

## MSC APPLIED ELEARNING

### LEARNING THEORIES ASSIGNMENT MARKSHEET: APPLIED PAPER OR MULTIMEDIA BLOG

<b>Module Title:</b> LEARNING THEORIES <b>Year of Study:</b> 2016-17 <b>ECTS Credits:</b> 5	
<b>Programme of Study:</b> MSc Applied eLearning <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Continuing Professional Development Module <input type="checkbox"/> MA in Higher Education <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Participant Name:</b> Dolores McManus <b>Tutor Name:</b> Dr Roisin Donnelly <b>First Assessor</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Second Assessor</b> <input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Assignment Type:</b> Applied Paper <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Multimedia Blog</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Assignment Title:</b> Applying relevant learning theories in the provision of eLearning support to academic staff.	
<b>Indicators:</b> Each criterion within the module must be passed. (Pass or Refer)	
<b>Structure and Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• be clearly planned and developed, well-presented and organised, with close attention to academic conventions concerning referencing, quotation, bibliography, footnotes, etc.</li> <li>• have a logical structure, be well laid out and in suitable format for an academic paper or multimedia blog</li> </ul>	
<b>Commentary</b> The writing style is clear, and arguments are well articulated; in terms of how the work is organised, there is good use made of relevant headings & sub headings throughout.  Dolores has given 'a nod' to all the theories explored in the module, but then focus on Gestalt theory and constructivism comes to the fore; she has chosen to explore the theories in a way that suits her approach to practice in eLearning support provision of the LTTTC. Her specific eLearning Support Officer role is defined early in the paper which is useful. Good use made of a variety of (visual) examples from her practice to illustrate the point being made with regards to the theories - these help give a fuller visual sense of the examples Dolores is discussing from her practice.  Dolores has a fluent writing style which is recommended for postgraduate study. However APA referencing style needs some more consistent use e.g. in-text citations need the year of publication included. Reference list not fully APA in presentation, and some publication details are missing. Some typos exist, so recommend a full	<b>PASS</b>

proof read before submission.	
<p><b>Literature Review and Scholarship</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrates a verifiable and comprehensible awareness of the relevant and pertinent learning theories literature</li> <li>• provide evidence of critical analysis and/or synthesis of appropriate literature on learning theories</li> <li>• demonstrates and builds upon skilled and judicious selection of relevant materials from appropriate sources, with evidence that key sources have been both explored and acknowledged appropriately</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Commentary</b></p> <p>This paper offers a fruitful opening discussion of a range of literature, dipping into educational theory – there is scope for much more literature from the eLearning support/provision side which would reflect Dolores’ work – there are 7 cited sources in the Reference list and more is recommended to build a fuller picture of theory into practice in Dolores’ context; perhaps even Dolores can include a Bibliography to show how her thinking has been informed from wider reading.</p> <p>The discussion is fluent, and it is clear that Dolores is familiar with the theoretical areas under discussion, and enthusiastic about growing and sustaining eLearning support in the LTTC. There is some critical analysis of possible theoretical approaches, and the strengths and limitations of various aspects of Gestalt theory are identified. There is scope for Dolores’s criticality to come in even more to the work with clear consideration of how all the theories have impacted upon and can continue to inform her practice – further synthesising the scholarship with Dolores’s argument is recommended.</p> <p>Overall, this paper offers a useful opening analysis of learning theories within the context of information literacy education in the secondary school library. Social constructivism is especially relevant to IL skills sessions where the trainer needs to engage the groups of students and build upon what they already understand in a social environment. The new learning needs to have relevance to their needs. There is good use of appropriate literature to support the points being made, with sources also drawn from Dolores’s independent reading for the module.</p>	<b>PASS</b>
<p><b>Development, Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provides evidence that the participant has understood the key issues and arguments together with an ability to contextualise the work within a local, national and global context</li> <li>• a pedagogically sound justification is made for the appropriate use of selected strategies and/or technologies to support student/user learning within a particular learning orientation</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Commentary</b></p> <p>There is a methodical and fairly comprehensive presentation and discussion of both the influences of two theories, and an analysis of how they have had an effect in Dolores's role and practice in supporting academic staff in eLearning design and development given the presented challenges facing the area. The discussion makes useful links back to the theories at all times. All the visuals are useful and are discussed in the text.</p> <p>How eLearning support is provided has been an important topic in higher education for quite a number of years now; while the challenges facing the area have been well documented in the literature, Dolores has managed to personalize the topic and give a clear rationale and examples from her own practice; her approach can be viewed as both result oriented and learner centred, and this can be achieved when webcourses users are willing to make good use of the cpd workshops and support/consultancy sessions available to them and are favourably disposed to integrate good practices in their own classes. There is a clear sense of Dolores's desire to actively work with her colleagues in the design and delivery process in which they are continuously exploring and building their own best practices. Some more development of how leading edge eLearning media and tools are utilized in the area would have been interesting to explore in more depth, but certainly can be included in the ePortfolio section for this module.</p>	<b>PASS</b>
<p><b>Discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• demonstrate evidence of clarity of meaning and purpose</li> <li>• demonstrate evidence of coherence of argument and of the ability to develop a consistent line of argument or reasoning</li> <li>• be informed by a good level of critical thinking and analysis<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• the work is intelligently linked to the professional development needs of the participant and the workplace context in which they are based</li> <li>• contain evidence of a good level of personal/professional reflection informed by research, literature or practice (where appropriate)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Commentary</b></p> <p>There are useful arguments being developed throughout, with inroads being made to critically explore the literature and the key issues</p>	<b>PASS</b>

<sup>1</sup> Critical discussion requires you to question the information and opinions in a text and present your evaluation or judgment of it. To do this well, you should attempt to understand the topic from different perspectives (i.e. read related texts) and in relation to the learning theories, approaches and frameworks in your own context. Overall the critique aspect means that your paper or multimedia blog should have a balanced discussion and evaluation of the strengths, weakness and notable features of the learning theories chosen.

identified in Dolores' practice in the delivery of eLearning support in the LTTC. The learning theories discussion links directly with her work and context, and there is an interesting mix of some reflection and discussion related to some of the key thinkers and writers in the field of these learning theories. The value of developing pedagogically sound eLearning support approaches is underlined by reference to literature. However there is scope for more criticality to come into some areas e.g. some more use could be made of the examples from practice throughout and a few of the online materials Dolores uses in her role. While the local context is given, the national and global issues with eLearning support could have been brought out more. The discussion can then stem from the question of how to address these challenges appropriately, and the role of technologies in doing so.

Overall, it is coming across that Dolores' engagement with learning theories has provided her with an understanding of how the range of academic staff she supports can learn effectively from the wide range of resources available via the webcourses VLE site itself. It also has encouraged her to think about the changing roles for eLearning support professionals like herself in providing cpd opportunities for improved VLE use.

**Feed forward: What is required in the submission**

Dolores, it has been useful for you to consider the application of the theories to how you work with colleagues to design and deliver the cpd opportunities you discuss here. At the end of the paper, for a look into the future, it would have been good to discuss how the activities used in these support sessions with the academic staff can continue to be designed and implemented to take the principles of learning into account, and should build on the integration of suitable eLearning tools and media.

On a minor note, remember to give a final check on the full use of APA style for future module written work.

**Feed Forward:**

- 1. What works well**
- 2. What would enhance the work (added value)**

Dolores, you have shown some analytic skills along with a fluent writing style in this paper, which will serve you well on the written assessments throughout the programme; I really liked useful links to the workplace. The inclusion of some visual examples of your design work and activities work well and even more of this would be good!

This paper has a coherent argument throughout and a consistent line of reasoning about the theoretical underpinnings of the form of instruction best suited to your eLearning support practice in the LTTC. The links to your workplace and context are consistent throughout and at times there is a suitably critical approach taken to the literature used. The paper is presented to an appropriate standard for postgraduate study. There is evidence of command of the subject matter of this 'Learning Theories' module: you have demonstrated an understanding of the theories chosen, applied the theory in your professional setting and discussed the theories from a particular perspective, showing how the application of the instructional theories can affect your work; useful inclusion and detailing of some learning strategies and discussion of some technologies used.

It is coming across that you have shown ease in being conversant with the basic assumptions, concepts, and principles of each of the two theories you have discussed and have explored each in light of a particular problem, issue and setting of interest to you in the delivery of eLearning support for academic staff; this work sets out to map learning theories to your practice, and to a broader discussion of the influence of theory in eLearning support development; you have tried to determine how well they principles "fit" the settings you have chosen to detail - the paper is therefore well embedded in your professional practice. Overall, the paper is informative in its content and logically organised in its structure. Dolores, you have a good foundation on which to continue your learning on the MSc programme following this opening exploration of the theoretical dimension of your practice.

What would enhance the paper further is that some areas of the paper could have more reflection and criticality – e.g. there could have been some further detail around how some of the media and tools are social constructivist in nature. As there is such a body of work on eLearning support both in Ireland and internationally, there is space for more literature to be brought in and critical reflection here. What kind of overall impact has this had to date? Are there any further gaps in what exists, and how can these be addressed going forward? What could usefully now be addressed through further use of media and tools?

It also would have added more value to bring out the following points further in the paper: emphasizing what is important for the user to learn in the workshops, not for the facilitator to cover in the session; the importance of dividing the topic into small units and tasks for learning; recognizing individual learning styles and abilities and develop learning sessions to cater for individual difference – to continue to think about individual differences among the webcourses' users and to work towards including more activities that have variety and interest for all; creating several formats or entry points to your sessions if possible; how you try to make learning interesting by including some 'surprises'; linking these to existing knowledge and then encourage the users to do further practice on the VLE on their own e.g. providing opportunities for practice, some in the sessions and some independently.

Perhaps if you are interested in any of these aspects, the ePortfolio entry for this module would be an excellent vehicle for developing these points further.



<b>Signature of Tutor and Date</b> <i>Roisin Donnelly</i> <b>10/11/16</b>	<b>Overall indicator</b> <b>PASS</b>
<b>Signature of Second Marker and Date:</b>	<b>Final indicator</b>