

RAINBOW
DORMANT
ACCOUNT
PROJECTS



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In 2009, the Institute of Technology Blanchardstown (ITB) secured funding of €237,191 from the Dormant Account (Educational Disadvantage) Fund which enabled staff from ITB to work with local primary schools, secondary schools and community groups to run innovative and exciting projects to open up the possibilities of access to 3rd level education in a new and positive way.

Projects were run in conjunction with ITB staff, students, the Learning and Innovation Centre (the LINC), the Student's Union and various student societies. ITB also collaborated with the National Learning Network, the Blanchardstown Area Partnership, the Irish Computer Society, Business in the Community, the Department of Social Protection, the University of Cambridge, Junior Achievement, eBay, PayPal and IBM.



The funding supported several projects which specifically targeted pre-entry activities to encourage those who traditionally might have found it difficult to access third level education. The theme of the projects was inspired by the colours of the Rainbow:

- **The Yellow Brick**
- **Red Race Ahead**
- **Work Analysis Programme**
- **Green – Student Mentoring**
- **Blue – Fun with Maths**
- **Orange – Bright Horizons**
- **Are you Pink or Purple? – Young Women in Technology**
- **Universal Design Projects**

ITB received funding to run the projects over two years. During these two years over 2,000 primary school children (aged between 10 and 12), 750 second level students and 70 adults have participated in the Rainbow projects.





THE YELLOW BRICK PROJECT

The Yellow Brick Project expanded ITB's primary school access initiatives by offering four primary schools in Dublin 15 additional activities/workshops to promote learning and interest in the world around us.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND DIGITAL MEDIA WORKSHOPS

Workshops were delivered involving an introduction to iMacs, taking digital photographs with PhotoBooth and shooting video clips. The students uploaded their photo onto an online cartoon application, imported photos and audio and created a video. The ITB Photography Society also ran a series of 'Photography and Digital Media' workshops.

WILLOW SCULPTURES

As part of the horticulture stream of activities primary school children were invited to a workshop on creating willow sculptures for their school garden.

THE GARDENING CLUB

Gardening clubs were established in local schools to encourage the children to engage in gardening in the school grounds. Work is on-going with ITB staff who provide advice and guidance to the schools. Teachers' training sessions were provided – "Working in tandem with the seasons" and "Planning for the School Garden Year".

"With the support of ITB, we set up our school gardening club. As a result of this club, the children have developed an invaluable love for gardening and an appreciation of nature. We have had so much fun and really appreciate the support of the Rainbow Dormant Account Projects and the staff of ITB".

(Michelle Brady, 5th Class Teacher in St. Philips Mountview)

MOSAIC CREATION

ITB was awarded a bronze medal for its garden entered into the 2011 "Bloom in the Park" exhibition. Children from the Gardening Club in St. Philips, Mountview helped design and construct the mosaic water feature for the garden. A workshop was run for the gardeners to train them in making a mosaic. The children attended the Bloom exhibition with their teachers.

CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOPS

Children from local primary schools participated in creative writing workshops with Emer Martin (writer and author) and Hannah Maguire (artist and illustrator). The workshops ran over 6 weeks and the children learnt how to design, write and illustrate a book. Their story books were bound and the students each received their book for keepsake. ITB hosted a book launch which was attended by the children's parents.

TEATRO Y ESPANOL

Children from local primary schools participated in workshops where they learned basic Spanish language and explored Spanish culture using drama, music and dance. On completion of the eight week programmes the children gave a staged performance in Spanish. As a result of the project one of the schools has continued to offer Spanish classes as an extra-curricular activity.



RED RACE AHEAD

This project focussed on the establishment of competitions to encourage enterprise, teamwork, innovation and project planning among the Dublin 15 second level student population.

D15 FORMULA 1 COMPETITION

Developed in partnership with the Irish Computer Society the project aimed to create an interest and increase awareness of Engineering as a career option. School teams designed, manufactured, modified and decorated model F1 cars and entered them into a speed competition.

D15 ENTERPRISE COMPETITION

Aimed to encourage enterprise and innovation as well as an interest in Business Studies as a possible career choice. Schools entered teams into a “Dragon’s Den Competition”, the teams had to submit a business proposal for a new product or service.

D15 PAPERCLIP CHALLENGE

Aimed to encourage creativity and problem solving. Teams started with a small object such as a paperclip and had one weekend to trade it for a bigger or better object and kept a diary of each trade.



THE NEW ADULT LEARNER – WORK ANALYSIS PROGRAMME

ITB in partnership with the National Learning Network developed a free course called the Work Analysis Programme targeting people over 23 years of age, who were unemployed and not actively involved in education. The project aimed to ensure the participants were well informed as to the options available to them, and to prepare them to enter into third level education.

Topics covered on the course were Learning/working styles, CV Preparation, Identifying strengths and weaknesses, Career History, Career Guidance, Interview Skills, Self-esteem and Motivation techniques, IT Basics, Thinking/ Planning for the Future and Sales and Communication Skills

“For myself this course has given me motivation, confidence, useful information and it was friendly and the tutors were excellent”

“Gives great encouragement to get back to work or education. I’m now confident with preparing a CV and cover letter”

(Testimonials from participants on course)



GREEN – SCHOOL LEAVER MENTORING SCHEME

In conjunction with Business in the Community, ITB established a panel of staff volunteers to mentor 5th year second level students. Each year the mentors are assigned a new mentee whom they meet on a monthly basis during term time. Mentees also participate in Sports Clinics, RoboCode workshops, Learning Styles Workshops, Careers Workshops, Interculturalism and Diversity workshops and “Thinking Outside the Box” workshops.

‘I never thought of going to college before I met my mentor. ITB has really changed my mind’

(Quotes from a mentee)

BLUE – FUN WITH MATHS

Targeting primary and secondary school students the project aimed to increase interest in maths based subjects and to assist schools in dealing with difficulties with numeracy.

In partnership with the Millennium Maths Project which was set up by Cambridge University, a number of maths road shows were delivered which focused on building core mathematical reasoning, problem solving and creative thinking.

MAGIC MATHWORKS TRAVELLING CIRCUS

An interactive hands-on maths exhibition that demonstrates and explores a multisensory approach to the learning of mathematics based on the Multiple Embodiment Principle of Z P Dienes. Participants experienced maths through sight, sound, touch and movement.

MILLENNIUM MATHS PROJECT

A collection of hands-on road shows that involved mathematical puzzles, games and activities designed to promote creative approaches to mathematics and strategic thinking to stimulate mathematical curiosity.

- Hands on Maths
- Risk and Probability
- Engima
- Maths and Sport – countdown to the games

WORKING IT OUT

Working It Out was delivered in partnership with Junior Achievement and takes the maths out of the textbooks and into the real world. Using penalty shoot-outs, basketball, skipping, darts and bingo, students get a chance to show off their skills and have fun expressing their scores as fractions, percentages, ratios and averages.



ORANGE – INFORMING ETHNIC MINORITY PARENTS ABOUT HIGHER EDUCATION

The project aimed to educate migrant parents about the Irish education system with particular emphasis on the transition from second to third level education. In partnership with local schools and organisations a programme of training sessions and workshops were developed and delivered:

- Various information sessions were delivered on the transition from second to third level, with particular emphasis on factors relevant to migrant parents.
- Workshops were held with students on study skills, learning styles, motivation, Qualifax and future career options.
- Training programmes on cultural awareness and cultural diversity were designed and delivered to ITB staff.

ITB in partnership with five other local education and training providers published a guide on educational supports in Dublin 15 titled “Guide to Education Supports available in Dublin 15”. The guide was also translated into Arabic, French, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Romanian and Polish and are available on www.itb.ie/access for download.

The project concluded with a conference showcasing issues around migration and cultural diversity in the education system in the Dublin 15 area.

A GUIDE TO EDUCATION SUPPORTS AVAILABLE IN BLANCHARDSTOWN

D.15



ARE YOU PINK OR PURPLE? – YOUNG WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY

This project targeted female second level students and aimed to create an awareness of the options available to them at 3rd level and in particular highlight those disciplines that are typically male dominated. Specific clinics in computing and creative digital media were developed to give the students an overview of the various technology programmes available. A key focus at these events was to introduce positive female role models who have opted to be original and to engage in a career that has been traditionally more male dominated and included practicals on “How to create your own cartoon” and “How to build your own website”. Students also attended a learning styles and careers workshop.

The students took part in industry visits to IBM, PayPal and eBay. PayPal and eBay were incredibly supportive in helping ITB launch this new initiative and in addition to running a workshop for the participants, PayPal offered summer internships to two of the girls.

“Extending the initial programme to include internships has been very worthwhile with two of the students that initially visited us spending six weeks on an internship in PayPal. During their internship they completed some valuable research for us in the area of mobile technology and got a real taste for working in a large multinational organisation. We are delighted to have supported the ITB initiative this year and believe that the programme will really help in inspiring technologists of the future.”

(Deborah Lynch, PayPal and eBay Developer Technical Services)

eBay



UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF

The aim of this project was to develop a toolkit of learning resources to provide learners with the knowledge and design approach skillset associated with universal design.

“Universal Design is an approach to the design of all products, services and environments to be as usable as possible by as many people as possible regardless of age, ability or situation”.

(Mace)

CAPTURING THE UNIVERSAL DESIGN EXPERIENCE

As part of developing this universal design thinking, ITB has created a large repository of universal design video content and best practice resources. The voices of many universal design experts have been captured, alongside the recording the user experience. This content can be used as lecturer reference material or student training material. It is envisaged that lecturers who use this resource can provide feedback and add to the resource.

CREATION OF LEARNING RESOURCES/ASSETS

ITB has developed innovative learning resource prototypes, illustrating the Seven Principles of Universal Design. Example resources include animations, board games, children’s booklets, postcards, calendars, bookmarks etc. These can be used in training environments to increase awareness and stimulate discussion.

The main aim in the delivery of the Universal Design module is to make the subject matter ‘real’, to illustrate the effect of universal design on real lives, both positively and negatively and thus allow the opportunity to fully appreciate the value of good design, on a human level. We accessed and

captured the universal design experts as guest speakers, at seminars, conferences, and workshops and on external visits.

The library of video recordings to date are as follows:

- Introduction to Universal Design and Seven Principles Workshop
- Irish Guide Dogs Workshop
- Universal Design on the Urban Scale for the Aging Population Seminar
- Visual Impairment and the Technologies that Enable Workshop
- Web Accessibility Seminar
- Assistive and Adaptive Technologies: Enable Ireland Workshop
- International Conference on Universal Design
- 24 Hour Universal Design Competition
- Universal Design User Views

A variety of the outputs from this project are contributing to an online multidisciplinary universal design module for first year college students, in conjunction with the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) at the National Disability Authority in Dublin.

Future work involves narrating the universal design story through interactive digital storytelling.



VISIT BY THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND MARY MCALEESE

On the 28th March 2011 ITB welcomed the President of Ireland Mary McAleese, local dignitaries and over 240 primary and secondary students to celebrate the success of the Dormant Account projects. During her visit the President spoke with some of the students who demonstrated to her what they learnt through the rainbow projects and told her what their experiences meant to them.

In her address President McAleese complimented ITB on the tremendous contribution the Institute had made to the local community by making education fun and meaningful for all through the dormant account projects.





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