. Three (12%) in total disagreed and two (8%) were undecided. This statement was responded to by all 26 who took part.

Enthusiastic delivery was experienced by 18 respondents, 10 (38%) agreeing and eight (31%) strongly agreeing with the statement. Three (12%) were undecided and five (19%) of the 26 did not experience an enthusiastic delivery.

The majority of the 26 respondents (14) agreed that the class material was delivered clearly and effectively with another three in strong agreement. This made a total of 17 (66%) experiencing clear and effective delivery. Six (23%) did not experience clear and effective delivery and three (12%) were undecided.
Encouragement to participate in class through questioning and discussion was experienced by 22 (84%) of the responding 26, with 12 in the agreeing category and 10 strongly agreeing. Of the remaining four respondents, three (12%) disagreed and one (4%) remained undecided.

25 students responded to this question on feedback to the student with three students (12%) being undecided. In the form given the statement did not allow the respondent to indicate whether or not they had received feedback. Five (20%) disagreed with the statement. 11 (44%) and six (24%) respondents respectively agreed and strongly agreed that feedback was forthcoming and helpful.

This statement on project work was responded to by 25 students and showed that 80% of them found that their learning was facilitated by course project work. Two students (8%) were undecided and three (12%) did not agree with the statement.
This statement and the following one was addressed by only 23 respondents. This may be because they found it did not apply to their particular group. The results from both are quite similar with 13 (57%) in agreement with the statement. Four (17%) strongly agreed that their learning was enhanced by working with other college groups, while two (9%) disagreed. (17%) were undecided.

This statement was an opportunity for the student to indicate their experience of working with others outside of the FEI. It was addressed by 23 in total with 70% being positive. Two (9%) disagreed and five (22%) were undecided. This would be as expected as class groups worked variously with outside agencies.

As mentioned above, the AACES framework was also used to frame this discussion and evaluation of the first cycle of the research. Evidence was sought for all five AACES design criteria/qualities or themes in this first DBR cycle. At times the evidence provided pointed to a particular theme pervading an experience and the experience could be referred to by that quality but this was not always the case as some experiences proved difficult to categorise as they provided a mixture of some, or all five, qualities.
4.4.1 Authenticity

The MAKE trip to Finland was a great success for the Art Department. Being able to provide the students involved with real, authentic, novel experience outside of their own country was an opportunity relished by the department. Being the first year of this project, it had necessitated a lot of work on the part of the teacher involved with the group in finding and making contact with possible work placements for her students. Finding suitable placements and matching them to the students’ interests proved the real success of this project. Firm contacts were established this year and they provided very helpful suggestions for further, future work placements. The enthusiasm of the students when giving a short report on the opportunity that was afforded to them and their unique experiences while on placement was obvious. An example of a student’s comments (taken from their blog Fig. 4.2) illustrates this:

It’s unusual for an artist to gain insight into the workings of a Gallery, what happens behind the scenes, how much work is involved in presenting art to the public.

Visits to the hairdressing and beauty salons provided an opportunity to talk to the therapists and observe the working of the salons as an example of RELW first hand. Overall the experiences were very positive. The visits also allowed for some informal conversation with the receptionist and other clients while in the waiting area (appropriately furnished with appointment desk, suitable wall décor, lighting and relevant information charts). One of the beauty therapists indicated how the authentic experience of real clients should give her ‘an edge’ on others when looking for a job after getting her award. The hairdressing salon was equally well equipped and suitably staffed, again having a reception desk and booking facilities.

The RELW salons provided an authentic environment where students were learning by doing, were contextualising theory through real-life work and converting information into knowledge. The therapists were suitably professional in dress and manner.
The images in Fig. 4.11 are themselves an example of authentic work as they are stills taken from a marketing video being done by the media department students for the college. The images again show the students in their RELW college environments.

“We have a lot of opportunity – more hands on with clients’.

“Its open as a real type of salon, so we have people coming in from the public and just having your own real clients and we can get to improve our skills and we have back-up with our tutors if we need it. Way more opportunities to do the different types of skills. In here you do every skill and you progress in that skill every week. They all come together. If you’re not in every day you are definitely not going to progress’.

Fig. 4.11 RELW Cycle 1
Chapter 4

The experience of the fashion students through the CALE element of PAL was profoundly authentic. The students were involved in all aspects of the Fashion Fiesta event from conception, to its organisation, promotion, management, and running. This week-long event with the Fashion Show as its finale provided for authentic, real experience in event managements, fashion promotion, themed hair and makeup for all involved. This was a public event and students had to develop professional working skills of project planning and management, meeting deadlines, team work and leadership.

4.4.2. Aesthetics

The art students on MAKE were ideally placed to come away with their ‘senses operating at their peak’ which is how Robinson in his Changing Paradigms Ted Talk (2008) so aptly explains an aesthetic experience. They were provided with opportunities for learning through interaction with more conversant learning partners in subject areas in which they had identified a particular interest and were thus enabled aesthetically in their learning. This was obvious in some of the blogs and in the words of one of the students ‘I was in my element!’ (Dee, April 7, Make Blog 2011, Fig. 4.2).

Some of the fashion students also seemed ‘in their element’ as evidenced by so many of the pictures taken during the Fashion Fiesta and also by some of the material presented for assessment based on the Fiesta, presented above and also in Appendix 6.

4.4.3 Creativity

The following paragraph, an excerpt from an assessment for ‘Event Management’ by a student in one of the fashion classes, shows how their CALE event provided a platform for creativity in so many ways:

One of our objectives was to generate awareness of Galway Technical Institute. I feel this was achieved as we did a lot of promotion through media, radio, papers, magazines, posters, brochures, talks, facebook, twitter, word of mouth and the GTI website. Then on the day of the show to promote GTI even
further the models did a flash mob through shop street in Galway were they held umbrellas with the GTI logo on them. It certainly grabbed the public’s attention as they were dressed in fantastic fashion and recycled clothing.

Creativity was a necessity from start to finish, commencing with devising a theme for the week (Victorian Circus). Costumes had to be created, and hair and beauty schemes devised to match. Marketing and promotion were carried out by a multiplicity of means from the older-fashioned posters and brochures to the newer social media. The fashion show was both creative and authentic, commencing with a flash mob parade from the college through the centre street to a town-centre shopping centre.

Art celebrates creativity and the art students on MAKE were provided with suitable placements to nurture their creativity in a very different environment than that of the college studios, and that shone through in their blogs, whether they were talking about working in a gallery or on boat restoration and the opportunity for creativity afforded them through being in such a different environment and culture.

4.4.4 Engagement

Engagement of students was obvious in all three types of AL observed in cycle 1 of the research. This engagement was facilitated by the authenticity and creativity of the learning environments provided to them to develop their own personal interests and to pursue some new ones. Students were learning by doing once they became involved and this happened very quickly with the students in Finland whose curiosity was immediately aroused due to the new circumstances in which they found themselves and the interesting projects and new tools they had at their disposal. This engagement was obvious for the student who got the opportunity to take part in printing classes and learn a new technique – ‘I took part in printing classes to learn a technique called ‘image on’. It is a printing technique that combines photography and printing ... really interesting and right up my street. I think as helped me to decide that I definitely want to do printmaking next year’ (Make Blog 2011, Fig. 4.2).
For the RELW students, they were engaging in the workplace. They had to look after their clients, not just with regards treatments, but also by engaging them in conversation, to determining what exactly the client required that day. They also had to engage with fellow-workers in a busy salon to ensure its smooth, professional operation. No event can take place without engagement from its organisers. Theirs was an engaging and collaborative experience. Engagement was required in all elements of the fiesta – engaging with other class groups in the college, arranging with shop management to allow ‘live windows’, meeting all stakeholders, arranging publicity, taking part in the show, engaging with the audience as a live model in a window, a live model on the catwalk or in presenting their work through static shows.

4.4.5 Sociality

Events like the CALE Fashion Fiesta could not be achieved by students working on their own. Such events needed collaborative effort by all engaged in the event. The sociality of having classes do group work extended even further by having a number of different classes involved. Students working with other students following a different course and with different skills provided a real, authentic working environment for all. The organisers were mainly the FIP class with support from Fashion Retail and in conjunction with their module teachers. Fashion Design students (levels 5 & 6) provided the outfits, with hair and makeup by the Hair and Beauty teams.

Students on MAKE were out of their own environment, in a different country with a different language, and sociality became their survival mechanism. They were not only learning while on placement but in many situations were ‘teaching’ also by being sociable, interacting with others and sharing their experiences.

The RELW students were ‘learning on the job’. They were dealing with clients and their development of social skills was a very important part of the learning process for a career in a service industry. In their situation, they were ‘learning-by-doing’ and not just reading about customer service in a book.
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Feedback was also received informally from outside agencies such as a participating local ballet company who provided entertainment, from the local businesses who provided prominent locations for the ‘live windows’ and the involved charities. All outside agencies contacted were very positive, especially the local ballet company – Youth Ballet West – as it provided them with an opportunity to get involved in a project outside of their own school.

4.5 Changes identified for Cycle 2

After review of cycle 1 and evaluation of observations and data, some changes were identified as being necessary for cycle 2. These changes were pinpointed with the help of relevant teachers, and management.

With regard to the RELW element, conversation with teachers from both the Beauty and Hairdressing areas indicated that the teachers were investigating the incorporation of some of the non-practical modules of the respective courses with the practical requirements of the learning, e.g. an oral presentation for their Communications module could be the presentation of some practical aspect of their salon work. An observation by the researcher on having visited the beauty salon as a client was that there was a slight lack of privacy as individual treatment beds were not cordoned off on all sides but were open at the foot end. This issue had already been noted by ‘staff’ in the salon and was on the agenda for discussion with management. Discussion was ongoing with regards to having a professional brochure of services printed. This year their brochure was done in-house and photocopied. Increasing the services on offer and changing times of opening were also issues on the agenda for the end of year group meetings.

Teachers involved in the fashion fiesta CALE element of applied learning had directly sought feedback from the students in the form of an anonymous online mini survey. This was done as part of the review of courses in preparation for feedback for management, and also for timetable considerations for the following year. The researcher was allowed access to the results. A discussion of some of the outcomes is below. The teachers
involved also prepared a document containing suggestions for the following year as a result of this survey and their observations of the event and the work involved. Of note is the fact that the ‘Event’ had become quite large and required a lot more in terms of time and input, skills and abilities than the current groups of involved students had. Some aspects of the ‘Event’ had now gone beyond the scope of the modules being covered by the students. This point was very much evidenced in the following comments taken from the survey returns and the requirements document:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event must be smaller or we need different departments to take responsibility for different areas of the event as we have had comments from students that it takes over the course and some students are not interested in event. (Teacher Comment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Event - A very good, interesting and valuable module but the event does take up all of our time through the year and its all we've been taking about all year in classes etc. Its quite stressful as we fall behind in other modules because of it. Also most people aren't interested in event at all and it just takes over the whole course. So maybe for next year, keep the event module but make it a lot smaller? (Student Comment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I found promotion difficult because there is to much history in the module, i found all the research to much with all the other projects and the fiesta maybe combing it with the fiesta would be a good idea. (Student Comment)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Very evident from the survey was the lack of overall computer time. This lack of time referred to both scheduled computer classes and also to access to computer suites. The question “Did you have enough computer time?” elicited the following comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>More computer time, slower paced classes. (Student Comment)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. We are heavily reliant on social media for our event and this facility was not available to us through GTI. The lack of extra free computer rooms in the day time and</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
evenings (Like many other colleges have) has also been restrictive in doing college work. (Student Comment)

The lack of Adobe photoshop and illustrator on the computers in Room 46 is a problem as we have have most our classes there. These programmes help us to put together really professional work for our portfolio and projects due for a variety of subjects, CIG, Styling, design, promotion. (Student Comment)

Students were lacking in communication training in writing skills & online networking skills, public speaking, delivering quality presentation. Sales presentation module would deliver this and could be offered instead of project management in case event is scaled down. (Teacher Comment)

A particular comment from the student survey carried out by the fashion teachers proved somewhat worrying:

Many of the project objectives were geared towards satisfying the needs and expectations of the management. (Student Comment)

This indicated an unawareness of the objective of having this event, and, also, asked the question if it was too much of an expectation that a real, authentic event such as this, could be produced within the confines of the needs and requirements of a one-year course with specific learning and assessment goals. There were also some negative observations regarding the venue and the need for a dressing area.

From the above sources – the survey done by a teacher in the fashion area, the document prepared by the teachers post-event and the questionnaire distributed by the researcher – it became clear that changes to the CALE element of AL would need to address the following three main points:

1. More collaboration with other departments in the school was required.
2. The event should provide more integration of modules and work for assessment.
3. Applied learning should become more integrated across more modules.

4. Modules being delivered for specific awards need to be considered in light of the experience from this year – a different combination of modules might provide the students with skills more beneficial for running such an event as the Fashion Fiesta.

There was a view that the Event Management Module was ‘taking over’ and too much time was being spent on it. Another item mentioned was that too much time was required by both students and teachers outside of the course time and the return for that time was queried.

4.6 Summary

Cycle 1 of this research on applied learning in an FE college considered examples of three of the identified elements of applied learning in use in the college and their efficacy as learning processes.

The MAKE project was only in its second year in the college and it was the first year that the art department travelled. All feedback from the students carrying out their work experience in Finland was positive and there was obvious appreciation of the chance afforded them to get this experience. The researcher was present when these students were awarded their certificates of participation and each participant gave some insight into their particular experience. As mentioned by the students themselves, they got experiences with different techniques and were facilitated in acquiring new skills that they would just not have gotten on a work placement in Ireland. While the students had different work experiences, all experiences were aesthetic and authentic, all were engaging and social and invoked creativity.

The hair salon and beauty salons were in existence prior to the commencement of this research and the project for applied learning being introduced as a concept. They had operated mainly as training salons and were not open to the public initially. These were identified as RELW by the researcher and through the PAL the teachers sought out more opportunities
for their students to ‘learn-by-doing’ by engaging more with the public and in running charity events for example. Feedback from the students involved in both hair and beauty classes were also positive with many commenting that this is what they wanted to do – they wanted to be working with hair and makeup and made the contrast with training in an outside salon where it would be a long time before they would progress from doing the more basic jobs such as washing hair. They also felt that the fact they would have already worked with clients would allow them to stand out more when job hunting after course completion. This example of RELW sat compliantly within the AACES framework of applied learning.

The CALE example – the week-long fiesta – was a big event. While it gave the opportunity for real authentic and collaborative experience, a number of questions were raised among both staff and students as to the amount of time involved. Overall though, opinion was positive about the experience it afforded the students that they would not otherwise get. It allowed for engagement and sociality amongst the students themselves, with their teachers and with outside stakeholders. It encouraged creativity and provided aesthetic experience.

In summary, cycle 1 of the research concluded at the end of the academic year 2010/11. The examples of applied learning investigated conformed well with the AACES framework as proposed by the researcher following a literature review and a study of existing learning theories and models. Some changes/interventions were identified for cycle 2, the topic of Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5: DESIGN-BASED RESEARCH CYCLE 2

5.1 Chapter Introduction

The second design cycle took place in the academic year 2011/2012. In the first cycle three types of AL from the five identified as taking place in the FEI were observed. In this cycle these same three types of AL were again observed (following intervention). The RELW element spread out this cycle with some teachers taking the opportunity of Galway being the finishing port for the famous, round-the-world Volvo Ocean Race, and also operating an experimental ‘pop-up holistic health centre’ in a workplace.

In addition, another type of AL was added which increased the number of types being observed in this cycle to four. This fourth type was identified as Award Integration – Delivery & Assessment (AIDA) and was observed in a number of varying examples throughout the college. This was not a new idea being introduced but an approach to integrated delivery that was already in operation and encouraged in the college. It evolved from the LMF (see Chapter 3) but had now been identified through this research as an example of AL in its own right, as well as being a starting component for some of the other identified types of applied learning.

During this cycle, changes/interventions which had been suggested by teachers, students, management and other stakeholders through the various types of review/observations undertaken during and after DBR Cycle 1, were incorporated where feasible. Some of the changes were made by the
teaching groups with management following end of year review and included changes of module/minor award where it was felt a different mix of modules would allow students to develop a better range of skills and competencies within their award area. The researcher, as ‘timetabler’ for the college during that period, was involved in these decisions and carried out necessary changes to the LMF and produced timetables to reflect changes and requests. Changes were made to timetables to allow more computer access for project work and to facilitate groups overlapping for collaborative purposes. Cycle 1 had also identified new opportunities for integration of modules and assessments and the inclusion of other student groups. This was important as informal conversation with some students as well as some feedback through surveys indicated the size of the Fashion Fiesta, and the extra work which was required, but for which there was no credit towards their award.

The researcher included a student online survey in this second cycle of the research.

Again, the AACES framework informed the discussion and analysis of the data from this cycle of DBR.

5.2 Activities Cycle 2

5.2.1 MAKE – Cycle 2

Cycle 2 saw the continuation of the MAKE element of PAL with a second group of students travelling to Finland and also a group of Media students travelling to Turkey. As part of the DBR process, the researcher reviewed the previous year’s experience with the class teacher involved and the staff member in the college with responsibility for that aspect of PAL. The researcher had read the student blogs, reports from the students for the funding body, and attended a presentation given by the students on their return. Some practical changes were identified as possible enhancers to the previous experience of MAKE in Finland; simple things with regards travelling and contact-keeping while away. It was felt that students could benefit from being more prepared in
their ability to post blogs and pictures and share their experiences. A number of changes were administrative such as alterations to the application form to include details of any medical conditions and next-of-kin, and also getting all necessary paperwork from the students on their return. Overall the first MAKE to Finland was considered a positive applied learning experience.

Art students applying this year had already seen the blogs from the previous year and in some cases had talked to previous travellers and were therefore better prepared for interviews. Placements were again assigned as much as possible with the interests of the particular student in mind once interviews had taken place and the MAKE participants chosen. The placements were diverse as per the previous year. Blogging was once again used as a communications tool, in order to reach as many people as possible.

The art teacher proved an extremely valuable source of practical advice for the media teacher in charge of the group travelling to Turkey during Cycle 2. Dealing with travelling practicalities and the paperwork required by monitoring body Lêargas was definitely easier second time around, and the media teacher had made contacts and had had numerous conversations with the hosts in Turkey while preparations were on-going.

Six media students from the Level 6 Media Production course went to Istanbul. Their placement was with the DOGAN Media Group, one of Turkey’s largest print and broadcast conglomerates, which proved an extremely successful experience for all. Part of the funding for the MAKE project covers language and cultural classes in preparation for students working abroad in non English-speaking countries. This proved a much more valuable pre-departure exercise for those students travelling to Turkey than it had been for those travelling to Finland where English was spoken by most.

5.2.2 RELW – Cycle 2
Cycle 1 of the design process indicated some possible additional opportunities for module integration, and for additional work experience of a real applied nature. The researcher met with the class teachers of the
involved groups in her role as ‘timetabler’ before the end of the previous academic year and discussed these possibilities using the LMF and the Course Review Requirement Document (CRRD) as the basis for the discussion. The CRRD, designed by the researcher some years previously, provided information to management and the ‘timetabler’ of timetable needs and allocation resources required for the coming year following a review by course teaching groups. Fig. 5.1 shows a blank CRRD which was emailed to teachers at the end of an academic year by the researcher, and which they filled in collaboratively in course teaching groups and returned.

![Course Resource Requirements Document (CRRD)](image)

Fig. 5.1 Course Resource Requirements Document (CRRD)

The Volvo Ocean Race coming to Galway was taken as an innovative opportunity for the provision of authentic work-experience for some students in the complementary health area. The Volvo Ocean Race is the world’s most prestigious offshore race passing through four oceans (Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, and Southern Oceans) and five continents (Asia, Africa, North
America, South America and Europe). The race started in Alicante, Spain on October 29, 2011 and finished in Galway, after coming from Lorient, France on July 3rd 2012.

Fig. 5.2(a) Arrival night in Galway

A festival associated with the race took place in Galway from 30th June - 8th July 2012. This Festival was held in two areas: the Race Village and the Global Village as shown in Fig. 5.2(b).
The Race Village hosted the crews, offered entertainment and was the base for the on-water events while the Global Village hosted a business expo with conferences, seminars, exhibition space, networking hubs and a food festival. The global village was 5 minutes walk from the college with the race village only being a further five. The complementary health students opened the college salons as a ‘Health Port’, offering services and treatments such as holistic massage, reflexology, and sports massage to the crews, visitors and general public. See Fig. 5.3 for ‘flyer’ that they distributed.
They also offered their services in the global village itself where they had a ‘pop-up’ salon. It proved very successful as the village attracted a lot of footfall throughout the day with its restaurants, amusements, and stalls etc. Fig. 5.4 shows the ‘salon’ and some of the Holistic Health students in uniform, with a view inside to the treatment facilities.
Fig. 5.4 Health Port pop-up ‘salon’ at Volvo Ocean Race Global Village
Some other opportunities were taken by students in the Beauty, Hairdressing and Makeup Artistry areas during the year to provide make-up and hair for charity fashion shows and parties, children’s Easter and Halloween shows for a local speech and drama school, and the Galway Arts Festival MACNAS theatre show. MACNAS was founded in Galway in 1986 as a community based arts and theatre company which has grown to become ‘a leader in the street arts and spectacle sector’ and as such see themselves as having ‘a responsibility to promote innovation and excellence’ (http://macnas.com/education/intro/). Through involvement with MACNAS, FEI students have been fortunate to have obtained authentic and creative experiences for a number of years. During this academic year and DBR cycle 2, art students worked with MACNAS in the making of masks and props, while makeup artistry and hairdressing students worked backstage in preparation for the arts festival parade. Media students were commissioned to provide edited video.

These opportunities for engagement with outside agencies, workplaces, and community groups provided scope for creativity and both aesthetic and authentic problem-solving. Enthusiasm for the work they had been provided with was very evident on talking to the students.

5.2.3 CALE – Cycle 2

A themed fashion show again provided the CALE element to PAL for this cycle. Taking on board and implementing suggestions from stakeholders, results of review surveys and questionnaires and all other outcomes from DBR cycle 1, this cycle saw the fashion show event moving to a larger venue and including a greater number of collaborating class groups, all having their own responsibilities in this event, giving them authentic experience in their chosen area of study. Fashion students provided the design and organisation of the event, beauty and hairdressing departments provided the makeup and hairdressing as before, and media students operated as sound technicians, photographers and video-makers. Security students were a new group this
cycle in CALE and they provided escorting duties, venue and door security. The researcher encouraged all teachers to use the LMF in an effort to provide as many opportunities for assessment as possible through this collaborative event for their students. Teachers and students from other areas of study other than those directly involved had helped out during cycle 1, but during this cycle, students within the media and security areas fulfilled part of their work experience assessment requirements and project work for their vocational modules.

5.2.4 AIDA – Cycle 2

The AIDA element of applied learning in the college has already been outlined in Chapter 3. The modules/minor awards required for a specific major award are examined by a group of teachers in an integrated fashion, overlaps between modules identified, and possible opportunities for cross-modular, real work assessment sought. Award integration as we have already seen, also provided the starting point for some of the CALE activities in the college, but AIDA came to be recognised as an important type of AL in its own right especially in some of the more non-practical courses. This is described here by a teacher from the Business Studies area, where most work is theory or computer-application based.

In the business department the approach to applied learning is slightly different. Over the number of years I have been teaching I have observed that students when studying business tend to see subjects or modules as being independent of each other. In the workplace when an employee is given a specific task to complete he/she will have to apply all knowledge and skills they possess to complete task asked of him/her.

In order to emulate the workplace the business department emphasises that all modules are interrelated. Students complete assignments, exams and skills demonstrations that include the learning outcomes for a number of the modules being assessed on the course. There are many reasons for this; to reduce student workload; to show that all modules being studied are interrelated;
to motivate students and to assist them develop the skills and knowledge required in the workplace.

Example 1: In the Marketing module students work in teams to complete a marketing research project. This is assessed by providing paperwork, doing an oral presentation and by completing an interview with their Communications tutor. It fulfils the requirements of FETAC and the Tutors are assessing 30% of their Marketing Module marks and 30% of the Communications marks.

Example 2: In the communications module the students have to complete a report. The communications teacher works with the work experience teacher to devise an assignment that fulfils the requirements for both modules. Again it fulfils the requirements of FETAC and Tutors are assessing 15% of both the Communications and Work experience modules.

Example 3: In the communications module the students have to complete an ICT Skills demonstration. This demonstration requires them to demonstrate the skills gained by them on the course such as email and also involves some element of data entry. In the data entry section the data they enter usually applies to theory required in one of their other modules: Payroll, Marketing etc.

AIDA was facilitated by the researcher in her role as ‘timetabler’ in conjunction with management. Using the LMF and the CRRD and meeting the teaching groups for the various awards, possibilities for integration of delivery and assessment were identified with the teachers and management. Experiences from cycle 1 and examples of good practice, assessment briefs, etc. were shared by teachers.

5.3 Discussion and Evaluation Cycle 2

As with the first cycle of DBR the AACES framework was used to structure this discussion and evaluation of the second DBR cycle with evidence being sought for all facets of the AACES framework. Again some of the experiences proved difficult to categorise as they fitted into more than one of the five elements of the framework.
Discussion at this stage focussed mainly on the effect of changes which had been made as a result of cycle 1 evaluation, new examples of certain AL elements, and the new element of applied learning under evaluation this cycle – AIDA.

5.3.1 Authenticity

The RELW, CALE and MAKE elements of AL in the college once again provided the types of authentic opportunities experienced by the students in the previous cycle. The in-house salons provided services with heightened professionalism and improved privacy for clients, printed brochures and a softened atmosphere through the use of soft furnishings. Opportunities were made available to students from Hair and Beauty areas to work at real events such as charity fashion shows through teachers and students offering services, but also with charities seeking services having heard of the activities of the school through word-of-mouth.

The MAKE element built on the experience of the previous year. Students travelling to Finland again experienced real-world working environments. The MAKE students who travelled to Istanbul had a very constructivist experience working on a live TV show for CNN Turk. Four of the six students who travelled gave interviews of their experience on MAKE as well as their general experiences in the FEI on their return.

We were working in a TV studio with a real team making a live show for 60 million people. I don’t think it gets any better than that for me. (I2)

We were involved in making the show. We worked on one of the biggest talk shows in Turkey. At first we knew nothing about it. We went to the building. It was class. We saw all the cameras, all the studios, how they produce it, how they film it and we were working live at the show helping them make it a good show.

You don’t expect to (work) on such a show and work with proper producers, proper TV and Film persons.. (a show) which is going to be shown all over the country. It was great. (I3)
The AIDA element of AL also provided an opportunity to be able to set students relevant and real workplace tasks. Rather than having isolated assessments in isolated modules, module delivery was combined across a number of modules allowing for authentic assessment and a better understanding for the learner as to the content of their courses and to how they are being prepared for the workplace. AIDA identified where theory could be brought into practice making the learning more ‘real’ for the students and reflecting the integration that occurs in real-life tasks. This was evidenced both in the highly visible events such as the Fashion Fiesta and End-of Term Exhibitions, by some groups, but also in the more staid and not so visible awards such as Business Studies as has been outlined just above by a business teacher.

See Fig. 5.5 where a fashion teacher is being interviewed at the launch of the Fashion Week. The GTI crew consists of an interviewer and camera operator, students of the Journalism and Film & TV courses respectively doing an article for the GTI Gazette, in fulfilment of an assignment brief.

Fig. 5.5 Interview at the launch of the Fashion Fiesta Cycle 2
5.3.2 Aestheticity

By identifying where theory could be brought into practice making the learning more ‘real’ for the learner, AIDA also provided an environment of aestheticity to students’ learning – providing them not only with opportunities to learn facts and maybe how to do something but also to being able to combine their knowledge and skills into ‘Eureka’ moments for themselves.

The comments from the Interviewees (I2, I3) above also indicate an aesthetic as well as an authentic experience for them – ‘it was class’, ‘I don’t think it gets any better than that for me’. They appear to have become engrossed in their activities in the Turkish TV studio and totally enjoyed the experience and were able to express their perceptions and feelings.

The students in the pictures (Figs. 5.6(a), 5.6(b)) also seem to be enjoying themselves as models for the live windows during Fashion Fiesta week and are certainly engaged in their task.

Fig. 5.6 (a) Live Windows Fashion Fiesta Cycle 2 (student work)
5.3.3 Creativity

The flow of creativity was again demonstrated through the CALE element of AL where the theme for this year’s fiesta was *Masquerade*. Creativity and innovation were again demonstrated initially by the teachers in finding alternatives to classroom learning for the delivery and assessment of modules, and then by the students in becoming creative agents, both individually and in teams, in their response to assignment briefs and the production of the various Fashion Fiesta elements.

Creativity was also much in evidence with RELW where standard teaching rooms and corridors require conversion to inviting, tranquil treatment facilities on a weekly basis.

5.3.4 Engagement

This cycle again demonstrated how allowing for activity and creativity promotes engagement for the learners. Apart from the obvious engagement of learners in events and real work, the interview with the business teacher discussed above also indicated the importance of AIDA for engagement of students. Providing the students with an integrated brief which requires
them to provide one substantial piece of work to cover a number of learning outcomes in a number of modules rather than small non-integrated assignments, led to greater engagement among her students and subsequently a better understanding of the subject matter.

Fig. 5.7 Students on set at TV station in Turkey (student work)

5.3.5 Sociality

This element was very much evident in the interviews from the media students who had travelled to Turkey on MAKE. As mentioned above, their interviews were not alone on the MAKE element of their programme but also on their experience of the college overall. Being asked about learning in a group elicited the following responses:

In the college situation we have a lot of students coming in from different courses and in a group situation you are always going to have someone who is better at some skill than another person and so by working in a group we could have someone doing editing on a programme that I have never used and I can sit in with them, and they will show me how to edit and I will be editing with them and then in turn if we are out using the cameras and I
know how to use the cameras and sound equipment and I will be showing them how to do it. I think by showing you learn even more yourself because you are just reaffirming what you know about it, so I think it works really well – a group situation. (I1)

That you have to be patient, that you just can’t do what you want to do. You have to listen to others and you have to, like, talk to other people and get them on the same level and be patient and do listen to their opinions as well and work together as a group so you can get the best out of it. (I3)

At one point early in the year, I was working on the Open Day and integrating with the Film & TV L5 class and I also tried my hand at some photography as well because I was talking to some from the L5 Fashion Design course ... you know, I mean as well as following your own courses, you get the opportunity to integrate with other students from other courses and sometimes, I suppose, in terms of some of the whole media and fashion side of things, you might share the same artistic ideals. I think when you integrate you go to such an extent that you may learn things from them that you don’t know and they may learn things from you. (I4)

RELW and CALW require various collaborative partnerships between all involved; student-student, teacher-student, teacher-teacher, group-group as well as partnerships with outside agencies such as work experience providers, charities and other organisations.

5.3.6 Survey

The researcher prepared an online survey on the PAL initiative with students invited to give their opinions at completion of this second DBR cycle. This is shown in Fig. 5.8 and also in Appendix 7 when surveys from all cycles are shown together.
Chapter 5

Applied Learning - Review

A main focus of QTI is to provide students with learning experiences involving problem solving based where possible on real-life situations - Applied Learning. To meet this goal students have the opportunity of undertaking work experience in local businesses or retail taking part in the In House Work Experience in QTI's Hairdressing Salon, Beauty Salons, Recording Studios, Cadaver TV, QTI Radio at QTJ Gazette. Some students get to travel abroad for their work experience under the Student Mobility scheme and many students from numerose courses get to involve themselves in QTI's main collaborative applied learning event - QTI Fashion Fiesta. This survey is being conducted in the context of the ongoing evaluation of this Applied Learning initiative. Your feedback will be used in planning towards quality improvement in teaching and supporting learning.

1. Student Profile

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Student of</th>
<th>Student of Learning Experience at QTI</th>
<th>Age</th>
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Any comment?

2. The course content was what I expected for my chosen course.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?

3. The facilities were what I expected for a College of Upper Education.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?

4. The delivery approach made me more independent and responsible for my own learning.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify):

Any comment?

5. My IT skills were improved during my time in QTI.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?

6. Working with other groups in the College enhanced my learning.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?

7. Working with other people and agencies in workplaces and communities outside of the College was an effective way to learn.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?

8. My personal strengths, interests and goals were taken into account in my learning and assessment.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?

9. The type of assessment undertaken made me more independent and responsible for my own learning.

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?
Chapter 5

The outcomes from this survey were also examined through the lens of the AACES framework. As pointed out in Chapter 1, due to size, this present research was unable to look at all instances of AL occurring in the college and looks at a sample across the five identified types. In consultation with the members of the in-house advisory panel it was decided to send the survey to groups who were more visibly involved in applied learning across the college in order to receive a more college-wide view of the efficacy of AL among the diverse awards on offer. Invitation to take part was through email from the researcher through the college in-house messaging system, post completion of the academic year 2011/2012, and class teachers were also asked to send a reminder to their individual classes two weeks later.

The survey was short containing only ten questions. Each question had two sections. The first section was a five-point, Likert-scale type running from ‘Strongly Disagree’ to ‘Strongly Agree’. The second section invited open comment. It was hoped that by being short, students wouldn’t be daunted by it and more might participate.

An initial paragraph introduced the survey and its purpose. It was hoped that this introduction would prompt those students who may not immediately recognise what was meant by the Project for Applied Learning.

Fig. 5.8 Survey circulated by researcher Cycle 2
Project for Applied Learning – Review

A main focus of the FEI is to provide students with learning experiences involving problem solving based where possible on real-life situations – Applied Learning. To meet this goal students have the opportunity of undertaking work experience in local businesses or/and taking part in the in-house work experience in the FEI’s Hairdressing Salons, Beauty Salons, Recording Studios, Cladda TV, FEI Radio or FEI Gazette. Some students get to travel abroad for their work experience under the Student Mobility scheme and many students from numerous courses get to involve themselves in FEI’s main collaborative applied learning event – FEI Fashion Fiesta. This survey is being conducted in the context of the on-going evaluation of the Applied Learning initiative. Your feedback will be used in planning towards quality improvement in teaching and supporting learning.

The first question sought a student profile. It identified the respondent as being male or female, being in a certain age category and the modes of learning experience they had had in GTI. Responses were made easier for the responder, and more exact for the researcher, by having drop-down choices in the survey, as shown in Fig. 5.9.

![Fig. 5.9 Survey circulated by researcher Cycle 1, Q1](image)

Respondents came from Art, Beauty Therapy, Business Fashion, Complementary Health, Fashion Design, Fashion Industry Practice, Hairdressing, Makeup Artistry, Media Production, Radio & Journalism, TV & Film, Video & Media areas. Changes had been made from the review questionnaire used in academic year 10/11 with the fashion groups because
of suggestions from teachers; the survey was now more specific and suitable for on-line use.

Response overall was low with only 85 responses received from approximately 240 emails sent out – a return rate of 33%. The Art & Design Department returned the biggest number of responses with a total of 43 (45.88%) coming from four art groups (three at L5 Art Portfolio and one at L6) and two Fashion Design groups (one at L5, one at L6). The Health Care and Beauty Department was represented by the Complementary Health group with 12 responses, Beauty Therapy with four replies, Makeup Artistry with two responses and Hairdressing with a single response, making a total of 19 (22.35%). The Fashion Retail/Business Fashion and Fashion Industry Practice groups had four and five responses respectively and they collectively represented the Business Department (10.58%). The Media Department contributed the final 21.17% with 18 responses in total from the Video & Media, Radio and Journalism, Media Production, and TV & Film classes. The Computing & Engineering and the Sport & Leisure Departments were not invited to submit to this survey.

The response rate and scatter raised a few questions. Did students not respond because they did not feel that it applied to them, did they not associate the term applied learning with their experiences, or maybe it was simply they were finished their course and felt no obligation to complete? The latter option is the one the researcher feels is the most likely. Looking at where the respondents came from, perhaps another factor could be that some groups were reminded of the survey by their class tutors and some were not. This is the most likely answer. This brings with it another question – did the class tutors not feel that the survey applied to their group, or was it simply the end of the academic year?

A number of the respondents completed the first half of each question but did not take the opportunity to include any comments. This could simply be a natural response to getting something done quickly and out of the way.
As expected from our student cohort which is mixed but largely school-leavers, the biggest number of responses came from the ‘Age 20 and Under’ category. This stood at 30 and was followed at 25 by the ‘Between 21 & 25’ category. Seventeen replies came from those ‘Older than 30’ and 10 fell in the ‘Between 26 and 30’ group. Three respondents omitted to reveal their age category.

![Respondents’ Profile Survey Q1 Cycle 2](image)

Part of that first question related to the different modes of work experience students had been exposed to in the FEI. All possible combinations were available from a dropdown option menu and the result is shown below. Five respondents did not answer this section of Question 1.
Two of the female respondents had taken part in ‘In-house Work Experience’, ‘Local Business Work Experience’, ‘Student Mobility’ and the ‘Fashion Event’. The highest number of respondents, 20, had taken part in ‘In-house Work Experience’ only and 15 respondents had been on ‘Student Mobility’.

Seven of the responders (8.86%) took the opportunity to give a comment at this stage, five of which came from art students who were quite positive of their experiences.

The two years I spend at FEI, well my first year I felt I was drifting not knowing which direction I was going in with my art, my painting. But then throughout my last year there something clicked and it all fell into place. Whether it be the relaxed atmosphere, the teaching method of the tutors or the sense of community at this college I don’t know. I do that I wouldn’t change my last two years for anything. I learned how to express my feelings, to communicate better in groups which sounds cheesy but I really have grown through ..

I had the wonderful experience of going to Finland for three weeks. It was truly a life-changing experience. The opportunity to be in another environment as an artist gave me a confidence and flavour to my work that I would not have achieved without it. The breadth of experience and new ideas, ways of working and cultural influences were brilliant.
The sense of engagement by the students and the sociality of their experiences is evident in the above comments. The aestheticity and authenticity of the tasks they were given to do for their work experience were also obviously appreciated.

Question 2 was a simple question relating to the content of the course the student had followed. Was it what the student had expected? Two respondents skipped this question while 10 indicated they were ‘Undecided’. Sixty-one in total were in the ‘Strongly Agree’ and ‘Agree’ categories while eight ‘Disagreed’ and three ‘Strongly Disagreed’. On further examination two of the respondents in the ‘Strongly Disagree’ category were students of Fashion Design and consolidated their choice with a comment that there were too many subjects. The third respondent in the ‘Strongly Disagree’ category with regard to course content, an Art student, offered no further comment for Question 2. Nineteen comments in all were submitted for this statement. Some were indications that they expected less or more content in certain areas – ‘It was not as focused on design as I thought’, ‘I expected a bit more film work.’ These comments may have only been cases of ‘wishful-thinking’ on the part of the respondents, as information on all awards was

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Archiving Fred Bazler’s documents. Quite sure that that was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and the chances of something like it arising again are probably quite slim. Fantastic to learn how to archive in detail, and the experience was actually beneficial to my CV, as opposed to be doing it superfluously for the sake of completing a module.

I completed my work experience with a local community tidy towns project. I worked as commissioned artist on a number of art works around the local area as part of Abbeys Golden Mile Campaign. As further part of my course at --- I was involved in the organising and running of our end of the year art exhibition both of which were invaluable insights into areas of my prospective career in art and design.
available on the FEI website with links to the full corresponding FETAC syllabi. One respondent confirmed the availability of information with her response ‘Yes, I had researched the course.’

![Fig. 5.12 Survey Q2 Cycle 2](image1)

The last of the more general questions, Question 3, asked for a response to the statement ‘The facilities were what I expected for a College of Further Education’ and drew very mixed comments, with some respondents being very specific about certain facilities in the buildings and certain conditions such as heat and space, but overall there was agreement from 54 students out of 82 (65.85%) with two students not responding to the statement.

![Fig. 5.13 Survey Q3 Cycle 2](image2)
Chapter 5

Surprisingly 17 respondents were ‘undecided’ on whether or not their IT skills had improved during their time in the FEI. Statement 5 ‘My IT skills were improved during the year’ saw 36 students agreeing and 12 students strongly agreeing with a total of 18 in disagreement. Some comments were made on specific computer classes with suggestions that perhaps recognition of the varying computer skills of students could be addressed in some way at the beginning of the year.

I really felt I didn’t learn much through IT. It was very scattered and not much attention was given to those students who didn’t understand the projects or for example: the programs we had to use.

I believe there should be a small entrance test to that students who have no IT can be identified and given extra classes or help, as opposed to everyone being taught together no matter what level of IT experience, meaning it is very hard to teach and even harder to sit through a class.

I dont feel we got the full benefit of Photoshop, other students were extremely talented but only because of their previous experience .. There was an obvious divide in the work of those who have experience from outside the course and those just having done the PLC, ..

An interesting comment from an art student illustrated the importance of having a need to learn –

While I found the Photoshop module as part of my course very difficult I have throughout the year become more apt as a typist through the use of the gti email system. The fact that
communication with the course director ... was via this email encouraged me to use and develop a skill I had previously avoided due to ‘inability’ – a revelation to me and something that has gone on to be very important skill to me in developing communication with prospective artistic opportunities going forward. However with Bloggins and computing being an important aspect of third level art and design and the artistic career area, as I found out during the application process to various colleges, I do feel that a beginners computer module would be beneficial in addition to the modules on this course.

Statements 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 specifically sought feedback on the teaching and learning approaches in the college as explained in the introduction to the survey. Q4, with the statement ‘The delivery approach made me more independent and responsible for my own learning.’ was skipped by two respondents, 82.93% of the remaining 82 either agreed or strongly agreed and 7.32% either disagreed or disagreed strongly. The two students who disagreed strongly did not offer any further comment. One respondent (No. 30) who had disagreed, added the comment ‘Sometimes it felt just like school again – sitting at a desk listening to someone talk at you. We were treated like children now again.’ It is encouraging to note that this was just one response among over 80 responses received.

Fig. 5.15 Survey Q4 Cycle 2
Q6 strove to elicit students’ opinions on working with other groups in the college and if it enhanced their learning. Sixty (71.43%) respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with 12 being undecided and a total of 12 disagreeing.

Fig. 5.16 Survey Q6 Cycle 2

Some of the comments received as a response to this statement are shown below. The first two are positive. The third comment comes from an unhappy student bringing up a very valid issue, which was brought to the attention of teachers involved and discussed. Module teachers would, in future, make all class groups aware of this issue early in the college year.

Yes, it is really useful and ideal. You have to learn to play well with others, be part of a group. At first it’s nerve racking and a bit scary but if you put yourself out there you find that people aren’t so scary after all and people are willing to listening and be open back towards you.

Working with and learning from the level 6 group in art and design was very beneficially, often having had talks from members of this group about their work etc was inspiring and enlightening and created a very open creative encouraging environment amongst the groups.

I worked with the hairdressers with artistic ideas etc. I felt the ideas were taken, used and no reference was given to where the idea came from. My idea was used in the subsequent events and no credit was given atall. Ideas were taken and ran with throughout the year in hairdressing that originated from me. I feel this situation has to be avoided in the future and I was unhappy and would be reluctant to involve myself in the future with collaborative events like this due to the lack of any
acknowledgement and the sheer rudeness of a student to take another persons idea and use it for their / as their own work. This situation needs to be avoided and there has to be clear guidelines when different departments are working collaboratively.

Question 7 was answered by 82 respondents out of 84. Seventy-six in total agreed with the statement that ‘Working with other people and agencies in workplaces and communities outside of the college was an effective way to learn.’

Fig. 5.17 Survey Q7 Cycle 2

Eight comments were received, all of them positive; three specifically referring to mobility (MAKE project). One student gave a very enthusiastic response on their work experience –

. this course .. allowed me to get involved with agencies such a TULCA whereby I invigilated at 126 Gallery during the festival. This was my first experience with meeting other working artists, art enthusiasts and art student. Speaking with people also interested in art about art was aan exciting and enlightening way to learn. I found that through this I not only learned from others about their work, their methods and influences but also begin to discover and realise my own.
Statement 8 ‘My personal strengths, interests and goals were taken into account in my learning and assessment’ had a total 72.84% of respondents agreeing, a total of 12.35% disagreeing and 14.81% undecided. This question was skipped by three respondents. Four comments were received. Three were positive with one negative one.

Fig. 5.18 Survey Q8 Cycle 2

I felt my tutor identified my own strengths and applied her own teaching to these, allowing me to work on my own and helping me when needed. I feel my own tutor was especially good at applying her own teaching experience to enable the students to work at the right pace for their own goals.

Throughout the year my tutors took time with me to discuss and develop my goals and interests by being there to talk things over with, to ask questions and to guide me as I found my goals and my direction in each task or discipline and beyond. Throughout the year and particular in compiling the portfolio the tutors were sensitive to my needs in every way, always positive always proactive and always interested. In no aspect of the course were we ever told you must do this a certain way, by a certain method to achieve this correct result which was just the most wonderful and proactive productive approach to learning I have experienced. this approach encouraged me to be creative in my approach to learning and to assessment so I strongly agree.
As aforementioned, the art course adapted to me, as my confidence grew in myself my strengths increased, - my goals increased. Each stop of the way, my tutor, and all of the tutors really, were there to guide you, but not obtrusively, keeping well back, and allowing me and my classmates to blossom on our own merit.

Didn’t find my tutor that to have much interest in me and found that she didn’t really know my strengths, interests or goals.

All comments came from art students. The researcher discussed these comments with the art teacher who confirmed the importance of taking into account students’ strengths, interests and goals, and nurturing and encouraging the students in letting their creativity out and being able to show and develop their abilities. She also mentioned that some students are unable to do this due to an uncertainty in themselves and their own abilities or an uncertainty as to what it is they want to achieve and they must be given time to develop confidence in their own ability and to be able to share their aspirations with their teachers. She continued that the art course has the flexibility to allow personal strengths, interests and goals to be taken into consideration more than some of the other courses.

Statement 9 related to assessment and provided the respondents with an opportunity to give their opinion of whether or not ‘the type of assessment undertaken made me more independent and responsible for my own learning’. Overall there were 80.73% in agreement – 54.22% agreeing and 26.51% strongly agreeing. A total of
7.23% disagreed leaving 10 respondents (12.0%) undecided. Of the four comments received, two mentioned the continuous assessment and how that suited them with one also commenting on how she/he became involved in the process of learning through the type of assessment being set. Another comment pointed to a misunderstanding of the question as they indicated that they had had only two assessments. The last comment received was a little disconcerting mentioning as it did some of the teachers involved in the student’s course and also indicating the reliance of students on one another rather than the tutor for help. A number of reasons could be the cause of the last comment other than a fault with the teacher. The responder may have been somebody whose education up to then had not encouraged a ‘learning-by-doing’ or experimental approach and they were accustomed to being given and receiving information, or it could have been somebody who may not have a genuine interest in the subject of their study and found it difficult to become engaged, among other reasons. It is an issue to be aware of in mixed class groups where students can have varying degrees of knowledge of the subject matter, having already, perhaps worked in the area.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The lack of actual exams, - continuous assessment, suited me better than a written-exam ultimatum, as I prefer to work over a longer space of time, that allows ideas to build up as a structure, leading to an ending that can still be changed or altered in the future. This type of assessment definitely increases independence as it really is up to you to do the work.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The continual assessment and daily communication with tutors about my progress really involved me in my learning. By working on strengths and weaknesses on a daily basis I became involved in the process of learning rather than it be something I had to had to learn to get X result.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I only had two assessments ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students relied on the stronger students for help rather then the tutors as they seemed the only ones that knew exactly what they were at and had a talent. ...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The last statement ‘The generated environment in FEI was conducive to learning’ should perhaps have been expressed more clearly so as to leave no ambiguity as to the meaning of the statement. Of the 81 who responded to this statement, a total of 71 were in agreement with 10 being undecided and four disagreeing. Eleven comments were received and it was here that it became clear that different meanings were taken from the question with some respondents making reference to the physical environment in some of the classrooms and general areas of the college. A number of comments are shown below.

Fig. 5.20 Survey Q10 Cycle2

... the outside influences of budget cuts, and confinements of space and facilities had a somewhat negative impact at times on the joy of learning.

... if a bit slow and confusing at the start.

I left school years ago and FEI’s environment made the taunting taught of going back to study after being away so long much easier.

Before I came to FEI, I was having difficulty in school. I was unable to talk to most teachers, .. I had zero confidence and because of this, I found it hard to be near other people, I couldn’t engage in class and ultimately, my course work got pretty poor. ... the environment in FEI was perfect, the level of teaching, the personality of the art teachers, the overall nature of the other people in my class, was the best thing I have ever been a part of or experienced.

The comments from the survey provided the initiative for the majority of the changes being carried forward to DBR Cycle 3. Some comments were irrelevant, outside the remit of this research project and also unexpected as
the objective of the survey had been explained at the outset. Where this occurred and there were legitimate issues, they were brought to the attention of the most relevant person to deal with them (individual teachers or management).

5.4 Changes identified for Cycle 3

Changes for the third cycle, which would again involve the same elements as cycle 2, were identified in response to the student survey, observations of involved teachers who saw the results of the survey, and management.

The third cycle would also include the final identified type of Al in the FEI – Work Experience (WEXP) in the traditional understanding of going to work either on a two-week block experience or a one-day-a-week experience. Work Experience of this nature had been part of assessment in the college since the commencement of post-leaving certificate courses and teachers were familiar with it. It was now being recognised as one of the five examples of applied learning identified in the college.

This being the second cycle, there were few changes/interventions identified as requiring attention. The majority were minor and in most cases were resource associated – either in facilities or time allocation to different aspects of minor awards. These were discussed through the use of the CRRD for the following year, with module teachers, award teaching groups and management, and final decisions were made by management as any change had to be within the resources allocated to the school. The CRRD proved a very useful tool and the researcher encouraged attention to detail in its completion. Two returned CRRDs (completed at the end of the academic year 2011/12, and cycle 2 of DBR) are shown in Figs. 5.21 and 5.22.
Fig. 5.21 CRRD Fashion Industry Practice

Fig. 5.21 shows the CRRD for the Fashion Industry Practice Level 6 course. This group had seven modules, giving a total credit of 120 which is the requirement for a full award. The requirements in terms of time and facilities is outlined and overlap where required in teacher allocation indicated. Included also was the necessary skill set of the teacher. The opportunity to provide further information at the bottom of the form was not availed of in this instance. Fig. 5.22 is a CRRD for the Fashion Retail Styling and Display award. They are offered nine modules to fulfill the major award criteria. Both

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Name and Code</th>
<th>Requirements</th>
<th>Time Allocation</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. TEAM LEADERSHIP (G01048) 15 credit</td>
<td>Tutor must have project planning skills and knowledge</td>
<td>3HRS</td>
<td>Computer room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SALES PRESENTATION (G01057) 15 credit</td>
<td>Tutor must have expertise in marketing and up to date presentations skills &amp; computer literacy (Microsoft)</td>
<td>3HRS</td>
<td>Computer room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. FASHION STYLING (G01058) 30 credit</td>
<td>Tutor must have knowledge of fashion styling</td>
<td>4HRS</td>
<td>2HRS IN COMPUTER ROOM (39) with Photoshop if possible for research and for presenting final photo shoots</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. DESIGN SKILLS (G01046) 15 credit</td>
<td>Tutor must have knowledge of design skills (in fashion area)</td>
<td>3 HRS (2+1)</td>
<td>2HRS IN COMPUTER ROOM (39) when possible; 3HRS in final week and 2HRS for final presentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. ILLUSTRATION TECHNIQUES &amp; PRACTICES (G01180) 15 credit</td>
<td>Tutor must have expertise in graphic design/photo shop and drawing, painting, collage etc.</td>
<td>2 HRS in a block with Photoshop tutor 2 HRS in block drawing/Illustration tutor 1 HRS in block drawing/Illustration tutor</td>
<td>Computer room 29 or other for Photoshop Drawing room 40 for the drawing/Illustration work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. FASHION BUYING &amp; RETAILING (G01012) 15 credit</td>
<td>Some overlap with Sales Presentation. Split of 2HRS with tutor with knowledge/experience in Fashion buying and 3HRS with design tutor as there is a new design section in new Materials/Buying module.</td>
<td>3 HRS</td>
<td>Computer room (with projector if possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. WORK EXPERIENCE (G01049) 15 credit</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>3 HRS</td>
<td>Computer room</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total credits:</td>
<td>120</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of these groups are involved in the applied learning CALE example of the fashion fiesta and the CRRD was discussed with the teaching groups in this context also and to determine if any changes were needed for the next cycle of research—cycle 3.

![Course Resource Requirements Document](image)

**Chapter 5**

Fig. 5.22 CRRD Fashion Retail

MAKE was now an accepted part of the college year and while it was seen as a great opportunity for those students travelling, it was also a burden. The students going abroad were missing 3/4 weeks of class contact time in the college and this had to be facilitated by the module teachers which sometimes was the cause of difficulty in award delivery and exam management. As the number of groups going on mobility continued to
increase the level of disruption was increased. MAKE would be facilitated as much as possible during college breaks.

RELW and CALE elements would operate as before with some minor changes as mentioned above, identified through the use of the CRRD, and with some new examples investigated.

5.5 Summary

Cycle 2 of this research on applied learning in an FE college considered examples of four of the identified elements of applied learning in use in the college and their efficacy as learning processes.

The MAKE project continued with Art students and Media Students being the examples of the research. Feedback from both sets of students through casual conversation was positive, and very obvious from this was the social aspect – the opportunity to get to know some of their fellow students with whom they had had little contact before this. Both groups of students made reference to the language and culture classes they had undertaken prior to their travel and how this helped them also in planning their free time for further travel and cultural activities. Four of the students who had travelled to Turkey gave interviews on their return.

The RELW element of PAL continued with the hair salon and beauty salons offering services to the college students and the public. The researcher met some of the same clients from the previous year returning again. Feedback from the students involved in both hair and beauty classes was obtained during this cycle through some media students who were undertaking their own applied learning through producing a marketing video for the college and this proved a very successful collaboration between the groups of students following the different awards. It provided for all the identified elements of applied learning – authenticity, aestheticity, engagement, creativity and sociality – and the students in the salons were more at ease being interviewed and recorded by fellow students. A sense of camaraderie was evident. Another aspect of RELW during this cycle was the pop-up salon
in the Volvo Ocean Race global village. Though this event took place after the academic year was completed, the students gladly took the opportunity to be part of this event and to use their creativity in turning a black tent into an inviting salon.

The CALE example of the fashion fiesta with its finale fashion show was another success. The fashion show had moved to a bigger venue, renting a hotel function room for the event. This provided greater opportunity for the involvement of more students from other groups – for example, sound, lighting, video, marketing, journalism and security, along with the core groups from the fashion and hair and beauty areas.

The AIDA element in this cycle contributed to the facilitation of more integration of modules within awards by identifying overlap in modules both in terms of curriculum and assessment.

In summary, cycle 2 of the research concluded at the end of the academic year 2011/12. The examples of applied learning investigated continued to conform well with the AACES framework as proposed by the researcher prior to cycle 1. Some changes/interventions identified for cycle 2 at the end of cycle 1 were realised, such as having more collaboration among different departments in the college and more integration of modules. Movement of the fashion show to a bigger venue did not cut down on the workload on teachers and students which had been mentioned in cycle 1 but did provide for an even more authentic and aesthetic experience, requiring more creativity and engagement of students, but with the increased provision of assessment opportunity. Chapter 6 follows with a report on DBR Cycle 3.
CHAPTER 6: DESIGN-BASED RESEARCH CYCLE 3

6.1 Chapter Introduction

The final cycle of DBR took place in the academic year 2012/2013. It was the last cycle for which data was obtained and analysed, though observation did take place throughout the academic year 2013/2014 and anecdotal evidence of the application of AL and its apparent effects in the college was received mainly through informal conversation with students and teachers. During this phase all five identified types of AL in the FEI were observed. Changes/interventions suggested from DBR cycle 2 were made following discussion with the management and class teachers. Changes were mainly timetabling issues with regards to time and module allocation and specialised facilities in order to facilitate more overlap of assessment. During this academic year a larger number of students from different class groups were travelling abroad for work experience through the MAKE element of applied learning and the timing of this work experience began to become an issue. The last type of AL to be observed was traditional work experience (WEXP) as distinct from work experience abroad as under the MAKE umbrella and the in-house studio work experience, RELW, undertaken by some groups. Again examples from diverse areas of study in the college were observed to give as broad a picture as possible.

Cycle 3 included the final identified type of AL in the FEI – Work Experience (WEXP) in the traditional sense of going to work either on a two-week block
experience or a one-day-a-week experience. Work Experience of this nature had been part of assessment in the college since the commencement of post-leaving certificate courses and teachers were familiar with it. The WEXP element would be investigated mainly in the Business and IT areas.

A highlight for the researcher in this design research cycle was the opportunity to travel as a monitor with some of the MAKE students to Finland and to visit some of them in their workplaces. The researcher was also involved during this cycle in the preparation and interviewing of students for the MAKE element of AL from a number of courses in the college and the production of required paperwork before students could travel.

During this cycle, apart from discussion of observations with the teachers involved, an online questionnaire was developed to allow them submit their thoughts on PAL and their experience of it within their own departments anonymously. It was expected that a worthwhile response could now be achieved to the questionnaire which would not have been possible in the earlier cycles due to the small number of teachers involved and with them being concentrated mainly in the one area. Discussion with involved teachers was ongoing throughout the three cycles, especially at the end of each cycle when the Course Resource Requirements Document (CRRD) was sought and timetabling and curriculum issues for the next academic year were discussed with teaching groups and management. This teacher data added much value to the research.

Some very rich data were also obtained from the media groups in the form of interviews, videos and YouTube uploads. Events were attended and observed. Evidence for the theoretical framework was sought with various forms of research techniques utilised.
6.2 Activities Cycle 3

6.2.1 MAKE

As mentioned above, the MAKE element of applied learning continued to increase this year. The Media and Art L6 groups travelled again to Turkey and Finland respectively, and the teachers involved with these groups were looking forward to providing this year’s students with the very positive experience of the students of the previous year.

A group of Beauty Students fulfilled the requirement of their Work Experience module by working in hotel spas in the Spanish island of Tenerife. Security Studies students also travelled to Tenerife and were placed by agencies there providing hotel security. The Sports L5 group travelled to Scotland and worked at a soccer academy in Glasgow as well as receiving advanced coaching. Glasgow was also the destination for a group of hairdressing students. A carnival in Tenerife provided the location for the L6 Fashion Design students to show their creativity and skills in both design and sewing while making costumes, and for the L6 Fashion Industry Practice students in providing styling and props as their work experience. Business students obtained work experience in Spain and Portugal.

The increase in numbers going on mobility brought with it an increase in overall administration as well as the need for staff involvement in interviewing students, preparations for language and culture classes before travel, required paperwork, and travel with the students to their destinations for a settling-in period of a few days. The MAKE activities took place variously between February and May.

The researcher was involved in the interviewing of students and preparation of travel documents for a number of groups and then travelled to Finland with an art group and settled them into their work placements in Helsinki and surrounding towns, while an art teacher accompanied another group of
students to the north of Finland to work placements which were being used for the first time.

6.2.2 RELW

The RELW components were, as before, the Beauty and Hair Salons and also included for observation this cycle were the Recording Studios (sound, video, radio), manned by a combination of media student groups. All studios were in use throughout the year for teaching and in the applied learning process, providing, for example, a recording opportunity for local bands, voice training for recording for a Speech and Drama and Casting agency, promotional videos for outside clients, as well as a continuation of services to clients in the in-house salons as before, the opportunities taken to work at outside events, and the involvement in the CALE element of AL within the college.

The media groups also had a two-week slot for in-house work experience where students from the Radio & Journalism and Sound Production classes developed presentation, production and technical radio skills on GTI’s on-line radio station, GTI Radio, by broadcasting for the two weeks. Shows consisted of both live and pre-recorded interviews on local issues. Media students in the TV & Film Production class applied their recording and editing skills producing digital content for CladdaTV, while GTI’s online Gazette was staffed by journalism and photography students.

The Diploma in Health Science students again went into the workplace, as is described (verbatim) by their teacher below:

Health Science students partook in an applied learning project within the community of the (named hospital) in conjunction with the Physiotherapy Department at the hospital...

The Physiotherapist services are provided within a new state-of-the art department at the... Hospital and the students ... were in a position to be involved with this department giving members of the hospital team (420 staff) treatments these treatments included Holistic massage, Reflexology and Sports massage.
Each student was on a working rota and had to present for work in a professional uniform and implement all theoretical and practical areas of good practice learned in the college. This applied learning project was fundamental to the development of the student body as it allowed them to develop professional awareness, confidence and personal development as therapists, students, exam preparation and future study or moving onto the working world. As part of this applied learning the students not only offered treatments but observed treatments being given by the physiotherapy team in the physiotherapy services such as sports rehabilitation treatment, injury rehabilitation treatment and post surgery rehabilitation services in individual treatment rooms.

6.2.3 CALE

The Fiesta Fashion Show ran again as the collaborative event at the end of the Fashion Fiesta week. This year brought more collaboration between different departments and class groups, with the theme being ‘The Journey’. The Fashion and Hairdressing & Beauty departments were joined by the Media and Business departments who provided the music and sound and a film crew and security personnel for the event.

The media department’s RELW experience, already described above, also provided an example of a CALE activity running over two weeks during their in-house work experience.

6.2.4 AIDA

AIDA had now become an almost college-wide way of working and is evidenced across all areas of study.

An example of AIDA is much in evidence in the media department through its, already referred to, two week broadcasting of an on-line radio station, GTI Radio. This two week initiative fits into RELW, CALE and AIDA categories of applied learning. As an AIDA example, students must pull together the skills and competencies developed in their individual modules/minor awards to
produce an integrated approach to the major real task they have been given, while fulfilling their various module/minor award requirements.

The researcher also investigated the Business and IT & Computing Departments for AIDA examples. These are not areas of study where AL would immediately spring to mind, other than WEXP, but they provided excellent examples of an integrated approach to the delivery and assessment of different modules/minor awards within a major award. These departments utilised the LMF (Chapter 3) carefully to identify all overlaps in the learning outcomes within their respective groups of modules and all possibilities for integrated assessment which could provide more real, work-like tasks for their students. Discussing their findings with the researcher in her role as ‘timetabler’ and laying out their identified requirements for delivery and assessment through the use of the CRRD allowed the ‘timetabler’ and management see where allocation of resources could be best utilised in these areas. Consideration could then be given to CRRDs from all groups in light of overall college requirements, but not all requests could be facilitated. Examples of integrated assessment, following integrated delivery by the one teacher or timely, collaborative delivery by a group of teachers are discussed in Chapter 3.

6.2.5 WEXP

The Work Experience module is, in almost all cases, a mandatory module/minor award for most major awards. Assessment requirements are most commonly satisfied by students undergoing either block release or day release, (2 weeks or 80 hours) unpaid employment in a local business. The employer provides an Employer’s Report for the student on completion of the work experience and the student completes a detailed diary and review for their work experience portfolio. It is hoped at all times that students will be given an opportunity to put into practice some of the skills and competencies attained through their time in the FEI. This may not always be the case as work placements can vary greatly even among the same types
and sizes of business. On discussion with teachers involved in this module, this mode of work experience works best when the prospective employer is made fully aware of the requirements of the module, the level at which the course lies on the Qualifications Framework and the abilities of the student.

### 6.2.6 Teacher Survey

A survey was sent to all teachers in the college seeking their views on the PAL initiative. This was an online survey, powered by Surveymonkey (basic version) and was sent by email from the researcher to each teacher's work email address. The researcher is personally known to all the teachers. An initial email was sent followed by two gentle reminders. (See Appendix 7).

The survey consisted of eight questions, each question having two elements to it. The first part consisted of a number of statements which respondents had to rate on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. The second part of the question allowed open comment to be received from the respondent. All who started the survey completed it and thirty-three responses were received in total.

The first survey question presents six statements regarding AL in general which had originated from the literature review carried out by the researcher. All thirty-three respondents replied to this question with the majority of replies in the ‘Agree’ and ‘Strongly Agree’ categories for each statement. No respondent ‘Disagreed’ with any of the six statements. Twenty-two respondents (66.7%) ‘Strongly Agreed’ with the statement ‘Applied Learning encourages student engagement’, with nine (27.3%) also Agreeing. None were ‘Undecided’ but two (6.1%) Strongly Disagreed. Those who strongly disagreed continued to ‘Strongly Disagree’ with all six statements. One respondent (3.03%) was ‘Undecided’ with the second statement ‘Applied Learning encourages students’ responsibility and self-management’, with 22 respondents Strongly Agreeing and 11 Agreeing. The number ‘Undecided’ increased by 100% to two (6.06%) for the third statement ‘Applied Learning invites reflection and evaluation’, with 13 Strongly Agreeing and 16 (48.48%)
Agreeing. Again the ‘Undecided’ doubled to four for the next statement ‘Applied Learning fosters life-long learning’ with the Agreeing and Strongly Agreeing responses total coming in at 27 (81.82%). Thirty-one respondents were either in agreement or strongly in agreement with the last statement ‘Applied Learning develops capacity for planning and organizing’, the other two respondents being the two who had disagreed strongly with all six statements. See Fig. 6.1 below.

![General statements regarding Applied Learning from various sources follow. Please indicate your level of agreement with each and add any comments you may have to clarify your responses or add some statements of your own. Applied Learning.](image)

![Survey Q1 Cycle 3](image)

Fig. 6.1 Survey Q1 Cycle 3
Only six teachers took the opportunity to contribute a comment, five of these being very positive in nature. Neither of the strongly disagreeing respondents (R2, R10) took the opportunity to comment further, unfortunately. Two of the positive comments referred to students developing confidence through this learning approach — ‘Students enjoy it and develop confidence in their ability’ (R31) and ‘Learning by doing often instills confidence in students who might otherwise be lacking in confidence due perhaps to having some reading/writing difficulty or perhaps because they have been away from learning for some time, or perhaps they simply do not consider themselves academic enough.’ (R13). This comment very much reflects the mix of students in the college. R28 remarks that ‘Students participate more willingly when task reflects real life duties’, while R5 remarks how AL develops team working skills and students are better able to communicate and liaise with each other and with people in business outside of college. The sixth comment came from the first responder (R1) who mentioned the requirement for ‘more resources especially smaller class sizes’. This same respondent strongly agrees that AL encourages student engagement and agrees that it both fosters life-long learning and develops capacity for planning and organising in the learner while she/he is undecided about whether it invites reflection and evaluation or nurtures creativity and develops students’ capacity to become innovators. This comment was reiterated in R1’s response to Question 6.

The second survey question related specifically to the AL model in operation in the college in question — the respondents’ own place of work. On this occasion four statements were presented with which the teachers were asked to indicate their level of agreement and were also invited to clarify their responses or add some statements of their own. Again all responders answered this question.

The first statement —

_The Applied Learning Model in operation at the college has as its underlying basis the idea of providing learners with learning experiences that involve problems based on real life experiences_
elicited 32 replies either agreeing or strongly agreeing. No responder was ‘Undecided’ or disagreed but R2, as in Q1 above, strongly disagreed with this and the other three statements in the question. Statement two responses show eight teachers undecided (24.24%) as to whether the model in operation ‘allows for partnership opportunities with other colleges, businesses and the community’, with 42.42% and 27.27% agreeing and strongly agreeing respectively. One teacher disagreed. Twenty-nine out of the 33 replies, a total of 87.87%, either agreed or strongly agreed that the learning model ‘provides opportunities for our students to acquire and practice skills needed for success as a student or worker’, while three (9.09%) were undecided. The last statement of this question — the applied learning model ‘involves a range of activities that may be mapped onto the FETAC/CAS curricula’ — left four teachers undecided. Seventeen (51.52%) and 11 (33.33%) agreed and strongly agreed.

On reflection, this statement should also have included other awarding bodies such as CIBTAC and ITEC, as not all students follow a FETAC syllabus. One teacher (R32) clarified her/his responses to the statements by adding the
comment ‘Activities are specifically chosen/designed to facilitate and reinforce FETAC/CAS learning outcomes’. Five other comments were elicited by Question 2. One of the comments again referred to students becoming more confident as had two of the comments for Question 1. The comment ‘Applied Learning is very diverse across the different courses being taught’ is as would be expected with the courses on offer being so diverse and some being more conducive to an AL approach than others. Respondent 12, while agreeing with the statements in the question, added a very strongly worded comment:

Partnerships with outside agencies are difficult to foster and must involve a mutually beneficial relationship – currently this involves a lot of personal commitment from staff which is not acknowledged or rewarded in any way other [than] satisfaction at seeing links created that are useful for students. This situation needs to changed locally and at Department level if meaningful long term relationships are to be built, my experience in other countries has shown me that being open to internships and collaboration with schools is part of the business ethos of many organisations abroad – something that is lacking in Ireland especially at VEC level. This should be fostered at national policy level and locally.

This issue was also referred to in the comment from R24 ‘Accreditation for some of our courses are not recognised in some colleges’. Respondent R28 left a rather unclear comment:

In the case of undecided the implementation of applied learning needs further attention and thought in order to ensure its benefits are seen.

It may be the case that they were saying if some teachers are ‘Undecided’ then there is a need for some thinking on the project for applied learning from management to ensure teachers are aware of its uses and benefits.

Question 3 made reference to some of the most visible projects for AL taking place in the college (Cladda TV, GTI Sessions, GTI Radio, GTI Gazette, Fashion
Fiesta, POISE Beauty Salon, CONCEPT Hair Salon, Fusion Furniture) and presented six statements for consideration. The first of these –

*Projects for Applied Learning are conducive to the Applied Learning approach being promoted for the delivery of award curricula*

had all 33 teachers responding. Twenty-eight teachers in total either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement while four were undecided.

There was one teacher in the ‘Strongly Disagree’ category who also strongly disagreed with the other five statements in the question. This again was Respondent R2. On this occasion the respondent contributed a comment which appears contradictory to the chosen category ‘Strongly Disagree’ – ‘Projects for Applied Learning have been the most successful collaborative events to occur at FEI all year’. This could be a situation where the incorrect box was ticked and the responder meant to ‘Strongly Agree’. This might well have been the case for this teacher throughout the survey. As for Statement 1, 28 teachers in total either ‘Agree’ or ‘Strongly Agree’ with statement 2

*Projects for Applied Learning have been successfully implemented to allow students to provide evidence for assessment purposes*

with three (9.09%) being ‘Undecided’. On this occasion we have one responder (R8) disagreeing and responder R2 again in the ‘Strongly Disagree’ category. Six teachers were ‘Undecided’ as to whether or not the projects for applied learning ‘Provide platforms for inter-disciplinary collaboration’ while 12 (36.36%) strongly agreed and 14 (42.42%) agreed. All thirty-three responders answered this question with R2 in the ‘Strongly Disagree’ category. Statement 4 gave teachers an opportunity to comment on whether the projects for AL in the FEI ‘provided real-life work experience for the learners’. Twenty in total (84.84%) either agreed or strongly agreed, one was undecided and three disagreed. The ‘Undecided’ responder (R1) was undecided about all statements in Question 3. A contributory factor to her/his indecision may perhaps be that they had not been involved with any of these projects. They had indicated that local work experience was the only
form of AL they were involved with in answering Question 6 of the survey later.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are confident to the Applied Learning approach being promoted for the delivery of award curricula</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>12.12%</td>
<td>30.20%</td>
<td>54.60%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have been successfully implemented to allow students to provide evidence for assessment purposes</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>42.44%</td>
<td>42.44%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide platforms for inter-disciplinary collaboration</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>15.18%</td>
<td>42.44%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide realistic, real-life work experience for the learners</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>9.00%</td>
<td>3.03%</td>
<td>36.36%</td>
<td>48.48%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place an extra time-burden on learners</td>
<td>6.25%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
<td>21.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place an extra time-burden on teachers</td>
<td>3.13%</td>
<td>9.38%</td>
<td>25.60%</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>31.25%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 6.3 Survey Q3 Cycle 3

The last two statements in this question sought comment on whether or not the projects for applied learning placed *an extra time-burden on the learners or the teachers*. One responder (R30) failed to comment on these two statements. Eleven teachers (34.38%) in total either agreed or strongly agreed that an ‘*extra time-burden was put on the learners*’ with 14 (43.75%) in total strongly disagreeing (2) or disagreeing (12). Seven (21.88%) were ‘Undecided’. This number increased to eight in response to whether or not there was an ‘*extra time-burden on teachers*’. Ten teachers were in agreement and 10 more strongly agreed there was an extra time-burden on teachers. This was a total percentage of 62.5 agreeing. Only one teacher strongly disagreed and three teachers disagreed making a total in
disagreement of 4 (12.51%). Two comments in particular referred to this extra time-burden.

Although student work load is increased, the students themselves will tell you at the end of the experience that the learning gained from it is worth the additional time and effort. Teacher work load is most certainly increased when involved in applied learning projects. Planning and co-ordinating the various roles, tasks and responsibilities of each student/contributor takes time. (R32)

Respondent R13 contributes:

They can place an extra time burden on teachers and I feel that some time within a teacher’s working schedule should be allowed for this so that the optimum benefit of the applied learning approach can be realised.

Question 3 received ten comments in total, the other eight being –

- Students use their work to build portfolios. (R31)
- Interdisciplinary collaboration is difficult to achieve in some instances. (R28)
- In house Poise Salon has provided a stepping stone for the learner, it helps with the transition of learning on fellow students to progression to real life clients and situations. (R25)
- Structured internships need to be established with local industries. (R24)
- I do agree they provide a good platform for collaboration, but I think a lot more collaboration between specific areas is needed, eg, art and design, graphics, furniture etc. (R22)
- The value of the projects to learners makes their implementation worthwhile and for this reason continue to be implemented at department level – in some cases they should be and are not fully integrated into the whole school plan. (R12)
- Applied learning projects usually take more time as there are more variables involved but this is the ‘real life’ aspect of applied learning as students learn to reach to obstacles and solve problems. (R5)
Projects for Applied Learning have been the most successful collaborative events to occur all year.

The final comment came from respondent R2 – and, as mentioned above, appears to be contradictory to the choices taken by him/her when answering previous questions.

Question 4 was an attempt to determine the popularity of certain strategies used by teachers during module delivery and assessment in an effort to provide more real and relevant learning for their students. Nine possible types were identified by the researcher and the respondents were asked to indicate all those relevant to them. Fig. 6.4 illustrates all strategies given and the choices from the 32 teachers who responded to this question. Respondent R19 omitted to answer Question 4. Integrating delivery and assessment, and collaboration with other members of a teaching team proved popular, being undertaken by more than 90% of all staff. Collaboration with specific module teachers in different teaching teams was less popular at 78.13%. Fourteen teachers (43.75%) indicated they enabled learners seek Work Experience abroad and this is an understandably lower number as the MAKE project is not available to all students. This is the same number of teachers that indicated enabling learners with in-house work experience.
A much larger percentage (81.25%) enables learners seek work experience in a suitable local industry. The issue of time was again commented on –

Unfortunately it can sometimes be difficult to find suitable time for collaboration with other teachers. (R21)

One comment referred to the length of work experience required by FETAC as being insufficient and ‘should be of least 160 hours’ (R30). The final comment mentioned that more relationships need to be developed with industries in order to establish exact skills sets that are needed in specific industries.

A check list of skills needed and developed should be devised so the students are aware of what they need to work in a real-life environment. (R24)

Question 5 asked about skills – specifically skills for the 21st century. The teachers were presented with quotations from prominent educationalists identifying skills required by 21st century students and were asked whether the AL approach in the college facilitated the development of these skills. All 33 respondents answered this question with one strongly disagreeing, a total of 28 in agreement — agreeing (19) and strongly agreeing (9), with the remaining four being ‘Undecided’. Respondent R2 was again the one strongly in disagreement and this is perhaps an error on his/her part.
Ten teachers skipped over Question 6, leaving only 23 respondents. This may indicate that some teachers did not want to comment on any challenges/difficulties they felt were associated with the AL approach adopted by the college, or perhaps it indicates that they had none, though it would be expected they would have replied ‘none’ were that the case. Of the 23 comments received, 14 of them referred to the issue of ‘Time’, mainly to the lack of time. (Emphasis by researcher.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cut backs in <em>time</em> allocated to modules and therefore time allocated to the applied learning projects. Although it is a good idea to give students responsibilities, it is crucial that the tutor(s) oversees the entire project because it only takes a small slip up to affect the reputation of the applied project, the course and the college. (R32)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is a huge commitment for teachers and very <em>time</em> consuming. This is not allowed for in the timetable. (R31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration, attention to integration are <em>time</em> consuming, but required in order to ensure that it works effectively. (R28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management for teachers. In order that applied learning is valuable, <em>time</em> needs to be awarded for planning and implementation. (R26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources, <em>time</em> and total commitment from all students. (R23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding <em>Time</em> constraints. (R22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Time</em> management. (R16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes trying to adapt students to positively approach the simulated work placement – apply their learning to the workplace, can involve additional <em>time</em> for repetition, which is very limited. Similarly, analysing their performance in the workplace is not always given adequate <em>time</em>, as their performance needs to be appraised at the end of the year, when students are concentrating on exams. (R15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


| **Time** to manage it properly and to have the **time** to plan before teaching commences at the beginning of the year. (R13) |
| **Time** resources, ... (R12) |
| **Time** required to discuss the above with colleagues. (R7) |
| May have a negative impact on the theoretical based delivery due to **time** spent on actual event planning. (R6) |
| As mentioned, requires more resources (financial, teacher **time**, planning, links with external bodies). (R1) |

**Fig. 6.5 Survey Q6 Cycle 3 Time Issues**

Some other comments referred to **timetabling** and therefore indirectly time. One of those was R31 already quoted above. Respondent R29 mentioned ‘Restrictive nature of module descriptors, time tabling and especially resources.’ Respondent R10 commented ‘Rigidly sticking to old model timetables etc.’ One of the comments referred to the timing of a particular in-house experience at a time when it might be more suitable for students to do work experience locally and when it would also have been beneficial to the work providers.

More and stronger connection to industry/external bodies was mentioned. The issue of **finance** is mentioned specifically, twice with ‘resources’ (which could in fact be referring to funding) commented upon on three occasions. There are two comments indicating that applied learning is not available to all – ‘I believe that closer cross-disciplinary connections could be made to make applied learning inclusive to all students (R14) and ‘Also, due to the nature of implementation in our college it is not available to all students, but only a chosen few.’ (R3) Respondent R3 also makes the comment that ‘While in theory the applied learning approach integrates with the curricula it usually ends up adding to it.’
Other comments were – ‘Not enough recognition by high management as to the amount of work involved for both student and teacher’, and

Expertise amongst staff is not updated through in service or other training – the responsibility for this rests with individuals rather than a management driven approach to upskilling staff. Some projects operate on an ad hoc basis rather than a planned year long approach. Skill level of students at beginning of year, and range of skills amongst class group make it difficult to manage projects.

‘More structured communication strategies between participating departments’ was also an issue.

Twenty-nine teachers identified the Project for Applied Learning and/or the Event for Applied Learning with which they had been involved in the college when invited to do so in Question 7 from a list of six supplied by the researcher. They were also offered the facility to identify any other events/projects using the ‘Other’ category.
Four teachers skipped this question. The majority (68.97%) identified Local Work Experience and this was followed by the Fashion Fiesta and associated events (55.17%) and in-house Work experience (42.28%). The ‘Other’ option revealed situations where opportunities arose and were seized upon by ever-vigilant teachers on the look-out for real-life experience for their students - students working during Open Day in the college, 4th July Galway Parade, in-house videos for PR purposes within the FEI (interviews by students, with students), GAF TV, photo opportunities during college graduations, promotional events in industry and once-off events in collaboration with community groups where students have provided hair and make-up, video and photography services. One reply simply stated ‘None’. One comment in this section identified a possible mentoring role – ‘Collaboration with course tutors in order to integrate curriculum delivery and assessment across modules’ (R26).

The last question, Question 8, of the survey asks if teachers feel in-service for the applied learning approach being promoted in the college would be of
benefit to new teachers coming into the college or to those already working there. One teacher skipped this question. Thirty teachers (93.75%) indicated it would be of benefit to present teachers while 28 (87.5%) indicated it would benefit new teachers. This question elicited 13 comments, shown below. The comments are quite varied. Some simply reiterate their choice – ‘All staff would benefit from in-service on applied learning as well as implementation of approaches being adopted.’ (R28), ‘All in service training is beneficial for all, whatever the purpose may be.’ (R2), ‘Induction for new teachers is necessary.’ (R22) Some comments go a little further and stress specificity and relevance – ‘Yes, if it was specific enough to help certain skills required for specific applied learning projects.’ (R5), ‘Yes but also specific training aimed at upskilling in vocational area is required and should be a priority for management and staff if schools aims and status are to be met and surpassed.’ (R12), ‘All teachers need to be sent on in-service that are relevant to their area of work.’(R10), ‘Many teachers seem eager to get involved in applied learning exercises but would benefit from focused event management/organisational training.’ (R14). Two comments make reference to the possibility of staff learning from staff –

Definitely, choose some few staff members who have their heads wrapped around experiential learning (in the words of John Dewey), and can apply that to the FEI. Seeing examples of how this looks in action would be very beneficial to other faculty members, and hopefully put some lightbulbs over heads. (R33),

It would be wonderful to be able to share ideas and make suggestions across various projects. More often than not we only get a chance to talk to colleagues involved in totally different areas at the end of term. It would be lovely to do so more frequently. Staff at FEI are incredibly innovative in their approach to applied learning and these projects are a credit to all concerned. (R32)

One respondent elaborated further in her/his comment:

In-service which would orientate teachers to plan, monitor and appraise Applied Learning projects in FEI, as well as stressing its
relevance to the world of employment. It would help both new and experienced teachers and would improve how students perform in the projects. All teachers need to be reminded of its value to students in their preparation for employment in the working world. Ongoing feedback from employers is also of vital importance in helping teachers update soft and hard skills in students for employment – update relevant requirements for the workplace. (R8)

Another comment was a suggestion for a small booklet with an explanation of the applied learning approach in the college and some examples of what has been successful (R13). Comments in the main are positive and encouraging and could be seen as indicative of the willingness on the part of present staff to undergo specific and relevant in-service training.

Other feedback was provided through individual communication. An example of this was feedback, by email, from the Art Department with regards to the MAKE project in Finland. Replies are verbatim.

The first questions were concerned with the MAKE project and asked how contacts were made and placements obtained, who had chosen Finland and some general questions on what worked, what didn’t work, and the general advantages to the students. The replies showed that there is quite an amount of work in arranging the placements and also that each placement must be continuously reviewed. Reference was also made to the amount of paperwork and administration involved which is somewhat restricting.

**How were initial contacts made?, subsequent contacts?**

In the beginning I looked up FET colleges in Finland online and emailed them requesting partnerships for placements for our students on mobility. I eventually found ArtEcult which is a network of 12+ art and design FET colleges in Finland originally but also their partner countries in Europe. GTI is now a partner college of ArtEcult. This network made it really simple to get in touch with many centres at once. Teachers in the network also put me in touch with other places they thought may be of interest for work experience. (I had initially wanted to send students to Iceland and/or Finland but I didn’t get many responses from Iceland)
Chapter 6

**Why Finland?** The education system in Finland is consistently ranked best in the world and I was curious as to why this was and wanted to investigate how they did things differently. Finland has a great reputation for design and innovation and their commitment to art education for all members of society is enshrined in legislation. Finland also has a unique culture and environment which has been of personal interest to me for a long time and I figured, for students, it wouldn’t be a place they might choose to go on holiday!

**Things which worked?** Some teachers understood the kind of curriculum our students are involved with really well and understood the kind of work experience they needed. When this understanding was in place, we found really good placements both in schools and outside of schools. When the placement worked well, it was not only the working that was good but the whole experience, the people they were around, the environment they had to be in everyday, these all have an impact on the satisfactory completion of their placement.

**Things which didn’t work?** When this initial understanding wasn’t there the placements were irrelevant, boring and unsatisfactory for the students. Usually it was when a teacher of a non-art subject was involved with arranging the placement, it caused the most difficulties. They usually couldn’t “see” the work that was being done by our students and wanted them to be doing work in their own area (e.g. business or I.T.) Likewise if I am in that situation I have the same subject blindness – I can’t “see” what someone does in an office all day!

I also found that getting the group to bond and work well together well before they went to Finland was really important and helped with things like- students responding properly to emails, looking out for each other’s welfare, meeting up and doing extra activities at the weekend. I would say that this is probably the most important job – to establish and maintain group cohesion.

**Changes made year to year?** I have reduced the number of places the students go – or at least where they are based for administrative purposes. At first I arranged individual placements for each student based on their needs. Now I have three bases where the students work from - they either stay at the school and do work-like work there or go to a nearby organisation. This is because the amount of emailing and communication was becoming quite time consuming so the process has been simplified a little. This is not necessarily just my choice, but the complexity of the project made a lot more work for everyone who had to work with all the administration, documentation etc.

Despite, time-consuming administration, The Art department do wish to continue with the project, as they find it advantageous to the students in numerous ways.
Is MAKE something you will continue with? Yes, I think it is the most invaluable experience for students. Truly life changing for people and is something they always get something from, even if the actual placement goes badly. I would like to send some students to Lisbon in Portugal next year, this is my fifth year going to Finland and I have a good placement in Lisbon that I would like students to go to – if I can get an arrangement set up I will send maybe 5 or 6 students there.

Advantages to your specific groups of students? The students who go are art students, mainly fine art but also some design students. For these people, seeing and immersing themselves in divergent cultures is extremely important. It changes their perspective on their own work and re-contextualises their future. Finland is also quite an unusual country in itself culturally, socially and politically and is a useful place for students to experience first hand, how art museums and organisations are managed etc. is very valuable for students who will eventually become art or design professionals. This experience also helps with future employment and study prospects as a colourful addition to their CV.

21st century skills enabling?

If by this it is meant problem solving, thinking skills, project planning, the European mobility projects are a perfect way for students to learn and practice these skills. Taking people out of their comfortable environment or comfort zone triggers the acquisition of a vast array of skills- from having to sort out phone issues, new food, managing money, dealing with unfamiliar people, new environments, a long list.. Last year was the first time I came across someone who was incredibly, crippling lonely. This was a mature student who had travelled all her life and was shocked herself at how difficult she found the three weeks. This was an unexpected one and difficult to resolve.

The remainder of the questions focussed on other identified types of AL – AIDA and CALE and how these worked for the department.

How many of the identified AL activities/processes does the Art Department support?

AIDA – Award Integration: Delivery & Assessment / CALE – Collaborative Applied Learning Event

How does this work for the Art Department? AIDA has always been integral to art curriculum planning and delivery. It is essential that the student produces their “own” work by the end of the year – this as is opposed to the work that is done for the “teacher” or for the “exam”. So even if the student has different teachers, each teacher has to row in along with each individual student and increasingly so as the year progresses. At the beginning of the year the work is quite directed and
relates to the acquisition of skills and knowledge. Later on each student starts to work at their own pace, and in an individual way framing their own projects and goals. The teacher guides, prompts and suggests ways of working as they go along. It is demanding of the teacher that they “tune in” to what the student is doing, the stage they are at in terms of development and their general progress. The teacher adapts their teaching to each student through conversations, questioning and demonstration where necessary. At the end of the year the students put on a large scale exhibition which involves more conversation, dialogue and negotiation. This is a huge learning experience for the students both in terms of their individual work as well as practising the difficult skill of working in a group.

**Is there an extra burden in adopting this approach or would it be your natural way of working?**

This is how all art students / teachers would have been taught and trained so it is completely natural. I have had experience of learning and teaching in more widely used/conventional approaches and it seems to me to make sense.

**How do students find it initially? Is it usually a new way of working for them?**

It is very interesting to see how students react to it. Because it is introduced gradually the students don’t always notice what is happening until they are right in the middle of it. This is a good result. Their own enthusiasm and effort carries them along. Sometimes students can be slightly out of synch – they may have been ill or not engaged enough at the beginning – and these can have difficulties. Some students like to be told what to do very specifically and can react quite strongly if they feel the expectations are ambiguous – which they mostly are! Then other students find the directed part too restricting and they want to do “their own thing”, often it is the same students who find the increasing lessening of restriction the most traumatic. With freedom comes responsibility and so as the teacher carries less of the burden of direction the student must then take it on. Its possibly a little like building fitness, it happens in small increments, building skills, knowledge and then framing concepts and increasing confidence so that they can take off on their own.

In school there is a set bundle of knowledge that must be assimilated and then recounted at an exam. This removes any sense of discovery from the learning which to me, means all the fun!

Many students are habituated to the rote learning method and find any other methodology very uncomfortable and uncertain. We try to make a virtue of uncertainty and confusion and use them as starting points for discovery.

**Do you introduce the topic of AL to your students?**

Not really, although we often mention that the teaching methodology is different from what they are used to or might expect – but I think that because the subject
is seen as being “different” students aren’t always that surprised by the teaching being unusual too. Personally I am used to the term project based learning from teacher training – the John Dewey idea I think, I don’t think it was called applied learning, there may be some differences.

**Any drawbacks?** It is time consuming and tiring to teach especially with large numbers of students. It is a labour intensive method. Teaching from the top of the class and reciting the same lessons day after day sometimes seems lovely but I don’t think I could put up with it either!

**Any changes you would like which would facilitate this better?** In Finland, teachers and schools are given a huge amount of autonomy – and there are no terminal examinations. That idea of trusting teachers to teach is a good one I think. Trusting teachers to build their own framework, to explore and develop their own methodologies is a little like an extension of what we do in class; taking off!

**Your end of year exhibition, would you consider it an ‘assessment event’?** Very much so, it is probably the most significant event of the year and it is the final stage of their year’s development. It also reconnects what they do with their families and friends which is also very important – sometimes this subject can be very isolating and it can be difficult for students to explain or justify what they are doing and intend to pursue at third level. It also frames what they are doing in the context of a community of their peers.

**Are there many modules covered/assessed through this event?** Originally it was difficult to time the exhibition with assessment, marking etc. but now a component of Problem Solving is always marked through the show and also sometimes Work Experience as well.

**Anything specific about art education which makes it suitable to the AL approach?**

Sometimes art education is called person centred learning and it has to do with developing a person’s personal potential, perception and self-awareness. It is often confused with hobby or activity classes which are mostly about learning a specific art related skill in isolation. A full time course at post leaving certificate level is complex and engages multi-disciplinary approaches and tries to fully engage the student in as many ways as possible, intellectually, physically, aesthetically etc. to the best of their ability – all possible levels of achievement are also contained in every class.

It can really only be taught using an applied learning approach – learning by doing. Students are often bemused by the idea that you can’t catch up, get the notes from another person, that the work they do is experiential and that no one else can do it for them. The student who comes in late and asks “what are we doing today?” can be honestly answered “no what have you been doing today and what are you going to do today?”
Valuable feedback was also sought and received from work providers and outside agencies. Here are some of the questions and replies:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employer 1 (and former student)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. <strong>What benefits do work experience placements offer your business?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Enthusiastic employees;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- New perspectives on established practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Potential opportunity to work with talented employees / trainees in future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. <strong>What benefits does work experience offer students we have placed with you?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The opportunity to test out their skills in an environment beyond the college experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The opportunity to really think about the role they are thinking about moving into longer term. It may be that they decide it really is for them in a real world environment or they may see another role or opportunity that they are more interested in as a result of the experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The opportunity to take on responsibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In my experience as an employer it introduced me to a number of students with whom I would (and have) work with again and again on different future projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Having work experience students enhanced my work and added greatly to the team.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. <strong>Please make suggestions as to how the college could better prepare students for placement with you?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- With particular reference to film – it would be useful if the students really understood the individual roles on the film set and how all of these need to dovetail together and respect each other in order to make the team work well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Understand the need to communicate by responding promptly, speaking to the employer / each other directly either by telephone or in person, not just via text or facebook.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Encourage the student to stay in touch with the employer. While we will of course remember all the students who worked with us it is the one’s who keep in touch and let us know what they are doing with whom we have built the longer term relationships and hope to work with in the future.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Employer 2 (and former student):

- Work experience placements benefit our business ...they allow us to communicate with the staff in said institute in order to let them know what is actually required of a person in a real life employment scenario in order for them to succeed.
- The ways in which work experience benefits the student is incalculable, it allows them to see first-hand what that vocation is REALLY like...
- If you view employment as the final test in education, which is the only real exam you get in my opinion, then all education should do, is directly prepare you to get a job.

A requirement of the Work Experience FETAC/QQI module is that the work provider completes an Employer’s Report. See Appendix 8.

6.3 Discussion and Evaluation Cycle 3

This final iteration of DBR saw a much more accepted and settled approach to the identified elements of applied learning within the FE college and the term ‘PAL’ no longer needed to be explained. The Hairdressing and Beauty salons providing real-environment learning and working were now an established feature of the college with the numbers of ‘regulars’ continuing to increase. The college was becoming known as a place where good media facilities were available through previous ‘clients’, GTIRadio and marketing, and the college more frequently was approached to provide media services, for example at the MACNAS parade. The fourth annual Fashion Fiesta took place during this cycle and the fiesta now appears established as a collaborative event providing opportunities for a wide variety of students to achieve the assessment requirements of a diverse range of modules/minor awards. With movement from FETAC certification to QQI and new and upgraded programme descriptors, AIDA has become an important tool in the provision of certification to the students of the FEI.
Cycle 3 was again examined through the lens of the AACES framework with special attention being paid to some of the new instances of the identified AL elements providing data for evaluation this cycle as well as those examples from previous cycles. As mentioned previously, it is not always easy to differentiate between the qualities of the five AACES design criteria as they are very much intermingled in the evidence.

6.3.1 Authenticity

Travelling with the MAKE students to Finland allowed the researcher to see at first hand their authentic, real work placements and the value of the placements to the individual students. The individual students remained in constant contact with one another and where possible visited other students in their places of work, thereby taking every opportunity for new experience. The MAKE students who travelled to Turkey experienced being part of the crew on a live TV show being broadcast across Turkey. The RELW was showcased again this cycle with specific attention being given to the activities of the media classes in the three studios – radio, recording and TV & Film.

6.3.2 Aestheticity

The aestheticity of learning through an applied learning mode was borne through again with the additional examples of applied learning under review. MAKE to Turkey was described as a ‘phenomenal experience’ by one of the students. The RELW media studios provided an aesthetic learning environment with an almost palpable sense of learning in the collaborative, integrated operation of all three Media studios through both RELW and AIDA. This was also in evidence through the live on-line Radio.

6.3.3 Creativity

Creativity was visible throughout the college – from the creativity in the devising of authentic, aesthetic, collaborative, integrated learning tasks and assessments by the teachers to the resulting creativity by the students in response to those tasks and in fulfilling their course requirements. Creativity
was embraced and encouraged by the provision of opportunities for the students to display their work and use their talents throughout the year and develop confidence to use their creativity.

6.3.4 Engagement

Engagement was very much in evidence in the working media studios, especially during the preparation for and broadcasting of GTI Radio. Students were engaged with their individual tasks but conscious of how their job impinged on the job of others and the necessity for a collaborative effort. They were also engaged with their learning, putting the theory into practice. They were engaged by the creativity of the tasks they were working on and learning through.

6.3.5 Sociality

Engagement with clients in the studios and salons obviously led to a sociality among the students themselves as they were all working together with the one aim. Sociality was very much in evidence in the media areas where there were a number of different class groups, each specialising in specific areas, but all sharing their skills and competencies with one another when working together as a group or ‘crew’.

6.4 Summary

Cycle 3 of this research on applied learning in an FE college considered examples of all five of the identified elements of applied learning in use in the college and their efficacy as learning processes. The focus of this cycle was to fine-tune the activities already in practice by making the changes identified from cycles 1 and 2. This cycle also provided an opportunity for the teachers to make known their feelings on the project for applied learning.
Chapter 6

6.5 Summary of DBR cycles

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 presented the three iterative cycles of DBR undertaken in an effort to answer whether an applied learning approach could be used successfully to enhance the students’ learning experience in an FE college and provide them with 21st century skills and competencies, and in so doing, could a transferable model for applied learning be developed.

Following the identification of five types of applied learning in the college, various examples of the different types were investigated throughout the cycles and their impact analysed through the identified AACES framework for applied learning. This framework of authenticity, aestheticity, creativity, engagement and sociality was the result of extensive reading of associated theory on learning and teaching, the topics of applied learning and 21st century skills, and the experience of the researcher from the college where research took place.

The framework describes the elements of an applied learning experience and was informed in particular by the constructivist school of learning, especially Piaget (1977), Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1977), was complemented by the underlying concepts of Knowles’ (1980, 1984) adult learning theory of andragogy, and supported by Robinson’s (2001, 2008, 2010, 2013) views on creativity. DBR methodology including various investigative techniques such as observations, interviews, questionnaires and surveys, with both quantitative and qualitative analysis was a suitable tool for this educational research (Brown, 1992), allowing change through the three cycles. Cycle 1 commenced with a study of three types of applied learning and another was added in both cycles 2 and 3. This proved to be a suitable progression through the cycles as more student groups and teachers became involved. Cycles 1 and 2 included student questionnaires while cycle 3 sought opinion from the teachers through an on-line teacher’s survey.

The next chapter, Chapter 7, discusses the findings from the research and the emergent AACES design model.
CHAPTER 7 – DESIGN PRODUCT, DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

7.1 Chapter Introduction

Following the Literature Review of Chapter 2 which commenced the process of developing a design solution for the research question, Chapter 3 situated the present research and the rationale behind it, while identifying the elements of the applied learning and teaching approach to curriculum delivery in an FE college. It also described the proposed overall design process. The proposed design solution was then tested in a genuine learning environment with Chapters 4, 5 and 6 outlining the three iterative design cycles of design-based research undertaken in order to produce a more useable and robust design. The proposed design solution was subsequently informed, modified and refined from the result of observations and output from student and teacher surveys and feedback from other informants.

This chapter progresses the research to Phase 4 – the discussion of findings and subsequent model design. The chapter commences with a summary of the background and research process, examines and discusses the outcomes, and presents the emerging model with discussion of the interactions and interdependencies of its component parts. Suggestions for possible enhancements to the model, limitations which need to be considered, and reflection on ways this research may be further developed for further research, follow.

7.2 Model Development

The research has shown through the study of teaching and learning in the FEI the possibility of adapting an AL approach to the delivery of pre-existing syllabi in a college of further education. Five AL criteria/principles emerged from the DBR oriented research approach; Authenticity, Aestheticity, Collaboration, Engagement and Sociality. These both described the environment and provided the framework for the design model – AACES.
Further research, informed by the AACES framework, identified five distinct modes of AL operating within the college among the awards from a number of certifying bodies on offer. Practical classes were required for a number of awards such as Furniture Making & Design, Hairdressing, and Beauty Therapy, and from the need for practical workshops and salons grew the RELW mode of applied learning where the salons and therapy rooms were open to the public for business, operated by the students. WEXP, the second mode of applied learning, was an award requirement for all students following a FETAC syllabus. This work experience requirement could also be fulfilled by taking part in the MAKE project, funded by the European Union and the third form of AL. The fourth mode of AL originated with the idea of having collaborative events through which students from a number of class groups and awards could fulfil some assessment requirements in a more innovative, creative fashion. The acronym CALE identified these collaborative events. The fifth and final mode of AL derived from the integrated teaching approach to award delivery by the module teachers involved with a particular group. This mode was given the acronym AIDA and provided a significantly more relevant and work-like experience of a student’s vocational area through authentic, collaborative assessment across a number of modules. Operating variously throughout the college, these identified modes of teaching and learning provided the platform for a model of applied learning underpinned theoretically by the five principal criteria of Authenticity, Aestheticity, Creativity, Engagement and Sociality.

7.2.1 Criteria/Elements of an applied learning approach to teaching and learning in an FE college.

As explained in Chapter 2, a conceptual framework, describing what an applied learning experience is, emerged from exploratory research, the Project for Applied Learning at the FE college and the literature review on applied learning. The researcher, from her own experiences and review of literature and policy documents on AL from other countries, considered an applied learning experience to be one which is variously authentic, aesthetic,
creative, engaging and social and takes place in an environment of authenticity, aestheticity, creativity, engagement and sociality. These themes are summarised here.

1. Authenticity:
   - Learning activities should be authentic with real-world relevance. Activities should match where at all possible the tasks of real professionals in the chosen discipline/career.
   - Learning activities should require investigation from a number of different perspectives, have various approaches for their completion and require the student to use various resources which they themselves must identify as being suitable for the task in hand.

3. Aestheticity:
   - Aesthetic education has body, mind, and emotions connected.
   - Demonstrating that learning has taken place can be displayed in many different ways, and using very different media other than the most common - spoken or written word.
   - Aesthetic learning experiences are those likely to invoke student satisfaction and increase retention thus encouraging motivation and further, deeper learning (Dewey, 1933; Robinson, 2008, 2013; Uhrmacher, 2009.)
3. Creativity:

- Learning activities should be both creative in their design, and require creativity in their processing. Tasks should allow the creativity, that Robinson believes is innate in everyone, to develop (2001). Sawyer (2006) believes creativity is part of what makes us human and creative work gives us insight and enriches our lives.

- Creative education should develop the students’ capacities for original ideas. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Robinson, 2001, 2008; Sawyer, 2006.)

4. Engagement:

- Learning activities should invoke curiosity in the students and motivate them to become engaged, thus leading to openness to learning and an acceptance of the challenge to learn. (Newmann, 1986; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Robinson, 2001; Uhrmacher, 2009.)

5. Sociality:

- Learning activities should provide for collaboration. Few real-life tasks are accomplished by individuals working on their own. Students need a reason to collaborate with others at different stages, thus sociality in learning tasks is a must.

- Students learn from one another and with one another when they have a common goal and a real need to succeed. (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wenger, 1991)

These themes overlap to provide the AACES framework.
7.2.2 The Informants and Stakeholders informing the design process

- The awarding bodies and their award assessment process, for example FETAC/QQI, ITEC, CIBTAC, City and Guilds, as well as their quality assurance guidelines. Valuable feedback and external perspectives were obtained through informal conversation and formal reports from the external examiners and external authenticators of these awarding bodies. These also provided the assurance of compliance with award criteria. Audits and audit reports from the grant-awarding body Léargas for the MAKE project also proved helpful. (See Appendix 9 with excerpts from the report.)

- The Department of Education and Skills (DES) along with SOLAS, within whose auspices the college is run, and the Teaching Council of Ireland (TCI) setting boundaries for teachers along with their teaching union. The DES is the department of the Irish state with responsibility for education and training and whose mission is ‘to enable learners to achieve their full potential and contribute to Ireland’s economic, social and cultural development’ (Department of Education and Skills). Established in Oct 2013, SOLAS is the new Further Education and Training Authority ‘responsible for funding, planning and co-ordinating training and further education programmes’ (Solas, 2014). The TCI is the professional standards body for teaching that promotes and regulates the profession in Ireland and ‘acts in the interests of the public good while upholding and enhancing the reputation and status of the teaching profession’ (Teaching Council, n.d.).

- The teachers at the FEI providing the collaborative, cross-module, cross-discipline approaches to learning and assessment and facilitating the authentic, creative and social learning experience. They provided rich feedback on an ongoing informal basis as well as through formal survey.

- The work providers, the community groups and the service users/clients, whose feedback is essential on an ongoing basis both to
set and maintain standards. Clients often provide feedback in an informal manner through conversation perhaps with their hairdresser or beauty therapist or with the staff at reception when paying for their appointments in the in-house salons. Recording sessions are always discussed and analysed as are video shootings. All providers of work experience must, whether through WEXP or the MAKE initiative, satisfy the award criteria of an ‘Employer’s Report’.

- The students with their feedback on all aspects of the applied learning initiative and their perspectives on what needed change.

Fig. 7.1 depicts the AACES model showing the design criteria and the supporting design informants.
7.2.3 The AACES Model

Supporting Design Informants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Awarding Bodies SOLAS</th>
<th>Work Providers Service Users</th>
<th>DES TCI TUI Léargas</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AUTHENTICITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Simulates and recreates the complexity of real-life professional and work demands, and the service and performance expectations that apply in these authentic contexts.</td>
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<td>• Contextualises theory in practice, through integrated atelier projects that are large in scale, e.g. radio station, furniture studio, fashion fiesta.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Requires students to draw on and integrate learning outcomes, competencies and skills, from across their different modules.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Events and projects should be designed based on students’ background, interests and envisioned career and life goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AESTHETICITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students engage in developing large-scale multimodal, multisensory projects, requiring the use of diverse materials and resources, digital and physical.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The learning space is the third teacher (Reggio Emilia, 2015); therefore, the design of the learning environment itself is important for the aesthetic engagement of students. As well as mirroring the relevant professional context, the atelier space (e.g. radio station, furniture studio, hair salon) should be inviting and inspirational.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students are supported by their peers and teachers to achieve a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) in their work, especially where challenges and difficulties arise in the completion of the larger atelier events or projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students are expected to develop events and projects to the highest standards of quality achievable by them, such that they feel confident to perform, demonstrate and, or exhibit their learning/work publicly.</td>
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<td><strong>CREATIVITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students’ creativity is encouraged by the well-designed learning space which affords them alternatives to the traditional and didactic, classroom-based experience.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students’ creative talents are explored and developed through working on, and across multidisciplinary, atelier events and projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Both formative (e.g. working portfolio) and summative (e.g. radio broadcast) assessments of students’ learning are used, which give value both to the processes involved in, and the products emerging from students’ creativity.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students are encouraged in their creative problem-solving and original thinking by their peers and teachers.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENGAGEMENT</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Augments the process of learning by doing through students’ participation in the design and implementation of creative and novel events and projects.</td>
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<td>• Events and projects are based on students’ interests, balanced with the imperative to address gaps or needs in the community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Breaks the larger, atelier events and projects down into smaller, manageable and achievable milestones, supported by a learning management framework, such as AIDA.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SOCIALITY</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourages formation of diverse collaborative partnerships, e.g. teacher-student, student-student, group-group, student-teacher-community.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Provides a formal structure, such as CALE, for cross-modular learning and diverse collaboration across events and projects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Priorities, encourages and supports civic engagement and collaboration with outside agencies and groups, e.g. local charities, and civic, sporting and voluntary organisations.</td>
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Fig. 7.1 The AACES Model

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7.3 Discussion

The researcher set out to establish the extent to which applied learning could be embedded across the curriculum to provide a model for the delivery of curricula in a further education college. To answer this question it was necessary to first identify what is applied learning in the context of further education in a further education college. Importantly then, this necessitated the establishment from previous academic research and policy documentation from other countries (Australia, Hong Kong, UK, US), the critical elements of applied learning in order to provide an academically sound platform for the research, and subsequently, the development of these elements into a framework onto which a model for applied learning in a FE college could be scaffolded. It was envisaged that this model could then be adopted to other learning situations other than that of the present study.

The rationale for the research and the researcher’s interest in the subject and her motivation for carrying out the research were outlined in Chapter 1. In this chapter also the central aims of this thesis were identified as:

1. To explore the use of Applied Learning to enhance the teaching and learning of students in an Irish Further Education college.
2. To develop, if possible, a model of Applied Learning.
3. To identify the needs/skills required from students in the twenty-first century and explore their incorporation within the Applied Learning model.

These were summarised into the research question: How can we create a sustainable AL intervention in the local further education college, while developing a transferrable AL design model to promote 21st century learning in further education in general?

The study was carried out in four phases in a ‘traditional’ thesis structure where the analysis of the data and its contribution to the field of education was preceded by a study of the theoretical underpinnings of the topic (e.g. Blake & Gallagher (2009), Sawyer (2006), Schulz (2011, 2012), Schwartzman & Bouas-Henry (2009)). Phase 1 was an exploration of the problem through
a general literature review, examining possible research questions, setting a research question and thereby setting limits/boundaries to the research. The term applied learning has not always meant the same thing nor has the same connotation in different countries. Commonly it was associated with vocational or alternative education. In Australia the Victorian Certificate for Applied Learning (VCAL) is an alternative, more practical syllabus than the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) (secondary school) and is aimed mainly at students not wishing to go further along the academic path. VCAL was piloted in 2002 and rolled-out in 2003. In 2003 there were 5137 students enrolled in VCAL and in 2011 that number had risen to 21,350 (VCAA, 2012; VCAA, 2012a).

Literature from the US also refers to Applied Learning but not in the context of a certification pathway as in Australia but as a possible method of delivery for the non-academic or underprivileged student and more often referring to the primary school. The term is also found in reference to some third level colleges who take an applied learning approach to their course delivery. In Hong Kong the applied learning aspect of their secondary education is known as ApL. A literature review did not reveal reference of the term ‘Applied Learning’ in the Irish educational context.

Phase 2 followed as an attempt to develop a solution/answer to the design question. This included a more detailed and specific literature research on the area of applied learning and also included some other contextually relevant areas. The development of a proposed plan to answer the research question followed. This phase saw the identification of applied learning in the specific FE context and the development of a guiding framework/methodology for the rest of the study activities leading to a model design.

Phase 3 comprised the iterative design cycles of design-based research which entailed the testing and refinement of the factors/options in the field, feedback from teachers and students, the implementation and evaluation cycles leading to the required product. Three iterative cycles were carried
out, using multiple sources of information in each cycle. Each cycle informed
the subsequent one following review and evaluation, and finally the whole
process informed Phase 4, the design of the required transferrable model for
applied learning, which emerged for final evaluation.

There were numerous groups of informants during the process – students,
teachers, school management, work experience providers, local community
groups and ‘customers’. Research was varied with attention to rigour and
data triangulation, and included observations, questionnaires, interviews,
attendance at events, personal communication with stakeholders, review of
assessment briefs and student work.

Phase 1 commenced at the beginning of the academic year 2010/11, followed
immediately by Phase 2, once direction for the research was set. Phase 3
commenced with the first research cycle in the second half of 2010/11 and
continued with the second cycle in academic year 2011/12 and the third cycle
in 2012/13 (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). Phase 4 followed in the academic year
2013/14 with the researcher ultimately proposing a framework for a model
of applied learning, and a presentation of all findings and overall conclusion
from the research (Chapter 7).

The research has highlighted some of the issues involved for the educators in
the FEI who had no previous experience of applied learning pedagogy, nor
indeed initially any experience of the Further Education area when the
college transitioned from a second-level school. The majority of the
educators in the college had achieved a Higher Diploma or Post Graduate
Diploma in Education (depending on when they had undergone their teacher-
training). These teachers are trained for second-level teaching where detailed
syllabi and associated textbooks are readily available and assessment is set
by the Department of Education and Skills. The completion of their secondary
education for the majority of students is marked by the undertaking of
written papers leading to the Leaving Certificate Award. Coming from second-
level teaching into the Further Education sector where curricula are more
loosely defined and where textbooks were not available initially proved somewhat daunting. Course books are now available for some of the minor awards, which are the work of the earlier teachers from the PLC/FE sector.

While having the label of Further Education, FE colleges deriving from second-level schools are still under the auspices of the Department of Education and Skills second-level management system. These colleges must comply with the second-level academic year, timetable restrictions and resources. There was little recognition of the challenges facing the college management and the educators. The first, very obvious challenge is the diversity of student in the FE sector – age, schooling, skills, previous training, etc. Secondly, most courses are one academic year in length which is quite a short time for the educators to get to know the students well and the students to settle in, and in the cases of some of the bigger FE colleges such as the one in question, there can be a new input of approximately 1200 students each year along with all the administrative paperwork that brings with it. This is significant compared to second-level schools who yearly have an intake of first-years only. Thirdly, many of the awards are specialist, requiring specialist accommodation and equipment, with much input being required from the specialist subject teacher, along with management, in their sourcing. Fourthly, teachers must keep themselves aware of links from the FE sector into third level for their students who may want to continue with studies in their chosen field, and ensure compliancy that what they are offering their students will allow advancement for them. This requires course assessment and review by teachers and management on a continuous basis.

Adding an applied learning approach on top of being a trained second-level teacher in a FE/PLC college adds an extra layer of complexity for the educators in the FEI under discussion. As mentioned above, the length of courses poses a difficulty as an applied learning approach attempts to take the interests and abilities of all of its students into consideration and to make them aware of the approach being taken. Educators also need to undertake some local research and make themselves aware of potential linkages into
community activities, partnerships with local groups (such as Youth Ballet West, Galway Bay FM, MACNAS theatre group, local charities, in this particular case), and the possibility of quality work experience for their students. Planning of cross-curricular and collaborative curriculum delivery and assessment is resource- and time-intensive and needs to take place very often outside of timetabled hours and indeed beyond what would be expected for class preparation.

With an applied learning approach, the process by which an outcome is achieved, and not just the outcome itself is of importance. Curriculum content may change from year to year, from student group to student group, and educators need to be continuously aware of and upskilling themselves in new and emerging technologies to which they can introduce their students to ensure the students’ 21st century literacy. With such rapid change, timetable negotiation is regularly required to ensure the highest possibility of achievement for the student within the confines of the course.

Teachers in the FEI were invited to take part in a survey and give their views of the applied learning approach at the end of Cycle 2 of this study. It was interesting to note that while the lack of time for communication and collaboration with both colleagues and outside agencies was mentioned in responses to a number of questions, the majority of teachers was also positive about the approach, saw the benefits for their students, recognised where they could benefit from upskilling themselves, and were willing to take part in in-service training. This could perhaps be facilitated through continuous professional development (CPD) and organised through the Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST) (www.pdst.ie).

The participating students were given the opportunity to provide feedback following cycles 1 and 2 of the iterative design process. The majority of the students who replied exhibited a positive attitude to their exposure to applied learning and the integrated approach to teaching adopted in the college and perceived it as an effective way of learning.
7.4 Changes to Further Education in Ireland

Further Education in Ireland has changed considerably since the commencement of this study and the completion of the research cycles at the end of the academic year 2012/2013. It continues to change and take shape. The Further Education and Training Act 2013 was signed into law in July 2013 and provided for the establishment of SOLAS. SOLAS operates under the aegis of the Department of Education and Skills and

... will, in conjunction with the sixteen Education and Training Boards, be responsible for the integration, coordination and funding of a wide range of further education and training programmes.

This quotation came from the Further Education and Training Strategy 2014-2019, which SOLAS was required to publish on its establishment, in order to ‘provide a framework for the establishment and development of a strong FET sector’ and

... presents a roadmap and implementation plan to realise the vision of a world-class integrated system of further education and training in Ireland which will: support economic development; increase social inclusion; and meet the needs of all learners, communities and employers who engage with FET (Preface, p.3).

The Plan also states that:

SOLAS will be tasked with ensuring the provision of 21st century high-quality FET programmes which are responsive to the needs of learners and the requirements of a changed and changing economy.

This report indicates that SOLAS and the DES are to address some of the problems identified by this present research in the Teachers’ Survey (DBR Cycle 3). Strategic objective 3.4 (p.139) of the Further Education and Training Strategy (2014-2019) is to develop standards for staff qualifications in the FET sector, and SOLAS will ‘Introduce appropriate and consistent qualification criteria and standards for all FET staff, including new entrants and existing staff engaged in the delivery of FET provision’ (p.109).
While teachers at every level need to have their pedagogical competence regularly updated via appropriate continuous professional development (CPD) programmes, FET tutors must ensure that their vocational competence is regularly upgraded, as it is their responsibility to prepare learners for current and emerging skill needs (p.110).

The Further Education and Training Act 2014 (Section 7(k)) states that SOLAS will provide or assist in the provision of training to persons charged with the delivery of further education and training programmes. All initial teacher education programmes (primary, post-primary and further education) in Ireland that lead to registration must have professional accreditation from the Teaching Council. In accordance with Regulation Five of the Teaching Council [Registration] Regulations, 2009, with effect from 1 April 2013, applicants for registration for the further education sector, must have attained a Council approved further education teacher education qualification (www.teachingcouncil.ie). In a document from the teaching council (March 2011) the Council encouraged higher education institutes offering further education teacher training to look at more flexible options for delivery such as forming delivery alliances with other HEIs and further education colleges and to consider using on-line and more traditional means of programme delivery. The Council outlined also in that document what should be the aims of a teacher education programmes in further education:

i) prepare student teachers to develop their knowledge, skills, competences and understanding in order to teach in further education

ii) provide a foundation in the theories and practices of lifelong learning, including pedagogical and andragogical approaches to teaching and learning

iii) develop teaching styles and methodologies appropriate to a wide range of learners and contexts

iv) develop the theoretical understanding and practical skills to devise and implement programme-appropriate assessment for national certification
v) provide supervised and supportive practical teaching experience in authentic further education settings. (www.teachingcouncil.ie, 2011, p.10)

The fifteen learning outcomes set out for the graduate teacher under the teaching, learning and assessment section, two only of which I have reproduced here:

- set clear, challenging and achievable expectations for learners, be able to plan and communicate accordingly and motivate and assist learners to become agents in their learning
- know how to engage with learners in order to develop effective, creative and imaginative teaching strategies that are appropriate to the learners and promote learning, e.g., facilitating interaction among learners to enable shared learning as well as individual learning outcomes (www.teachingcouncil.ie, 2011, p.14)

reflect much of what has been presented here in this research on applied learning and the identified criteria for an applied learning environment are all present.

The AACES model for an FE College, implemented as suggested, could ensure the regular upgrading of its tutors’ vocational competence in multiple ways. Working in close association with work places both here and abroad through the WEXP and MAKE elements of this model means the teachers, and consequently their students, are up-to-date with what is happening in industry and business. They also need to keep informed of all current trends in the RELW elements of Hairdressing, Beauty, Design and all aspects of Media within the college in order that students are able to engage authentically and creatively with clients and satisfy clients’ needs. The integrated delivery and assessment of awards by a carefully chosen competent group of teachers through AIDA and the opportunity for collaborative, authentic assessments through CALE help to ensure that all members of a teaching group for a specific award are kept aware of changes
and trends in that vocational area, be it Business, IT, Fashion, Beauty, Furniture Design or Healthcare.

### 7.5 Suggestions for Successful Implementation of the AACES FE Model

Fig. 7.1 depicts the derived AACES model for an FE College in answer to the research question posed. It identifies the environmental criteria of authenticity, aestheticity, creativity, engagement and sociality to provide a learning framework and nurture an applied learning experience for the college students. It also identifies the supporting design informants, such as the teachers and students, the awarding bodies and government educational authorities.

For this model to be successful, school management must be prepared to provide:

1. **Training for all teachers in the areas of**
   - applied learning
   - constructive alignment in delivery and assessment
   - collaborative techniques
   - learning management.

2. **Opportunities for teachers to discuss timetabling issues with colleagues and management through a timely, consultative process and build on their experience from previous years.**

3. **Recognition of all teachers’ personal and subject-related strengths and interests and acknowledgement of these in the creation of teaching groups for specific awards.**

4. **Professional development / vocational training for teachers in a timely manner where identified as necessary.**

5. **Opportunities within timetables for teaching groups to meet, plan, collaborate and review.**

6. **Flexibility within timetables to allow for assessment events taking place outside of normal college hours and perhaps facilitate the incorporation of unexpected opportunities for applied learning that may present themselves (for example the Volvo Ocean Race,**
invitations to provide styling, hair and makeup for a charity event), and also allow for innovation in assessment.

7. Opportunities for all supporting design informants to provide regular feedback.

7.6 Summary

The aims set out in Chapter 1 have been achieved by this research as outlined by the research narrative and the research question has been answered. The DBR study has shown the possibility of adapting an applied learning approach to the delivery of pre-existing syllabi in a college of further education, and the development of a model of applied learning specifically for an FE college. The model, as presented, is very much in line with the requirements for further education teachers as set out by the teaching council. (www.teachingcouncil.ie, 2011)

The elements for an applied learning environment have been documented as authenticity, aestheticity, creativity, engagement and sociality. In the FEI where research was undertaken, the researcher identified occurrences of five different types of learning activities informed by these criteria – referred to for the purposes of research as WEXP, MAKE, RELW, AIDA and CALE. Other colleges or institutes might recognise some of these same applied learning experiences as well as recognising opportunities for new ones in their own colleges. Colleges may then identify their relevant supporting design informants and bring their own model together with the use of a relevant learning management framework.

Twenty-first century employers expect potential employees to have 21st century skills. They want employees with critical thinking and problem-solving skills, who have initiative and are adaptable to different situations. They expect potential employees to be ‘future-ready’, to have developed good communication skills and be familiar with all collaborative tools and show curiosity in keeping up with new technologies. Hargraves (2010, p.334)
refers to the findings of the New Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce (2007):

... as well as strong skills in literacy and mathematics and core subjects, 21st century students must be comfortable with ideas and abstractions, good at both analysis and synthesis, creative and innovative, self-disciplined and well organized, able to learn very quickly, work well as a member of a team, and have the flexibility to adapt quickly to frequent changes in the labor market (pp. xviii-xix).

Wagner (2008) compiled seven essential skills for the 21st century: critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration across networks and leading by influence, agility and adaptability, initiative and entrepreneurialism, effective oral and written communication, being able to access and analyse information, and curiosity and imagination.

This study has shown that these skills can best be developed and honed by having them incorporated within assessments as part of the skill-set used in completion and enhancement of assessment work, and in an applied learning delivery environment.

A theoretical educational model for the adoption of applied learning in a further education setting has been developed. This model of applied learning evolved somewhat from teaching and learning activities already in operation within the college but identified and enhanced as examples of applied learning through the design-based research cycles undertaken, and new opportunities for applied learning recognised as a result of research interventions. This model is potentially a model for the 21st century, where students need to develop skills of critical thinking and problem-solving and need to be prepared for forever-changing work situations being brought about by rapidly evolving technologies.

For the researcher, Award Integration – Delivery and Assessment (AIDA), is the pervasive approach in the overarching AACES framework which epitomises an applied learning approach to the delivery of an award in an FE college, whatever awards they are offering and whatever facilities they have
at their disposal. AIDA is potentially the most transferable element to other learning environments. It has also been used to provide the scaffolding for successful implementation of RELW and CALW in the current research and can stand on its own as an implementation and operationalised model of applied learning – AIDA: Design for Applied Learning in Further Education. Fig. 7.2 depicts the principle of AIDA, where the content from each module (the learning outcomes) for a particular award are considered together. These inform the teaching and learning activities, and the assessment, for the award teaching group.

![Diagram of AIDA model](image)

Fig. 7.2 AIDA - Learning Outcomes from individual modules are considered as a set of outcomes for a full Award and both Assessment and Teaching & Learning Activities follow.

### 7.7 Suggestions for Further Research & Concluding Observation

This research exemplified the potential of an applied learning delivery approach for a college of further education with the motivation to improve
the quality of the learning experience for the learners and identified this approach as being transferrable to other colleges of Further Education. A possible suggestion for further research is the adaption of this model to a different educational sector.

The model as presented here, based on the activities of a specific further education college, could potentially be adopted and adapted to other situations. Five types of applied learning were identified as being in operation in the FEI. Some of these came about due to the nature of the courses on offer in the college – such as the Real Environment Learning and Working (REWL) and the Collaborative Applied Learning Events (CALW). Work Experience (WEXP) was a required component of FETAC awards and MAKE came about due to the opportunity on offer from the EU and the willingness of management to embrace that opportunity. Other colleges/institutes could have a very different offering of examples of applied learning.

This research is a contribution to learning design and has provided a practical, operational model based on the experience of the teachers in the further education college under study. It is grounded in pedagogical, androgogical and heutagogical theories and incorporates the overlapping themes of authenticity, aestheticity, creativity, engagement and sociality in learning and shows how applied learning – a mosaic of learning experiences - can provide the support required for a hands-on experience for a variety of learners and offer the possibility of going into the world of work or of opening a pathway to higher education.

This study makes a contribution to the available academic research on applied learning, by giving an insight into the innovative practices, at the FE college in the study.

This research has also exemplified the use of practitioner-based, design-based research where the ‘insiderness’ (Sikes & Potts, 2008, p.5) of the researcher was crucial to the study as it provided access to people and policy that would otherwise have been difficult to obtain.
The study has contributed to the body of academic literature in the use of DBR in an educational setting where the literature review revealed a lack. It commenced with the research question – **How can we create a sustainable AL intervention in the local further education college, while developing a transferrable AL design model to promote 21st century learning in further education in general?** and has succeeded in that quest.

Fig. 7.3 Illustration of AACES Design-Based Research, based on McKenney & Reeves’ (2012) *generic, integrative model for educational design research*

Situating this research in the context of McKenney and Reeves’ (2012) model for educational design research (see Chapter 3, Fig. 3.5), there are four major outputs from the design-based research outlined in this thesis. Figure 7.3 illustrates the emergence of the AACES model and related outputs over the three major design cycles. Although the formal research has concluded, the applied learning project - informed by AACES - is now a mature intervention in the local FE college, and continues to support and promote students’ development of 21st century competencies and skills. In terms of design research, the first key takeaway or output of this thesis is the enumeration of
a cyclical, iterative process of design which demonstrates how applied learning can be introduced and developed school-wide in a further education college. Second, the thesis contains multiple examples of the work of students and the creative artefacts and events they were supported in developing through their engagement in the AACES process. The third and fourth significant contributions are the Learning Management Framework and AACES design model, which other FE educators and curriculum designers can adapt and deploy to develop applied learning in their own context, and therewith augment their students’ learning of 21st century competencies and skills.

An applied learning approach to course delivery continues in GTI.
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APPENDICES
Appendix 1
Deep and Surface Learning
Deep and Surface Learning Compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deep</th>
<th>Surface</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus is on “what is signified”</td>
<td>Focus is on the “signs” (or on the learning as a signifier of something else)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates previous knowledge to new knowledge</td>
<td>Focus on unrelated parts of the task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates knowledge from different courses</td>
<td>Information for assessment is simply memorised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates theoretical ideas to everyday experience</td>
<td>Facts and concepts are associated unreflectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relates and distinguishes evidence and argument</td>
<td>Principles are not distinguished from examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organises and structures content into coherent whole</td>
<td>Task is treated as an external imposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis is internal, from within the student</td>
<td>Emphasis is external, from demands of assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Atherton, 2003, based on Ramsden, 1988)
Appendix 2
Bloom’s Taxonomy
http://wiki.ubc.ca/images/1/1d/Blooms_taxonomy.jpg

Bloom’s Original Taxonomy


Bloom’s Revised Taxonomy
Appendix 3
Victorian Applied Learning Association (VALA)
What is applied learning?

Applied learning is a teaching and learning pedagogy applicable to all education levels and content areas. Applied learning is an approach, which emphasises the relevance of what is being learnt to the ‘real world’, the world outside the classroom, and makes that connection as immediate and transparent as possible. Partly as a result of this, applied learning involves students and their teachers in partnerships and connections with organisations and individuals outside school. Applied learning is concerned with nurturing and working with a student in a holistic manner, taking into account their personal strengths, interests, goals and previous experiences. It also means taking into account differences in preferred learning styles, and ways of learning. Applied learning acknowledges that part of the transition from school to work is being treated as an adult, and that moving students out of the classroom to learn also means helping them to make a shift to become more independent and responsible for their own learning. Applied learning also places equal importance on both theory and application, where the link between them is provided by the context. Thus the theoretical understandings and knowledge required to complete a task will be drawn from the context, which also provides the opportunity to use and apply what has been learnt. (VALA, 2006)

Vision:

For Applied learning practice and pedagogy to be valued and used across all education sectors, levels and content areas.

Mission:

To be the peak organization for Applied Learning, providing leadership, support and expertise to practitioners and decision makers within 21st Education.

Goals:

1. To maintain a full calendar of Professional Learning activities and services for VALA Members and non-members.
2. To expand our influence with other organisations and to champion the relevance of Applied Learning in the 21st Education conversation.
3. To grow to be a self sustaining organisation by developing key partnerships and other income streams. (VALA Planning day December 2013)

VALA Home Page

February 2015 newsletter VALA Web version

In this issue
1. Changes at VALA
2. VALA Induction Day 2015 Friday February 20th, Box Hill Town Hall
3. VALA Membership renewal
4. SAFE T1 - new resources - 5 Young Workers’ Stories
5. Call for papers
   - 24th National Vocational Education and Training Research Conference ‘No Frills’
6. Research
   - The Victoria Institute, ‘Putting The Jigsaw Together’ - Flexible Learning Programs in Australia.
7. Resources
   - Playmec
8. Professional Development
   - What’s new in VET with a focus on LNN
   - Numeracy workshop: Engaging all Students in Maths and Numeracy
9. Projects of interest
   - Arms & Dangerous 2015 - Youth Film Festival - Entries close March 1st 2015
   - OXFAM Close The Gap
   - Free LNN assessment - participate in trials of the new Foundation Skills Assessment Tool (FSAT)

VALA February 2015 Newsletter
Appendix 4

Authentic Learning Matrix with Identified Quadrants
QUADRANT 1:
Academic tasks set in academic settings
Most educational tasks probably fit into this quadrant, where teachers set questions, essay topics, exercises, quizzes and tests for students to complete in the educational setting - the university or school classrooms.

QUADRANT 2:
Academic tasks set in a real setting
In this quadrant, tasks are generally set by the teacher, and they are completed in a real setting, such as a worksheet on an excursion to a factory or on a field trip, or set tasks for students to complete while on internship or practicum.

QUADRANT 3:
Real tasks completed in a real workplace
Most practicums and internships occur in this quadrant where pre-service professional engage in the practices of the profession in the real workplace.
QUADRANT 4: Realistic tasks set in an academic setting

This is what we mean by authentic learning. It means realistic and complex tasks that can be completed in classrooms and educational institutions, giving students important opportunities to think as professionals!

(Source: http://authenticlearning.info/AuthenticLearning/Matrix.html)

Authentic Learning Matrix with identified quadrants
Appendix 5
GTI Radio Broadcast Schedule Sample
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Staffing</th>
<th>Staff No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>13:01</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:01</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>13:05</td>
<td>News &amp; Weather, Recorded, 10PM Headlines &amp; Weather</td>
<td>P, R, R2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:05</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>13:45</td>
<td>Student Choice (Music Show)</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:15</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>Talk Show: Current Affairs, Presenter-led Show including reporting and sports section</td>
<td>R2, R2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>14:40</td>
<td>What's on Review, Event Guide and review including music, theatre, art, music, LTV</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:40</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>14:50</td>
<td>News, News Briefs</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:50</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>14:55</td>
<td>Sessions Show, Music from GTI sessions, 3 Tracks and LTV possible</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:55</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>15:05</td>
<td>Student Magazine Show, Presenter-led 4 x 15 Inserts, 1 GTI story, include class projects</td>
<td>P, R, R2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:05</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>15:10</td>
<td>Vocal Mix, 2 x TV spots with 3 links</td>
<td>R1, R2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:10</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>Sounds Good (Music Show)</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>15:40</td>
<td>Closing Time (Daily Round Up), Round-up of day's programming</td>
<td>R1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:40</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>16:00</td>
<td>Station Sign, &amp; Station News</td>
<td>Station Manager, Admin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: P = Presenter, R = Producer, R1 = Producer 1, R2 = Producer 2, D = Desk, L = Live, M = Microphone, N = Interview.
Appendix 6
Fashion Promotion and Event Management student assignments
Event Management
Evaluating the Fashion Fiesta 2011
Post Event Evaluation
By

Andrea Guerrero
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• Introduction

• Achieve our Objectives

• Value for Money (ROI)

• Feedback

• Human Resource Management

• Self Analysis

• Conclusion

• Appendices
Introduction

Fashion Fiesta was a great success and in order to achieve this, a great deal of organisation went into this event. It began with a great launch including fashion talks in the museum by ex footballer Paul Galvin turned fashion guru. Level 5 fashion business students collected money in aid of ‘Voices for Galway’ up Shop Street using buckets and a model dressed in a designer’s creation generating awareness about our event.

The exhibition of our work was on display in Eyre Square Shopping Centre the week before and left up throughout the Fashion Fiesta week. Giving the general public a taste of what’s to be expected in the show. A comment board was erected so we could follow up on what people thought.

The Fashion Fiesta week kicked off on the 4th of April where it started with rehearsals for the models, Youth Ballett West and the Dj in Eyre Square Shopping Centre at 7pm. This included GTI teachers and the Fashion Industry Practice class to go over any fine details needed to be included.

On Tuesday the 5th the Fashion Industry Practice class of 2011 met at 8:30 am in Yeats to be briefed on the tasks for the day and given the props to be used. This included the Live Window display’s which took part in Anthony Ryans, Brown Thomas, Swamp and Remus Uomo. We were allocated a window and put into teams. The windows were dressed and a dancer from Ballet West performed in the windows as we got feedback from the passing public. All the FIP class were in t-shirts advertising who we were and what were about, Fashion!!!

On the Wednesday 6th of April a fashion talk was held in the museum by designer Sarah O Neil a past student whose collection is in Zebra. The press came along and took shots for the newspapers including The Galway Advertiser and The Galway Independent advertising our event some more.

On Thursday the 7th of April at 8:30 am FIP met at GTI were we discussed the big day ahead. Certain jobs had to be completed within a time frame therefore we started immediately on our tasks. It was a long day of organisational skills and time keeping. The show started on time and went well. The second show was cancelled due to higher management upset with the capacity of the event. In the end the show went off with a bang and we attracted a big audience and awareness for our chosen charity ‘Voices for Galway’. All collections and clothing were seen in the first show so not having the second show didn’t effect us. We set out to hold a big Fashion Fiesta and we did. A success!!!
Achieve our objectives?

OBJECTIVE 1

To Generate awareness of the GTI Fashion Fiesta

One of our objectives was to generate awareness of Galway Technical Institute. I feel this was achieved as we did a lot of promotion through media, radio, papers, magazines, posters, brochures, talks, facebook, twitter, word of mouth and the GTI website. Then on the day of the show to promote GTI even further the models did a flash mob through shop street in Galway were they held umbrellas with the GTI logo on them. It certainly grabbed the public’s attention as they were dressed in fantastic fashion and recycled clothing.

OBJECTIVE 2

To raise awareness of the chosen Charity

An important objective was to generate awareness of the charity ‘Voices for Galway’. For the Launch of our event Fashion Fiesta, the level 5 Fashion Business students did a bucket collection day were they went up shop street collecting money and making people aware of our event and who we were. On the day of our event our class members also went around the audience collecting money in aid of the charity. Further awareness was advertised on our poster and in the press release’s which were sent to all types of media we targeted.

OBJECTIVE 3

To generate attendance at the event

It was important to the Fashion Industry Practice class to generate attendance at our event in order to succeed and feel all our hard work paid off. All in all we were more then thrilled at how many people actually did show up. We out did last years event in attendance therefore we achieved our objective of generating attendance. People came in groups and quickly filled the space up even making it difficult for the shoppers to pass by. We supplied chairs but people were sitting on the floor to watch the show.
OBJECTIVE 4

To Show case the students work

The reason we decided to hold this event and put our biggest efforts into it was to showcase what we can do. Our talented students want and deserve to be seen. This Fashion Fiesta gives the GTI students the opportunity to show what they can do. With such a big turn out each designer and Business Fashion student got to revel in the limelight as all eyes were on there work. It was great publicity and with all the professional photographers there it meant the work will be noted.

OBJECTIVE 5

Run a successful event

A main objective to Fashion Industry Practice was to run a successful event. We heard and some were involved in last year’s event on how successful it was. It drove us on to do better and work harder at making ours one to remember. It was a success and even Jimmy Brick our Principal sent us on a great email saying we set the standard.
Value for Money (ROI)

The amount we spent on the event was €3,000 that was our budget. Promotion of the event was very important for the money to be spent on such as the offline branding such as the posters which were designed and had to be printed and hung up around the city to ensure a good turn out for the event.

T-shirts and umbrellas were also bought and printed with the GTI logo and other writing about our event. This was very important to have as it was more publicity for GTI. The models held the umbrellas up as we walked them up to Eyre Square in a model train this looked so effective and the public could clearly see where we were from and what were about.

Online advertising by using Twitter, Facebook and the GTI fashion fiesta website were free so we took full advantage of this so we could generate more awareness of our event.

Through our advertising with the help of our budget we got a great turn out and exceeded our expectations. We made sure to keep the logo of GTI visible wherever possible. In turn the college should benefit from our event and hopefully we generated interest in our courses.
Feedback

Comment on the feedback

After the event I created a feedback form so that we could receive further information on our event on what we could improve on. By email I sent this form to the models involved as I was part of the casting team. I got five replies and all in all was positive. It’s obvious from this form that they wished there had been more refreshments and a seating area were they could wait. They were happy to be contacted throughout this process of organising there rehearsals and on the day by email. As a team we were rated 1-5 5 being very good and one being poor. The team got mostly 5’s so it was a success but there is always ways to improve. For example a further comment wished there were water for after the show and the walk back to GTI.

Give recommendations for next years Fiesta

Next year I would suggest that there should be a separate event management class for this scale of an event as it takes up your whole year. As I’m interested in Fashion and the other modules that come with this course I would have preferred to do more class related things or work experience so I could soak up as much as possible regarding the fashion industry. I felt the event took away from what I really wanted to do. It was fun at times but very stressful and time consuming. I would also suggest the event were held in a hotel that could supply the room for changing, catwalk, people, hair and make-up, entertainment, the after party which would eliminate the stress and make it more enjoyable. Also a hotel could cater and make the event a big night out including dinner then tickets could be sold. Shops and boutiques could rent space to sell there products with discount prices. There money could go to Charity or expenses. Make it a real big Fashion Extravaganza night.
Comment on how you found the process of managing the following: contractors, volunteers, suppliers and GTI staff

Overall everyone involved really pulled out all the stops, we weren’t really ever let down as we had backup plans. All media were fantastic and really promoted our event. The manager of Eyre Square Shopping Centre was hard to contact and sometimes she could not supply us with concrete answers which got extremely frustrating for us. It was pivotal that we knew what we could do within the shopping centre in order to go ahead with our ideas and plans. With three different locations offered to us we finally got the go ahead on the location on the bottom floor towards the back. It was smaller then what we had planned but went with it. It came out looking well and working for us.

The volunteers of certain teachers were much appreciated and really helped in a way they’ll never know. Other volunteers included Youth Ballet West which supplied great entertainment for our audience and made a great impact on the public in our live windows.

The suppliers for our Fashion Fiesta are much appreciated as without them we wouldn’t of been able to go that extra mile. The Meyrick Hotel supplied the chairs and champagne. The Galway Bay Hotel and the Ardilaun Hotel supplied the red carpets. A shop within the Eyre Square Shopping Centre supplied the helium Balloons which made it look fantastic.

GTI staff was all on board and very patient with us as we took over the college for the week and got everyone involved helping. The Canteen supplied the models with food before they got ready for a long day ahead. We were given the use of two prefabs to do makeup and fittings. All teachers were in attendance at the event to support us which boosted our morale. [REDACTED] also attended which put the pressure on us to achieve our goal of making GTI known.

All in all everyone was a delight to work with, we had no problems bar one or two with the manager of Eyre Square Shopping Centre but I’m sure [REDACTED] was happy with the turn out and what we did for there reputation.
Self Analysis

Complete a self analysis questionnaire on your work on the Fiesta

My job as part of the Fashion Fiesta was to be in control of the models. I felt overwhelmed with the amount of girls I had to keep in the loop so I asked for help from another team member who dealt with all the emails. I was organised from the beginning whether that was castings, writing details of the models getting head shots done, dealings with the designers, I constantly kept my focus on the first job of trying to get every designer a model. My second big job was to ensure the day went to plan regarding the models getting dressed and the designers having the right models. I had to ensure they got up to Eyre Square on time with the help of Orla O Neill.

Here’s feedback from my fellow students and teachers of my performance:

- You were totally organized and professional. Your experience with fashion shows really came through. You did so much thorough preparation and organization, from the model casting to the running order, and the creative planning on how and where the models should walk etc. You really did a fantastic presentation earlier in the year showing your vision and planning for the event and you pulled it all together really well on the day. I was REALLY impressed. Well done, Siobhan

- Andrea Guerrero is a true professional in all tasks that she is involved with. Her ability to organise an event such as GTI Fashion Fiesta is second to none and she is an outstanding leader. She is dedicated, hard working, reliable, thorough, creative and collaborates well at all times with her team. I am honoured to be able to recommend Andrea as a person of outstanding ability both in terms of Event Management and in her creative projects, where her extraordinary eye for detail and talent is in abundance. In summation, I would like to take this opportunity to say that Andrea is a true spirit of Renaissance ability. She is multi faceted and multi talented and can be relied upon to produce results of the very highest standard.

- I wanted to congratulate you on the event. You obviously worked extremly hard in preparing for the event. The day of the event you did an excellent job organising the models in GTI and also working behind the scenes at the fashion show.

Orla O Neill
• **Andrea**, you were the one!!!:-) I am impressed with the amount of work you put into the fiesta. On the day you were visible and I received help from you any time I asked. You also guide a models in a very professional way. Thanks.

**Ask 5 of your team to appraise your work on the Fiesta**

**Comment on the areas you feel you can improve/personal growth areas**

**Communicating Skills:** I felt I could of communicated better with the models involved as some were unsure what to do, where to walk how to pose etc. Also the designers felt they did not know what was going on sometimes and they should have been kept in the loop which could have been a job of mine as I dealt with them a lot with casting for there models.

**Organisational Skills:** I am an organised person in general but I realised by dealing with this many people I could have been more organised and on top of things better. I felt as if I needed to carry my paper and pen the whole time to keep on top of it. And I could have had all the numbers of models designers etc. in my phone and had credit to ring people other then email as a text or call is instant and people didn’t check there emails too often to reply straight away.

**Delegating Skills:** I am not a leader at heart and I felt that I wasn’t taken seriously sometimes as I didn’t assert myself better. I could improve on my delegating skills. I wanted to take lead sometimes but felt I would be looked badly upon so I took another approach. I had to shout occasionally, too assure that I am heard and understood when I was in charge of the models.

**Stressing:** I am a worrier and stressing comes with that. I got ill through it and wish I could have dealt with it better. If I could improve on being organised and communication better I felt I would have been less stressed.

**Did this process help you reach/find your career goals?**

This process made me realise what my strengths and weaknesses are. In my chosen career I would need to improve on certain skills but I feel this experience has helped me discover those elements. My career goals will consist of communicating with people all the time and delegating and being organised. Hopefully I won’t feel the stress too much. It just comes with wanting to succeed and make a career for myself. I know now with the guidance and the experiences my role included for the Fashion Fiesta I will have a good background to help me achieve what I want to do.
Conclusion

In conclusion to the Fashion Fiesta 2011 by Fashion Industry Practice it is obvious it was a learning curve for what’s to come for us in business ventures. Many skills were put to test including communicating being a very important one for us. It was a big task for our class and a reputation was at risk. GTI put there trust in us to pull off an amazing successful event. With confidence I can safely say we achieved just that. It began with the great launch were there were fashion talks and even Paul Galvin ex gaa Kerry footballer turned fashion guru got involved with GTI, discussing how he got into fashion and now writes an article in the paper. Level 5 Business students did a collection on shop street were they raised money for ‘Voices for Galway’. To get people interested and give them a little taste of what’s to come an exhibition of our work was on display in the Shopping Centre the week before the Fashion Fiesta week.

Then the week of the Fashion Fiesta kicked of with a buzz when the live windows stopped people in there tracks on shop street. We generated awareness about our event on the 5th of April gathering as much feedback as we could. On Wednesday the 6th more fashion talks by ex student and designer for Zebra located in Galway Sarah O Neill discussed how she began her design career. Thursday the 7th of April the big event took place in Eyre Square Shopping Centre were we pulled off the Victorian themed show, showcasing amazing and quirky fashion by the students of GTI and Yeats fashion department. The exhibition was taken down Monday the 11th of April. Hopefully leaving a mental imprint in peoples minds of how GTI is a great college to come to in order to better your skills.
Event Management
(N32947)

Evaluation of the GTI Fashion Fiesta 2011

Prepared By: 
For the attention of: 
Submission Date: 11/05/2011
Candidate No: 7113379T
Class: FIP
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Terms of Reference

This report is being prepared for the module Event Management (N32947) as part of the FETAC Level 6 Award AFIPX in Fashion Industry Practice.

Aims

The aims of this report are to evaluate the GTI Fashion Fiesta 2011 with reference to the following points:

- State the objectives of the event
- Give the results and analysis of the objectives
- Analyse feedback from the event
- Make comments and recommendations based on the feedback
- Address any Human Resource Management issues
- Complete a self analysis and get feedback on my role in the event
- Illustrate my work through the project strategy
- Identify GTI’s (client) needs and expectations (deliverables)
- Analyse the budget with projected cost against the actual cost (ensure value for money, ROI)
- Demonstrate relevant Fashion Industry Practice event production skills
- Detail key issues with clarity and objectivity
- Conclusions are to be drawn using critical thinking and analysis from the findings of the report
- Assemble a written project at FETAC Level 6 standard and meet the assessment criteria for this work
- Adhere to deadlines

Method

Project Management is an essential tool used in order to successfully execute a project. The project must meet the expectations of the client; this can be done by clearly setting out clear objectives and deliverables. For our project, a Gantt chart was chosen as the method to organise and manage the Fashion Fiesta. The Fashion Industry Practice (FIP) class was divided into teams and allocated a particular section of the event to organise. Each team had a team leader to assign tasks to other members and monitor their progress. The system used for monitoring these teams and their tasks is an online collaborative effort using google docs and an excel spreadsheet in the form of a Gantt chart. This would allow each FIP student to access and update this Gantt chart as they deal with their relative tasks.
**Background / Introduction**

The GTI Fashion Fiesta took place early this April and was a fantastic success. The GTI’s Fashion Industry Practice (FIP) students created a spectacular series of “Victorian Circus” themed events that wowed the people of Galway.

A live windows display took place in many fashion stores in the city; Anthony Ryans, Brown Thomas, Remus and Swamp. These windows featured creative designs such as a Lady Gaga inspired recycled dominoes pizza box dress and a Black Swan themed costume. The windows proved to be a hit with the public, with children and adults alike getting great amusement from interacting with the models.

GTI Tutor [Name] organised a series of talks from fashion industry professionals in the Galway City Museum. Many prominent up and coming designers (for example former GTI Students [Name] and [Name]) told the audience of their experiences as they tried to make it in Ireland, London and beyond. There was a great atmosphere on the day and the experts were extremely open and engaging and very helpful in answering any questions from the students and the public.

The Grand Finale Fashion Show in the Eyre Square Shopping Centre was the jewel in the crown of the whole event. Earlier that day was spent prepping models in GTI where hair and makeup students set to work and delivered a beautiful Victorian aesthetic. The models then formed a parade and walked from the college grounds into town and literally stopped traffic! It was an unbelievable sight; crazy, colourful and creative, and unlike anything ever done in Galway city before. It created a real buzz!

The finale fashion show was hosted by iRadio’s Dave O’Connor who was a big hit with the audience. The location for this event, the ground floor of the Eyre Square shopping centre, was absolutely thronged, so much so that the management threatened to shut it down! Luckily, with just a little
manoeuvring the show carried on and amazed all who attended. The professional standard of the show and creativity of the students has really set the bar for future fashion events in Galway. The entire event was meticulously planned and executed by the FIP students and it managed to raise €1,900 for a well deserving charity “Voices for Galway”.

Overall GTI succeeded in bringing the circus to town, and didn’t disappoint!
Did we achieve our objectives?

It is necessary to have a project definition in order to have clear objectives.

Project Definition

The GTI Fashion Fiesta 2011 was organised by the Level 6 Fashion Industry Practice students in GTI as part of their course requirements. The main events took place from April 5th-7th, 2011, building on the success of last year’s event. The aims were to create a successful high quality event that meets the requirements initially laid down by the client, while giving the students involved practical experience and personal satisfaction. In addition to this, the event aims to create awareness about the GTI Fashion courses while showcasing the talents of its students. A high public attendance is imperative to generate revenue for a specified charity, while developing goodwill and relationships in the fashion industry.

The key events were:
- A Fashion Fiesta Launch
- A live window display
- A static project display
- A day of talks from fashion Industry professionals
- A fashion show finale

Objectives

1. **Generate awareness of the GTI Fashion Fiesta by April 7th 2011 for all target audiences.** This objective was successfully achieved. In the run up to the event there were a number of promotional activities taking place generating both online and offline awareness to our target audience. Social networking sites and radio and newspapers were all used to generate awareness.

2. **Ensure attendance at all the Fiesta events during the week of April 7th, 2011.** This objective was also achieved; our finale fashion show gave us in excess 400 audience members from GTI students and staff and the general public. In fact, there was such a big crowd there that we had to cancel the second show due to overcrowding. The talks at the museum and the live windows both had an average attendance, perhaps this is due to the fact they were on earlier in the week when town is much quieter.
3. **Showcase student work at all of the events during fashion week and gain feedback from audiences at events.** The events that took place during the Fiesta were as follows: Launch party, Live Windows, Day of Talks and Finale Fashion Show. During all of these events there was plenty of exposure of the GTI students work, for instance from the fashion courses, media and hair and beauty students.

4. **Fundraise for a specified charity from February to April 2011 and raise €2,000 approx in money from target audiences.** We successfully raised €2,100 for our charity “Voices for Galway” through a combination of fundraising; the Level 5’s raised money with a bucket day in town and the FIP class raised money with further bucket collecting during the weeks events and a raffle draw.

**Analyse the budget with projected cost against the actual cost (ROI)**

The estimated budget was drafted to ensure minimal spending. The actual budget shows that we did not quite reach our target revenue for the event this year. I recommend that next year there should be tickets sold to generate extra revenue for the event. By using an online ticketing website such as www.amiando.com the tickets can be sold through the website where the funds transfer directly to the charity, perhaps this is worth looking at. Other ideas for fundraising need to be explored next year.

The projected revenue for the event was €3,000 however we managed to raise € 2,100. The budget analysis is detailed in the appendices.
Feedback on the event from GTI staff

As part of gauging the return on investment I was charged with creating a feedback form for GTI staff (see appendix). This form was answered by 5 staff members through google docs and the results can be summarised as follows:

- The staff heard about the event by either posters or word of mouth
- Some of the words used to describe the event were: Creative, Outstanding, Superb and Commitment
- All fiesta events rated consistently as good or excellent
- The staff members who were in the VIP area rated this very highly enjoyable
- All staff who completed the feedback say they will attend next years event

Overall the feedback was very positive, however there were some criticisms and recommendations made:

- Try to have the model photoshoot somewhere out front of GTI (for Branding purposes) as the location used outside the art room was not attractive
- There should have been a radio for the models in the pre-fab prep area
- The live window needed to be better explained and promoted to the public
- Events should have been earlier in the week in order to get more exposure in the newspapers
- A larger venue was required to host the finale fashion show
- The host for the finale fashion show made an inappropriate joke about GTI, perhaps have the opening address prepared for future hosts

As well as agreeing with the above, I will also make my own recommendations:

- A supplier contract should have been put in place with the Eyre Square Shopping Centre management as they were consistently difficult to work with and made a lot of empty promises
- In order to implement the exhibition FIP members should have completed a safepass course as there were problems with using ladders and chairs to hang up items (incidentally I believe that this could also be useful to FIP students if they were to go on a photoshoot on location)
- A strategy for post event promotion is needed
Self Analysis - Feedback on my performance

Each team member was to complete a questionnaire feedback form to assess their performance throughout the event. My role was promotion team leader for the entire event. The feedback form was answered by 8 people (this includes students of FIP and tutors) through google docs and the results can be summarised as follows:

- All respondents enjoyed working with me
- I consistently achieved excellent ratings for my skills in the following areas: Communication, Negotiation, Problem Solving, Planning & Organisation, Interpersonal, Leadership and Management
- I consistently rated as good or excellent in the areas of: Efficiency, Creativity, Dependability, Maturity and Commitment
- 7 out of 8 respondents strongly agree that I work well under pressure and remain calm at all times, whereas the other respondent agrees with this statement.
- 7 out of 8 respondents strongly agree that I am original and come up with plenty of ideas and am very willing to share these ideas, whereas the other respondent agrees with this statement.
- 7 out of 8 respondents strongly agree that I work very well as both a team leader and a team player, whereas the other respondent agrees with this statement.
- Some other responses and feedback were as follows:

  "you creativity is fantastic and there is no doubt that your professionalism will get you a long way"... “You worked like crazy all year and did an amazing job”... “Well done! Very easy to work with and is great for just getting things done!”... “you are a great leader and very creative”... “I had a great time working with and would love to work with her in the future”... “You’re lovely to work with”... “Wonderful woman, who works her butt off and really does make everything run smoothly, a great asset to have around”... “is a great team leader”... “is a star and works so hard”.

This form and its results were shared with the project manager. Overall the feedback was very positive and I am very pleased, however there are some areas I can work on:

- My rating for efficiency was the lowest with 38% of the respondents describing it as good. I feel that this will help me to develop time management and delegation and people management skills in the future.
The process of getting feedback on my performance has helped me to focus on the areas that need improvement in the future. I think that my future career goals will develop around my strongest areas from this feedback.

**Human Resource Management - HRM**

HRM was very important during this entire event. This can be analysed under the following headings:

- **Contractors:** I did not have any experience working with contractors however I recommend mandatory participation in the event for other courses in the GTI (i.e. Hair and Beauty) and it should be credited through their modules too.

- **Volunteers:** Students from a variety of courses in the GTI all kindly helped out with this event and it was a really enjoyable collaborative effort. From my own personal experience as Promotion team leader however I felt that my team members were distracted in the run up to the event as they had roles on other teams also. Perhaps in future, smaller teams with a more direct focus would be an advantage.

- **Suppliers:** As mentioned previously above the management of the venue at the Eyre Square Shopping Centre were problematic for us in the planning and execution of the event. This could have been less troublesome if there was a supplier contract in place.

- **GTI Staff:** The GTI Staff were extremely helpful to us throughout this event. They were great leaders and inspiration that kept the FIP class focused and motivated. I recommend that in future there should be a weekly meeting between all FIP students and tutors involved so that everyone is aware of their roles and responsibilities as the event progresses.

**Conclusions**

This event has been an amazing success. I have gained invaluable experience through this module and feel that it will stand to me in many ways. There are some recommendations that should be implemented for GTI Fashion Fiesta 2012. Overall, the feedback results show that the objectives were successfully achieved and all clients and stakeholders were pleased with our performance.
Appendices:

1. Gantt Chart – Promotion and Marketing
2. Promotional Snapshots
3. Budget Analysis
Appendix 1: Gantt Chart – Promotion/Marketing team

This is a snapshot of the Gantt chart used for the promotion and marketing of this event:
Appendix 2: Promotional Snapshots

Facebook Page for the event

Fiesta Press Release and Launch info on page 2 of the Galway Advertiser @ 24/03/2011
# Appendix 3: Budget Analysis – ROI

## EVENT BUDGET GTI fashion fiesta 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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Type in your costs and Excel will automatically calculate the totals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expense</th>
<th>Estimated Cost</th>
<th>Actual Cost</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facility Fee</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rentals (tables, dishes)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenter/Entertainer Fee</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audio/Visual Equipment, LED Screen</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising/Promotion</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-Shirts</td>
<td>350</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postage</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food/Catering</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Design/Props/Decorations (Windows &amp; Show)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photography</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security and Technicians</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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**Total Expenses:** 3150 1170

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>Estimated Revenue</th>
<th>Actual Revenue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ticket Sales</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Sales</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vendor Fees</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Sponsorship (Awards)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donations (Buckets)</td>
<td>3000</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
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</table>

**Total Revenue:** 3000 2100
Appendix 7
Surveys: Cycles 1, 2, 3
Project for Applied Learning – Review (Cycle 1)

Project for Applied Learning – Review

One of the aims of GTI is to provide our students with learning experiences that involve solving problems that are based on real-life situations where possible. Through this innovative approach students will appreciate the usefulness of adapting and applying what they learn in the classroom to the real situations and problems encountered in everyday life.

This survey is being conducted in the context of the on-going evaluation of this Applied Learning initiative. Your feedback will be used in planning towards quality improvement in teaching and supporting learning.

**PLEASE TICK THE MOST RELEVANT BOX FOR YOU**

**Content:**

1. The course description accurately reflected the contents of this course.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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2. Course content was what I expected with material covered at a suitable level.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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3. Course was well structured.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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4. Course content stimulated me to think critically on the subject areas.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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5. Course content has continued to develop my interest in the subject.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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6. The workload was very much as expected at this stage of education.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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7. The course format was different to what I had been used to in education.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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Delivery and Management:

1. Aims and objectives of the course modules were clearly explained.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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2. The delivery approach made me more independent and responsible for my own learning.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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3. Module delivery was enthusiastic.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
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4. Material was delivered clearly and effectively.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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5. Participation through questioning and discussion was encouraged.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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6. Feedback was forthcoming and helpful.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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7. Project work greatly facilitated my learning.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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8. Working with other groups in the College enhanced my learning.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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9. Working with other people and agencies in the workplace and communities outside of the college was an effective and exciting way to learn.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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**Assessment:**

1. I was made aware of my award requirements.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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2. I was made aware of the assessments and examination requirements of each module.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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3. The amount of assessment was appropriate for a course at this level of study.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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4. The variety of assessment catered for different learning styles.

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<tr>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
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5. My personal strengths, interests and goals were taken into account in my learning and assessment.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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6. The type of assessment made me more independent and responsible for my learning.

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<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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Project for Applied Learning – Review (Cycle 2)

**Applied Learning**
**Project for Applied Learning - Review**

A main focus of GTI is to provide students with learning experiences involving problem solving based where possible on real life situations. Applied Learning. To meet this goal students have the opportunity of undertaking work experience in local businesses and taking part in the in-house Work Experience in GTI’s Hairdressing Salons, Beauty Salons, Recording Studios, Café del IV, GTI Kebab or GTI’s Bar. Some students get to travel abroad for their work experience under the Student Mobility scheme and many students from numerous courses get to involve themselves in GTI’s main collaborative applied learning event - GTI Fashion Festa. This survey is being conducted in the context of the ongoing evaluation of this Applied Learning initiative. Your feedback will be used in planning towards quality improvement in teaching and supporting learning.

1. **Student Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Student ID</th>
<th>Mod of Learning Experience at GTI</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Any comment?

2. **The course content was what I expected for my chosen course.**

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?

3. **The facilities were what I expected for a College or further Education.**

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?

4. **The delivery approach made me more independent and responsible for my own learning.**

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Other (please specify)

5. **My IT skills were improved during my time in GTI.**

- [ ] Strongly Agree
- [ ] Agree
- [ ] Undecided
- [ ] Disagree
- [ ] Strongly Disagree

Any comment?
6. Working with other groups in the College enhanced my learning.

7. Working with other people and agencies in workplaces and communities outside of the College was an effective way to learn.

8. My personal strengths, interests and goals were taken into account in my learning and assessment.

9. The type of assessment undertaken made me more independent and responsible for my own learning.

10. The generated environment in G11 was conducive to learning.
Project for Applied Learning – Review (Cycle 3)

Teachers’ Questionnaire

GTI’s prospectus 2013 informs prospective students that its: “Applied Learning approach is designed to enable students learn more effectively in real-life situations. Applied Learning provides our students with learning experiences that involve solving problems that are based on real-life situations. ... By bringing the real world into the classroom and the classroom into the real world, Applied Learning has become the most effective and exciting way to learn the key skills required for the 21st Century”.

Question 1

General statements with regards Applied Learning from various literature follow. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements and add any comment you may have to clarify your response.

Applied Learning

(a) encourages student engagement.

<table>
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(b) encourages student responsibility and self-management.

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(c) invites reflection and evaluation.

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(d) nurtures creativity and develops students’ capacity to become innovators.

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(e) fosters life-long learning.

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(f) enhances communication skills.

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(g) develops capacity for planning and organizing.

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Question 2

Statements relating specifically to Applied Learning at your school follow. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of these statements and add any comment you may have to clarify your response or perhaps give an example.

**The Applied Learning Model in operation in the college**

(a) has as its underlying basis the idea of providing learners with learning experiences that involve solving problems based on real life experiences.

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(b) allows for partnership opportunities with other colleges, businesses and the community.

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(c) provides opportunities for our students to acquire and practice skills needed for success as a student or worker.

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</table>
(d) involves a range of activities that may be mapped into the FETAC curriculum.

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**Question 3**

*Specific projects for Applied Learning operating in the college (CladdaTV, College Sessions, College Radio, College Gazette, Fashion Fiesta, Furniture Fusion, POISE Beauty Salon, CONCEPT Hair Salon)*

(a) are conducive to the Applied Learning approach being promoted for the delivery of award curricula.

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(b) have been adopted successfully to allow students provide evidence for assessment purposes

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(c) provide platforms for inter-disciplinary collaboration.

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Question 4

During module delivery and assessment do you as an educator employ any of the following in order that learning is more real and relevant for your students? Please tick all relevant.

(a) Invite speakers from relevant occupational areas
(b) Provide Work Experience in a suitable local industry
(c) Provide Work Experience abroad in a suitable industry
(d) Provide In-house work experience
(e) Develop community links
(f) Integrate delivery across modules and module assessment in instances where you are teaching more than one module to a specific group and it is feasible to do so.
(g) Collaborate with other members of a teaching team with regards overlapping of module content and possible shared delivery of material
(h) Collaborate with other teachers on a teaching team to provide integrated assessment across modules
(i) Collaborate with module teachers in other teaching teams for other student groups in order to maintain quality-assured standard of delivery

Question 5

Below are two quotations from prominent educationists identifying skills required by 21st century students:

“The notion that we could take all of the facts that a person needs to know, divide them into twelve years of schooling, and learn these facts and be done does not clearly equip young people for the future. Twenty-first century students need a deeper understanding of the core concepts in the disciplines than they receive now. In addition, students need to be able to design, evaluate and manage their own work. Students need to be able to frame, investigate and solve problems using a wide range of information resources and digital tools.” (Darling-Hammond, Linda, 2010 New Policies for 21st Century Demands in Bellance, J., Brandt, R (Eds) 2010, 21st Century Skills. Rethinking how Students Learn.

“... work, learning, and citizenship in the 21st century demand that we all know how to think—to reason, analyze, weigh evidence, problem solve. These are no longer skills that only the elites in a society must master; they are essential survival skills for all of us”. Wagner, Tony (2010) Change Leadership. Transforming Education for the 21st Century.

http://www.tonywagner.com/resources/the-global-achievement-gap
The Applied Learning approach at your school facilitates the development of 21\textsuperscript{st} century skills.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<th>Agree</th>
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<td>Agree</td>
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Comment:

**Question 6**

In-service for the Applied Learning approach being promoted within the college is necessary.

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<td>Agree</td>
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Comment:
Appendix 8
Employer’s Report
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Signature of Workforce Supervisor</th>
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**FURTHER COMMENTS**

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**Cautions**

This report forms an important part of the overall assessment of Work Experience for candidates who are due to undertake the Graduation or Professional Training. It should be consulted by a

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidate's Name:</th>
<th>Signature:</th>
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**Supervisors Report**
Appendix 9
Excerpts featuring the College from
Léargas Report on Vocational
Education & Training
National Training

Leargas in Vocational Education & Training

Fifteen sports training students from North Cork visited the Grande Central for the Sports and Leisure event. They were given the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge of sports training and were encouraged to pursue careers in this field.

Awards ceremony - Athlone IT - the students were presented with their awards and certificates by the staff of the institute.

The students were also given the opportunity to compete in a national competition in which they had to design and build a prototype of a sports facility.

The competition was judged by a panel of experts from the sport and leisure industry, and the winners were awarded prize money and scholarships.

The mission of GTI is to develop the knowledge, skills, and competencies of learners and to facilitate participation in lifelong learning. The programme aims to reflect the complexity and challenges of a changing world.
The mission statement of CTT is to ‘develop the knowledge, skills and sociability to deliver programs in a learning environment that reflects the core of a changing world. The MAKE project is a unique project that is thanks to the collaboration of staff at CTT and to the European Commission for funding these projects.’
Appendix 10
Template for Facilitation of Alignment of Learning Outcomes & Assessment
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLOs</th>
<th>Module: Event Management</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LEARNING OUTCOMES</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 1</strong></td>
<td>The Event Proposal:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.1</td>
<td>Identify the essential parts of an event proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.2</td>
<td>Plan a feasibility study for an event proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.3</td>
<td>Carry out market research for an event proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.4</td>
<td>Identify the client’s objectives, needs and expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.5</td>
<td>Ensure value for money for the client</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.6</td>
<td>Prepare and present the budget for a special event, including projected costs, cashflow and sources of revenue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.7</td>
<td>Demonstrate good presentation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.8</td>
<td>Identify suitable sales, marketing, advertising and PR techniques for a special event, with creative and innovative elements in the event and the event proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.9</td>
<td>Discuss the events industry in Ireland and abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1.10</td>
<td>Identify what makes one event proposal distinct from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unit 2</strong></td>
<td>Event Management and the Human Resource:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2.1</td>
<td>Develop management and leadership skills in the events environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2.2</td>
<td>Demonstrate knowledge of employment legislation; prepare a job description and a contract for temporary employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2.3</td>
<td>Select staff, volunteers, suppliers</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.2.4</td>
<td>Plan induction and training for staff and volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.2.5</td>
<td>Draft a WBS (work break-down schedule) with delegated duties and clear deadlines</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.2.6</td>
<td>Identify networking opportunities in the events industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2.7</td>
<td>Demonstrate good time management, meeting skills, negotiation skills and conflict resolution skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2.8</td>
<td>Co-ordinate staff, contractors, volunteers, suppliers</td>
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</table>

Unit 3  
**QUALITY ASSURANCE, RISK PLANNING AND EVALUATING AN EVENT:**

| 10.3.1 | Identify legal requirements in event planning in Ireland, eg planning permission, electricity, hygiene, room capacity; insurance, Local Authorities, health and safety |
| 10.3.2 | Draft sample contracts for a special event |
| 10.3.3 | Carry out a risk assessment and demonstrate a knowledge of quality assurance and event risk management |
| 10.3.4 | Address security concerns at a special event |
| 10.3.5 | Keep effective records and event documentation |
| 10.3.6 | Deal with payment of suppliers and feedback meetings |
| 10.3.7 | Plan a post event evaluation and assessment of an event, based on primary research eg attendance and guest feedback, questionnaires, surveys |
| 10.3.8 | Critically evaluate the success of an event, using different event evaluation techniques |
| 10.3.9 | Report an event’s success to the client |
| 10.3.10 | Introduce revisions to future event programmes |
| 10.3.11 | Prepare a post-event evaluation report |

**Unit 4 Staging an Event — The Event Itself:**

| 10.4.1 | Produce an event and co-ordinate various elements such as guest list; crowd management; signposting, registration and admission process |
| 10.4.2 | Plan logistics for the event and a logistics checklist for the event, made up of all operational activities |
| 10.4.3 | Co-ordinate the involvement of guests and participants, achieving interaction and ambience, with ice-breakers, music and entertainment where necessary |
| 10.4.4 | Co-ordinate guest speakers and performers, the running order, contingency, sound and lighting systems |
| 10.4.5 | Demonstrate organisational effectiveness and effective management of staff, volunteers, suppliers |
| 10.4.6 | Demonstrate efficiency and good planning in providing for catering, clean up, toilet and first aid facilities |

**Unit 5 The Different Special Events Environments**

| 10.5.1 | Identify the specific resource requirements (legal requirements; cost requirements; human resource requirements) for various types of special event eg private |
| 10.5.2 | Know how to market and publicise more than one of the different special events |
| 10.5.3 | Understand the role of the special event in establishing and maintaining corporate identity, brand management and the role of the special event |
Appendix 11
Total Assessment Requirements for Full Awards for 1. Fashion Industry Practice & 2. Fashion Design
## Course: Advanced Certificate in Fashion Industry Practice

**Certification:** FETAC Level 6

**FETAC Course Code:** AFIPX

### Module: Design N32802

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Portfolio of Assessment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collection of Work:</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of a range of specific learning outcomes. The collection will include a portfolio of work that clearly demonstrates the candidate’s ability to progress a design brief from the first principles for final proposal. This should include elements of Research, Analytical Skills, Conceptual Skills, Development Skills, Synthesis, Construction awareness and appropriate Communication techniques.</td>
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### Module: Fashion Buying & Retailing N32837

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment:</strong></td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>The internal assessor will devise two briefs that require the candidate to produce evidence that demonstrates an understanding and application of a range of specific learning outcomes. <strong>Assignment 1:</strong> The brief for the first assignment may cover the Units for Design Studies and Planning and Buying. The assignment will may take the form of a planning proposal for buying or sales. <strong>Assignment 2:</strong> The brief for the second assignment may cover the Units for Merchandising and Selling. The assignment will require candidates to investigate and analyse topics appropriate to Merchandising and Display. The assignment may take the form of a small scale research study, an investigate study, or assembling a display. The assignments may be presented in a variety of media, for example written, audio, video, graphic, visual or any combination of these. Any audio or video evidence must be provided on tape. Both assignments carry equal marks.</td>
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<th>Learner Record:</th>
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<tr>
<td>A personal logbook/journal/diary/daily diary/record will be compiled by candidates. It will include evidence of specific learning experiences, activities, responses and skills acquired while on work experience. It may report on skills learnt or demonstrated in buying/retailing situations, or administrative processes carried out. These experiences may also be evaluated. The log book/journal/diary/daily Diary/record may be presented using a variety of media, including written, oral, graphic, audio, visual or any combination of these. Any audio or video evidence must be provided on tape.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Skills Demonstration:</th>
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<tr>
<td>In one or more skills demonstrations, candidates will be assessed in a broad range of practical skills and knowledge as outlined in the specific learning outcomes and devised by the internal assessor. These skills are assessed at any time throughout the learning process by the internal assessor/another qualified person for whom the candidate undertakes relevant tasks. The skills may be demonstrated in a range of conditions, such as in the learning environment, in a role-play exercise, or in a real life/work situations. The skills tested will be chosen at random by the internal assessor on the day of assessment from a pre-advised list. The candidate may submit a written report/supporting documentation as part of the assessment.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module: Fashion Styling N32838</td>
<td>Portfolio of Assessment:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: The internal assessor will devise two briefs that require the candidate to produce evidence that demonstrates in depth research and analysis of contemporary and historical fashion styles and contemporary and historical fashion media photography and journalism. Evidence will take the form of written and visual material with an analysis of the impact of social, cultural and political influences. Both assignments carry equal marks.</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 2: The internal assessor will devise a project brief that requires candidates to demonstrate practical skills learned in Styling by producing a range of press packs for varied types of media. The candidate will have styled the images to a set brief. The candidate will demonstrate art direction skills by competently briefing and co-ordinating the team producing the photo shoot.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Module: Fashion Promotion N32327</th>
<th>Portfolio of Assessment:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1: The brief for the first assignment will require the candidate to study and profile the different methods and channels for the fashion media in the 21st century.</td>
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<td>Assignment 2: The brief for the second assignment will require the student to study the history fashion advertising and suggest the direction of campaign in the 21st century.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment 3: The brief for the third assignment will require the candidate to investigate the role that fashion branding plays within the industry, for new and existing brands.</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project: The internal assessor will devise a project brief that requires the candidate to demonstrate their understanding and application of concepts of Fashion Promotion. The candidate will devise a promotional plan that includes a strategy for public relations for a high street fashion company. This project should be suitable for presentation to a client.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module: Event Management N32947</th>
<th>Portfolio of Assessment:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Project: The internal assessor will devise a project brief that requires candidates to present an event proposal. The presentation will be recorded and the visuals aids and background notes to the presentation will be submitted as part of the project. Candidates will identify the clients' needs and expectations and set objectives accordingly. Candidates will show evidence of completed feasibility studies and market research, in addition to a strategy to promote and market the event. Candidates will demonstrate good presentation and research skills, using creativity and innovation in their presentation.</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collection of Work: The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of an understanding of quality assurance, contingency planning, recording keeping and one of the following: 1. Detailed structured budget. 2. Event contract. 3. WBS (Work breakdown Structure) and 4. Detailed feasibility study. The collection will include a quality assurance document for an event and one other piece of event documentation, taken from the above outlined list (1-4). Both documents will be based on a locally devised event.</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assignment: The internal assessor will devise a brief that requires the candidate to produce a post event evaluation document, based on a locally devised event. The document will communicate clear objectives; value for money to the client; evidence of gathering and analysing feedback, an understanding of good recordkeeping and human resource management. The learner will include a critical self-appraisal; appraisal of the planning process and appraisal of event management theory.</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Module:</td>
<td>Sales Presentation B30156</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Portfolio of Assessment:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Skills Demonstration:</strong> In one of more skills demonstrations, candidates will be assessed in each of the following areas: 1. Content delivery e.g. effective message conveyed, appropriate verbal and non-verbal techniques, logical flow of information. 2. Presentation style e.g. clear delivery, confident delivery, use of voice, ability to handle questions. 3. Concluding a presentation e.g. summarising presentation, clarifying next steps required. The skills may be assessed over a period of time. The candidate will submit supporting evidence as part of the assessment. The evidence can be presented in a variety of media for example written, audio, oral, graphic, visual or a combination of these as required. Any audio or video evidence must be provided on tape.</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assignment:</strong> The internal assessor will devise a brief that requires candidates to produce evidence that demonstrates an understanding and application of a range of specific learning outcomes. Candidates are required to research and plan a sales presentation appropriate to their industry sector. The assignment may be presented in a variety of media, for example written, audio, video, graphic, visual or any combination of these. Any audio or video evidence must be provided on tape.</td>
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<td><strong>Technique Portfolio of Coursework:</strong> A selection of work/pieces under the following headings: 1. <em>Interview 5%:</em> An interview by the assessor/teacher on the candidate’s CV and future career. Duration of 3-5 minutes presented on audio tape. 2. <em>CV 2%:</em> This should be a “real life” CV presented on 2 pages and word processed. 3. <em>Formal business letter 3%:</em> The letter should be word processed, following current business conventions, consisting of 2-3 full paragraphs. The letter should reply on behalf of supervisor/manager within a company to a letter addressed to the company (e.g. letter of enquiry, of complaint etc). 4. <em>Evidence of group interaction 5%:</em> The evidence of interpersonal/group interaction should include the use of non-verbal as well as oral/aural communication. It may take place during group discussions or during role plays and may be assessor verified. 5. <em>Sustained piece of writing 5%:</em> The piece of writing should be based on the candidate’s personal/professional interest e.g. short story, personal letter. It should consist of at least 700-1000 words and may be handwritten. Evidence of editing, proof-reading and re-drafting skills should be provided. 6. <em>Critique/Review 5%:</em> The critique/review may be on any topic of the candidate’s choice. The written review should be 500-700 words long, and will form the basis for an oral presentation to the candidates peers.</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td><strong>Technique Case Study: Format:</strong> A case study on information flow within an organisation familiar to the learner. The case study will provide evidence of research and analytical skills, knowledge of communications theory and ability to present information visually. It should be word processed, with graphics/diagrams/charts etc.</td>
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<td><strong>Technique Oral Skills Components as follows:</strong> 1. <em>Oral Presentation on the written critique/review 5%:</em> The oral presentation to the candidate’s peers should be based on a written item form the module such as the case study, the critique/review or the specialist report, use visual aids and include an opportunity for the candidate to answer questions from the audience. The oral presentation should be recorded video tape. 2. <em>Oral exercise 15%:</em> The candidate should role play dealing with a customer on the telephone, using active listening and communication skills. Evidence of the interaction should be presented on audio tape. 3. <em>Video CV 10%:</em> The candidate should make a</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Technique Specialist Vocational Skills</td>
<td>Component as follows:</td>
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<td><strong>1. Teleservices</strong></td>
<td>The candidate must produce a full structured written report on any aspect of the Teleservices industry. It should include appropriate visual aids such as diagrams, charts etc and show evidence of critical thinking/analysis of the topic.</td>
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<td><strong>2. Network &amp; Software Systems</strong></td>
<td>The candidate must develop and deliver an oral, technical presentation, presented on video tape (approx. 10 minutes) on a computer related product. The presentation should include appropriate visuals aids, demonstrations and support materials. This presentation must be assessed separately from the oral presentation detained above in 11.3.1.</td>
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Course: Advanced Certificate in Fashion Design
Certification: FETAC Level 6
FETAC Course Code: AFDES

Module: Garment Construction N32799
Portfolio of Assessment:

Collection of Work: The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of a range of specific learning outcomes for garment construction. **Planning and Practical Skills:** The collection will include a co-ordinated range of garments devised from a design brief. A variety of fabrics must be used in their construction with a corresponding folder of work. The garments must include the following: 1. Coat/jacket lined and interlined where appropriate. 2. Trousers or skirt with a zip fastening. 3. Dress with pockets and accessory. 4. Skirt/blouse with a collar and cuff. Garments can be for female or male. A portfolio of sample techniques must also be presented for assessment. This should include: 1. Fastenings zips concealed and invisible, open ended, button and buttonhole hand and machine. 2. Pockets patch pocket, side seam pocket. 3. Hems, hand sewn hemline, narrow machine hem. 4. Suppression twin needle, double row of machine gathers, darts, single and double ended, pleats. 5. Collars basic collar applied to bodice. 6. Cuffs basic cuff applied to sleeve, sleeve must have slash or continuous opening. 7. Seams basis straight seam neatened in a variety of ways. French seam, welt seam. 8. Surface decor beading, applique, patchwork, painting, dyeing, printing. **Health and Safety:** Candidates should identify potential health and safety hazards in the working environment and describe current health and safety regulations including electrical, chemical, fire and ventilation. **Personal Contextual Influences:** A personal reflective journal will be compiled by the candidates. The journal should include a record of the candidate’s own learning and development on the course in relation to his/her appreciation of the history of fashion and their research into contemporary fashion at local and international level. **Presentation:** Candidates should use a broad range of presentation techniques to display completed items of fashion garments, sample swatches and artwork in a public venue.

Module: Design N32802
Portfolio of Assessment:

Collection of Work: The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of a range of specific learning outcomes. The collection will include a portfolio of work that clearly demonstrates the candidate’s ability to progress a design brief from the first principles for final proposal. This should include elements of Research, Analytical Skills, Conceptual Skills, Development Skills, Synthesis, Construction awareness and appropriate Communication techniques.
Module: Drawing A20017
Portfolio of Assessment:

Collection of Work: The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of a range of drawing skills. In order to achieve the module candidates are required to present evidence of coursework to show that they have developed a range of appropriate practical skills in both the core drawing unit and once selected specialist drawing unit. The integration of drawing evidence from related modules is encouraged. 1. Unit 1, Core Drawing Skills (50% of marks); 2. One Specialist Drawing Unit selected from the following (50% of marks): 1. Craft and/or 3D Study Drawing Skills; 2. Architectural and/or Interior Design Drawing Skills; 3. Computer-Aided Drawing Skills; 4. Fashion and/or Textiles Drawing Skills; 5. Furniture and/or Joinery Drawing Skills; 6. Portfolio Drawing Skills. The Collection will include: Drawing Process Skills: Candidates are required to demonstrate evidence of an acceptable level of competence in a range of drawing skills. The evidence should include the candidate’s ability to record, observe and analyse accurately. Creativity: Candidates are required to produce evidence that demonstrates a creative approach to problem solving. Evidence should also include the ability to interpret a given brief and original approaches to producing a solution. Sketchbooks, notebooks and relevant support material should form part of this evidence. Development of Work: Candidates are required to show evidence of research carried out. It is expected that their drawing skills will demonstrate evidence of process and the exploration of a wide range of subjects. An accepted standard of achievement using a range of drawing media and material should be an integral part of the learner’s development. Presentation Skills: Sound aesthetic judgement and organisational skills should be demonstrated in the selection of work presented by a candidate. The selection should indicate a critical evaluation of the coursework by the candidate.

Module: Pattern Drafting L21540
Portfolio of Assessment:

Collection of Work: The internal assessor will devise guidelines for candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of a range of specific learning outcomes for Pattern Drafting. The collection of work will include a collection of patterns for a co-ordinated range of garments from a design brief. The garments must include: 1. Coat or jacket lined and interlined where appropriate. 2. Trousers or skirt with a zip fastening. 3. Dress with packets and accessory. 4. Shirt or blouse with a collar and cuff. Garments can be for male or female. Candidates are required to produce evidence of the following: 1. Collection of Patterns: The collection of patterns must show evidence of adapting patterns to a design brief from a basic block. Each garment should have a collection of patterns which include a draft from a basic block with adaptations to a specific design, fitting records of changes and adaptations, master patterns suitable for manufacturing. 2. Technical Notebook: The candidate should have explored and experimented with various pattern drafting techniques and show evidence of the work in a folder format. The learner should appreciate and investigate contemporary and historical influences and craftsmen. 3. Basic Pattern Blocks: The candidate should present an appropriately marked and labelled collection of the following pattern blocks: - Basic Trouser block, front and back - Basic Bodice Block, front and back. - Basic Skirt Block, front and back. - Basic Sleeve Block. 4. Presentation: The learner should demonstrate organisational skills in a broad range of presentation techniques.
Module: Fashion Buying & Retailing N32837

Portfolio of Assessment:

**Assignment:** The internal assessor will devise two briefs that require the candidate to produce evidence that demonstrates an understanding and application of a range of specific learning outcomes. **Assignment 1:** The brief for the first assignment may cover the Units for Design Studies and Planning Buying. The assignment will may take the form of a planning proposal for buying or sales. **Assignment 2:** The brief for the second assignment may cover the Units for Merchandising and Selling. The assignment will require candidates to investigate and analyse topics appropriate to Merchandising and Display. The assignment may take the form of a small scale research study, an investigate study, or assembling a display. The assignments may be presented in a variety of media, for example written, audio, video, graphic, visual or any combination of these. Any audio or video evidence must be provided on tape. Both assignments carry equal marks.

**Learner Record:** A personal logbook/journal/diary/daily diary/record will be compiled by candidates. It will include evidence of specific learning experiences, activities, responses and skills acquired while on work experience. It may report on skills learnt or demonstrated in buying/retailing situations, or administrative processes carried out. These experiences may also be evaluated. The log book/journal/diary/daily Diary/record may be presented using a variety of media, including written, oral, graphic, audio, visual or an combination of these. Any audio or video evidence must be provided on tape.

**Skills Demonstration:** In one or more skills demonstrations, candidates will be assessed in a broad range of practical skills and knowledge as outlined in the specific learning outcomes and devised by the internal assessor. These skills are assessed at any time throughout the learning process by the internal assessor/another qualified person for whom the candidate undertakes relevant tasks. The skills may be demonstrated in a range of conditions, such as in the learning environment, in a role-play exercise, or in a real life/work situations. The skills tested will be chosen at random by the internal assessor on the day of assessment from a pre-advised list. The candidate may submit a written report/supporting documentation as part of the assessment.

Module: Fashion Styling N32838

Portfolio of Assessment:

**Assignment:** The internal assessor will devise two briefs that require the candidate to produce evidence that demonstrates in depth research and analysis of contemporary and historical fashion styles and contemporary and historical fashion media photography and journalism. Evidence will take the form of written and visual material with an analysis of the impact of social, cultural and political influences. Both assignments carry equal marks.

**Project:** The internal assessor will devise a project brief that requires candidates to demonstrate practical skills learned in Styling by producing a range of press packs for varied types of media. The candidate will have styled the images to a set brief. The candidate will demonstrate art direction skills by competently briefing and co-ordinating the team producing the photo shoot.

Module: Fashion Promotion N32327

Portfolio of Assessment:

**Assignment 1:** The brief for the first assignment will require the candidate to study and profile the different methods and channels for the fashion media in the 21st century.

**Assignment 2:** The brief for the second assignment will require the student to study the history fashion advertising and suggest the direction of campaign in the 21st century.

**Assignment 3:** The brief for the third assignment will require the candidate to investigate the role that fashion branding plays within the industry, for new and existing brands.
Project: The internal assessor will devise a project brief that requires the candidate to demonstrate their understanding and application of concepts of Fashion Promotion. The candidate will devise a promotional plan that includes a strategy for public relations for a high street fashion company. This project should be suitable for presentation to a client.

Module: Computer Illustration Graphics E20135
Portfolio of Assessment:

Collection of Work: The internal assessor will devise guidelines for a candidates on gathering a collection of work that demonstrates evidence of a range of specific learning outcomes. The collections will include: 1. Custom fill patterns. 2. Precision drawings of mechanical pieces, instruments, three dimensional objects. 3. Complex path constructions/reconstructions. 4. Landscape/physiological images with fills, tints, graduations. 5. Evidence of scanning techniques. 6. Printouts of initial and final images, plus at least three printouts at various stages. 7. Colour separations. 8. Saved and exported images in various file formats. 9. Listing of tools and techniques used, the order in which they were applied and the effect achieved. 10. File listings and software application used. Candidates are required, given the difficulties likely to be encountered with file sizes, to have regard to their own computer system limitations when determining image sizes, resolutions etc. All electronic files must be retained and made available as evidence.

Project: The internal assessor will devise a project brief that requires candidates to demonstrate: 1. Mastery of tools and techniques. 2. Design Skills. The project brief will require the candidate to design a series of at least three interrelated products on a theme of their own choosing. The series could be a promotional campaign for an organisation, commercial product or service, such as brochures, posters, postcards etc, or an event such as an art exhibition, concert, sporting fixtures etc. or other appropriate topic. Both text and graphic elements must be included, and all materials must be original work in colour. Evidence presented will include: 1. Development of design ideas from concept visualisation to final production. 2. Printouts of finished series, including: - colour printout of each product. - colour separations for at least one of the products - tiled printouts and/or registration and crop marks where appropriate. 3. Image detail including dimensions, digital file size, resolution, colour mode, file format. 4. File listings, hardware and software specifications. 5. Notes and sketches indicating research and preparatory work. Candidates are required, given the difficulties likely to be encountered with file sizes, to have regard to their own computer system limitations when determining image sizes, resolutions etc. All electronic files must be retained and made available as evidence.
Appendix 12
Sample Data Analysis
Data were examined through the lens of the identified **AACES** framework.

**Student Blog from MAKE.**

### First GalwaytoFinlanders 2011

| What a **fantastic experience** I have left Finland with mind full of ideas, and a huge respect for the Finnish people. It was quite surreal to be positioned up north, and what an **amazing landscape.** Maggie, April 11 |
|---|---|
| It’s unusual for an artist to gain **insight into** the workings of a Gallery, what happens behind the scenes, how much work is involved in presenting art to the public. For me this was the most **valuable** thing I have learned here, how much time and effort is put into giving people access and education about art. Jo, April 8. |
| I took part in printing classes to learn a technique called ‘image on’. It is a printing technique that combines **photography and printing**......very interesting and right up my street. I think it as **helped me to decide** that I definitely want to do printmaking next year. I was in my element. Dee, April 7 |
| our work experience at the boat museum is going well. We **agreed** on a few jobs with our supervisor Göran, like sorting digital media, photographs, producing slideshows, recording sound for the arctic seal hunter exhibition, painting sign boards for the museum, helping with ideas for the new website, and a few more things. |
| Yvonne & Gosia, March 29 |
| Sarah and Sari (from the college in Seinäjoki, SEDU) visited us on Saturday so we didn’t plan a weekend away. We met Göran and Gustav of the boat museum and had a **very interesting and stimulating cultural exchange** (a four hour conversation), touching on anything from Art to Viking ships, on our Leonardo exchange programme and why Sarah chose Finland as destination, on education systems and boats in Galway, Hamburg, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Mazury in Poland, mentioning particularities and differences... and after that we showed Sarah and Sari around the boat museum, leading them all the way through the piles of snow at the fisherman’s hut. Yvonne & Gosia, March 29 |
Interview with Business Studies Teacher

In the business department the approach to applied learning is slightly different. Over the number of years I have been teaching I have observed that students when studying business tend to see subjects or modules as being independent of each other. In the workplace when an employee is given a specific task to complete he/she will have to apply all knowledge and skills they possess to complete task asked of him/her.

In order to emulate the workplace the business department emphasises that all modules are interrelated. Students complete assignments, exams and skills demonstrations that include the learning outcomes for a number of the modules being assessed on the course. There are many reasons for this; to reduce student workload; to show that all modules being studied are interrelated; to motivate students and to assist them develop the skills and knowledge required in the workplace.

Example 1: In the Marketing module students work in teams to complete a marketing research project. This is assessed by providing paperwork, doing an oral presentation and by completing an interview with their Communications tutor. It fulfils the requirements of FETAC and the Tutors are assessing 30% of their Marketing Module marks and 30% of the Communications marks.

Example 2: In the communications module the students have to complete a report. The communications teacher works with the work experience teacher to devise an assignment that fulfils the requirements for both modules. Again it fulfils the requirements of FETAC and Tutors are assessing 15% of both the Communications and Work experience modules.

Example 3: In the communications module the students have to complete an ICT Skills demonstration. This demonstration requires them to demonstrate the skills gained by them on the course such as email and also involves some element of data entry. In the data entry section the data they enter usually applies to theory required in one of their other modules: Payroll, Marketing etc.
**Comments from student on his work experience in Turkey**

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<th>We were working in a TV studio with a real team making a live show for 60 million people. I don’t think it gets any better than that for me.</th>
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<td>We were involved in making the show. We worked on one of the biggest talk shows in Turkey. At first we knew nothing about it. We went to the building. It was class. We saw all the cameras, all the studios, how they produce it, how they film it and we were working live at the show helping them make it a good show. You don’t expect to (work) on such a show and work with proper producers, proper TV and Film persons.. (a show) which is going to be shown all over the country. It was great.</td>
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