

HIBERNIA  
COLLEGE



# TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

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## Foreword



Since its foundation in 2000 by Dr Seán Rowland, Hibernia College has been acknowledged as a leader of innovation and the use of technology in its programmes. It has fulfilled its mission of delivering distinctive technology enhanced educational opportunities to its students in order to prepare them for complex professional roles in a rapidly changing technological world.

In 2016 Hibernia College developed a Strategic Plan for the period to 2020 to provide the College with an overall sense of direction, to establish its priorities and to outline measurable goals. The Strategic Plan followed a period of restructuring and reorganisation that will allow the College enter its next phase of development. Alongside the overarching Strategic Plan, two sub strategies have been developed: The Teaching Learning and Assessment Strategy and the Research Strategy. These strategies are developed in support of the overarching Strategy.

Presented here is the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. It has been developed by a working group of the Hibernia College Academic Board and involved extensive consultation with stakeholders including students, Alumni, Faculty and external stakeholders. This Strategy has been developed during a period of great change in Irish society generally but particularly in higher education. These changes include a greater diversification of the student body, greater than ever demand for flexible learning and a move to a performance-based funding model for Higher Education Authority (HEA) funded institutions. Alongside this, the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning was established by the Minister for Education and Skills to enhance the quality of the learning experience for all students at third level, be they full-time, part-time or flexible learners.

The Strategy sets out six distinctive attributes of Hibernia College's graduates that go beyond disciplinary or technical knowledge. It then establishes the six Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Priority Areas and concludes with a commitment to providing the best possible learning experiences and to producing highly employable graduates.

I wish to acknowledge the effort of the Hibernia College Academic Board Working Group under the leadership of Dr. Louise Heeran Flynn in developing the Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy. Our challenge now is the effective implementation of this Strategy.

Denis Cummins, Academic Dean



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## Context

The creation of this Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy comes at a time of great societal change. Across the globe, the world of Teaching, Learning and Assessment in higher education is being shaped by similar phenomena.

The transformation of Irish society, its economy and the resultant cultural and social diversity has meant a more diverse student body, as the number of people entering the system grows and the profile of students changes. Unemployment and changing patterns of work, place a greater emphasis on lifelong learning and up skilling. The importance of high quality research to an institution's teaching mission and to underpinning socio-economic development has grown significantly (*National Strategy for Higher Education to 2020. Report of the Strategy Group, 2011*). In a time of rapidly changing technological possibilities, increased demands in terms of quality, accountability, success rates and progression into employment, we are cognisant of the importance of developing high quality graduates with transferable skills. This Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is also created against a backdrop of renewed national emphasis on teaching, learning and assessment in higher education in Ireland (see *National Strategy for Higher Education to 2020. Report of the Strategy Group, 2011*; *A Conceptual Model for the Professional Development of those who Teach in Irish Higher Education: Report on the Findings of the Consultation Process, January, 2016*; *National Guidance for the Professional Development of Staff who Teach in Higher Education, March, 2016*; *Enhancing Student Engagement in Decision Making. Report of the Working Group on Student Engagement in Irish Higher Education, April, 2016*).

As a College, we must meet these new challenges. In building a strong College Community of Practice, we must build on the strengths that have brought us this far, and build new strengths that can serve Irish society over the coming years in order that we can successfully meet future social, economic and cultural challenges.

Higher education students should have an excellent teaching and learning experience, informed by up-to-date research and facilitated by a high-quality learning environment, with state-of-the-art learning resources and e-learning facilities (*National Strategy for Higher Education to 2020. Report of the Strategy Group, 2011*). In a changing society, Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is a forward thinking conceptual framework which sets out to achieve this vision for its students in practical terms. Each section of the Strategy comes complete with a profile of what it should look like in reality, together with indicators of attainment. The Strategy aims to achieve the highest quality learning experience possible for all our students, producing robust, highly employable graduates.





## Consultation Process

The Hibernia College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy is a result of an open consultation with relevant stakeholders. In keeping with recent literature in the area which presents students as partners, not consumers, (*Working Group on Student Engagement in Irish Higher Education, Higher Education Authority, April, 2016*), this Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy comes about from a two stage consultation process. In phase one of the consultation process, in a cross-programme initiative, current students, Alumni, Faculty and relevant external stakeholders were surveyed in relation to Teaching, Learning and Assessment in Hibernia College. In phase two of the consultation, a Draft Consultation Paper was released for feedback.

## Hibernia College Graduate Attributes and Employability

As a College, we aim to produce graduates who are highly employable and equipped for rapidly changing and globalising workplaces. Employability is defined as '[a] set of achievements - skills, understandings and personal attributes that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations' (Knight and Yorke, 2003: 5). In keeping with this, the College has developed a Hibernia College Graduate Profile.

**A student who graduates from Hibernia College will have acquired an education at an advanced level, including both specialist knowledge and general intellectual and life skills that equip them for citizenship and employment and lay the foundations for a lifetime of continuous learning and personal development.**

**Hibernia College graduates are knowledgeable, adaptable, change agents who are innovative, collaborative and digitally competent.**

**Hibernia College graduates are pioneering, responsive, socially responsible professionals.**





## Hibernia College Graduate Attributes

The Hibernia College Graduate Profile has an associated range of Graduate Attributes. Graduate Attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a College community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include, but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most College courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future (Bowden et al., 2000).

The following diagram outlines Hibernia College's Graduate Attributes:

# Hibernia College

## Graduate Attributes

### Professional

Hibernia College graduates are responsible, caring, ethical professionals. They are self-directed, empathetic and confident. They are judicious, operating with integrity and equity.

### Knowledgeable

Hibernia College graduates are highly competent and capable. They have extensive specialist knowledge in their chosen field. They display a wealth of emotional intelligence as well as cognitive ability. They appreciate that education is a transformative, never-ending process and embrace continuous life-long learning.

### Agent of Change

Hibernia College graduates are curious and display a questioning disposition. They are reflective, responsive and proactive. As individuals they are enabling, pioneering and adaptable.

### Innovative

Hibernia College graduates are creative and resilient. A critical thinker, the Hibernia College graduate is a positive individual, who can use their skills to problem solve.

### Collaborative

Hibernia College graduates are collegial and cooperative and they work well as part of a team. They display high levels of both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and are respectful in their dealings with others. They are open minded, with a restorative attitude when working with others. They are receptive to feedback.

### Digitally Competent

Hibernia College graduates are digitally competent and ready for the 21st century workforce.



Fig. 1 Hibernia College Graduate Attributes





## Hibernia College Graduate Profile

**Professional** - Hibernia College graduates are responsible, caring, ethical professionals. They are self-directed, empathetic and confident. They are judicious, operating with integrity and equity.

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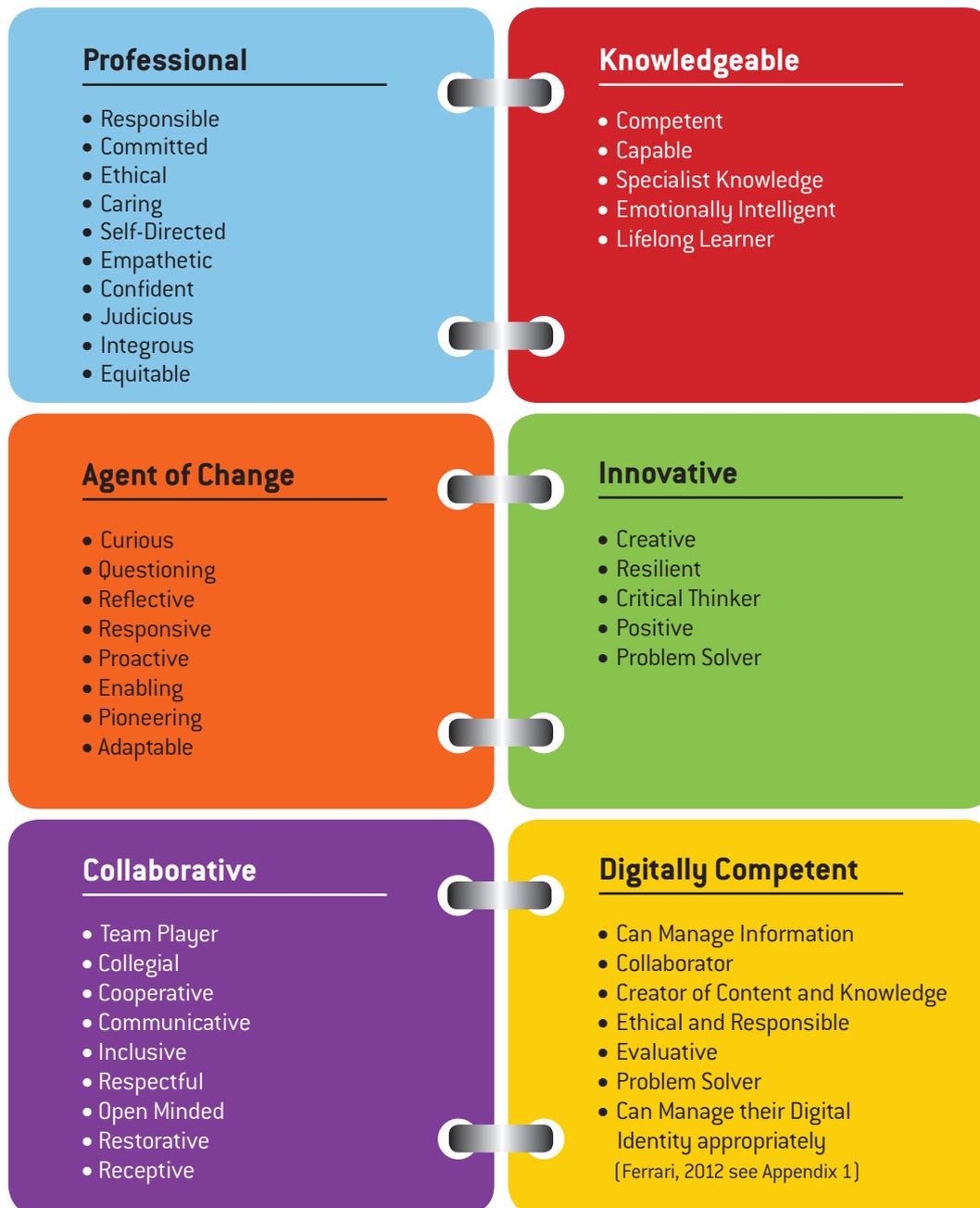
**Agent of Change** - Hibernia College graduates are curious and display a questioning disposition. They are reflective, responsive, and proactive. As individuals, they are enabling, pioneering and adaptable.

**Innovative** - Hibernia College graduates are creative and resilient. A critical thinker, the Hibernia College graduate is a positive individual, who can use their skills to problem solve.

**Collaborative** - Hibernia College graduates are collegial and cooperative and they work well as part of a team. They display high levels of both interpersonal and intrapersonal skills and are inclusive and respectful in their dealings with others. They are open minded, with a restorative attitude when working with others. They are receptive to feedback.

**Digitally Competent** - Hibernia College graduates are digitally competent and ready for the 21st century workforce. Broadly defined as the confident, critical and creative use of ICT to achieve goals related to work, employability, learning, leisure, inclusion and/or participation in society, digital competency is the set of knowledge, skills, attitudes, (thus including abilities, strategies, values and awareness), that are required when using ICT and digital media to perform tasks; solve problems; communicate; manage information; collaborate; create and share content; and build knowledge effectively, efficiently, appropriately, critically, creatively, autonomously, flexibly, ethically, reflectively for work, leisure, participation, learning, socialising, consuming, and empowerment (Ferrari, 2012).





**Fig. 2 Hibernia College Graduate Attributes Framework**

The Hibernia College Graduate Profile lays out explicitly the shared expectations for student learning at both the institutional and the programme levels. The Profile is therefore a guiding document for more specific disciplinary-based learning outcome statements and curriculum design. The role of Faculty is to design the curriculum, the teaching methods and strategies, the pedagogy and the educational opportunities that intentionally promote these shared expectations (Maki, 2004).

## Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Priority Areas

*For to be a teacher does not mean simply to affirm that such a thing is so, or to deliver a lecture. No, to be a teacher in the right sense is to be a learner. Instruction begins when you, the teacher, learn from the learner, put yourself in his/her place so that you may understand what s/he understands and in the way s/he understands it...*

[Kierkegaard, 1854]

Biggs (1999) describes teaching as a balanced system in which all components support each other. Biggs (1999) outlines the critical components of teaching as follows:

- The curriculum we teach;
- The teaching methods and strategies we use to facilitate student learning;
- The assessment processes we use and the methods of reporting results;
- The climate we create in our interactions with students;
- The institutional climate, the rules and procedures we are required to follow.

All of the above are reflected in the College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Priority Areas.



Fig. 3 Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Priority Areas



## Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Priority Areas Profile

**Programme Content** - Hibernia College's programme content is relevant, cutting edge and responsive to the market. It is of the highest quality, and evidence based, meeting all required professional and academic standards. It is content that is thought provoking and engaging.

**Mode of Programme Provision** - Hibernia College's programme delivery is pioneering. It is blended and constructivist in its nature. As such, it is accessible, flexible and intuitive. It offers a scaffolded structure which fosters collaboration and discussion. It follows the COACT model (see Appendix 2) and is compliant with the requisite standards for delivery.

**Student Experience** - Hibernia College's Student Experience is inclusive and accessible in terms of both equality of access and uptake. It is a supported Community of Practice, which is stimulating and responsive, fostering lifelong learning and collegiality. It is learner centred, focusing on the holistic development of the student. It is a transformative, enabling experience.

**Teaching and Assessment Excellence** - Hibernia College uses a range of inclusive teaching and assessment methods. Our teaching and assessment methods are robust and rigorous and led by national and international research. Our teaching and assessment methods are underpinned by the Teaching for Understanding (TfU) framework (Blythe, 1998) (see Appendix 3). Our teaching and assessment methods are informed, stimulating and responsive, supported by training and enhanced by feedback. They foster links between theory and practice.

**Research** - Hibernia College's Research is collaborative and informed by real world issues and both national and international trends. It is ethical, relevant, accessible and attainable. It produces replicable models and is disseminated.

**Partnerships** - Hibernia College's partnerships are collaborative and symbiotic. They are dynamic and innovative. They are supported in order that they are sustained and maintained. They are valued and nurtured. They are purposeful, communicative and progressive in order to establish relevant Communities of Practice. Hibernia College's partnerships are socially responsible and ethical.





Fig. 4 Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Priority Areas Profile



Fig. 5 Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Priority Areas Indicators





## Concluding Comment

It is appropriate to conclude Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy with a quotation from the educational commentator, Ernest Boyer (1990):

*Teaching is a dynamic endeavour involving all the analogies, metaphors and images that build bridges between the teacher's understanding and the student's learning. Pedagogical procedures must be carefully planned, continuously examined, and relate directly to the subject being taught knowing and learning are communal acts. With this vision, great teachers create a common ground of intellectual commitment. They stimulate active, not passive, learning and encourage students to be critical, creative thinkers, with the capacity to go on learning after their college days are over (Boyer, 1990, 23-24).*

In Hibernia College, we are very proud of the work that we do. Hibernia College's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy was created through a dynamic open consultation which viewed students and Faculty as partners in the process. Its creation and publication marks Hibernia College's continued commitment to providing the best possible learning experiences and to producing highly employable graduates.

Hibernia College wishes to extend its sincere thanks to the students, Alumni, Faculty and external stakeholders who took part in the two stage Consultation Process which produced this Hibernia College Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy.





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## Appendix 1

### Digital Competence

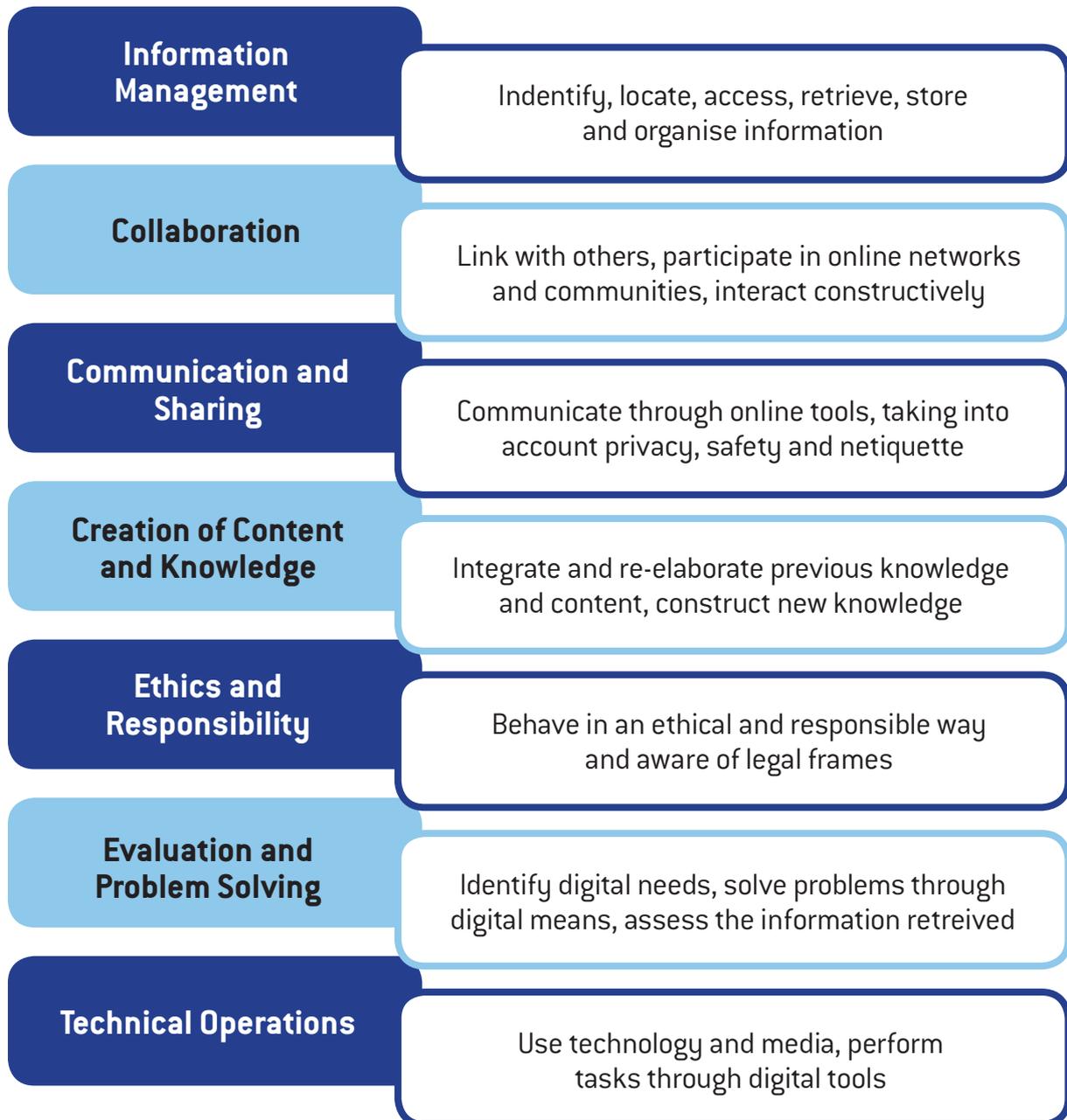


Fig. 7 Elements of Digital Competence (Ferrari, 2012)



## Appendix 2

### COACT Model

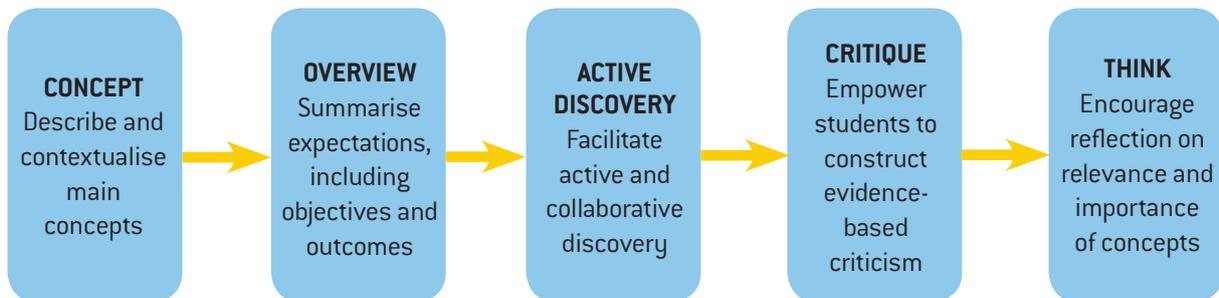
All Hibernia College instructional materials are developed in accordance with the COACT pedagogical principles devised by the College. The COACT model is a theoretical framework that forms the basis of lesson design and structure, with a view to ensuring that higher-order learning is achieved. The framework builds on the seminal work of Säljö's (1979, 2004, 2010) hierarchy of learning that underpins work by The Goteburg Group (Gibbs et al., 1982) and later the ETL Project at the University of Edinburgh (Enwistle, 2004).

The model has been developed in order to improve the overall student learning experience and create sustainable approaches to teaching and learning by:

- Creating a framework for course design that, if followed, guarantees higher-order learning takes place and learning objectives are explicitly addressed
- Ensuring the creation of truly engaging e-learning content
- Drawing on the full range of pedagogic tools available in order to create a richer learning experience
- Encouraging a move away from a dependence on tutor-led learning in order to create independent learners
- Enabling learners to acquire lifelong learning skills by equipping them for the knowledge-based society

The definition of the word 'CO-ACT' is at the heart of the student learning experience: COACT = 'CO': 'together' + 'ACT': 'to take action, do something'. This definition, upon which the framework is based, represents a mutually constructed, active approach to learning. The model breaks the learning experience down into a five-stage process, as shown in the figure overleaf. These five stages reflect a progression from lower-order towards higher-order learning, towards 'seeking meaning' through interpretation, critical analysis and application of knowledge.





**Fig. 8 Model of COACT Stages**

In planning lessons, authors are required to explicitly work through each step in the framework to ensure that each level is addressed. Within the structure of the framework, however, authors are free to choose whatever learning objects or teaching methods they feel are most suitable to achieve the learning outcomes.

The intended outcome of this approach is that the graduated 'journey' through the learning shifts the educator's focus towards the best format to allow learners to achieve the learning outcomes. Because such decisions are made on a lesson-by-lesson basis, this in turn ensures that lessons are varied and draw on a large variety of resources. While authors may at times still wish to spend time developing custom content, the necessity for this is reduced as authors are encouraged to view the learning experience in a more holistic and constructivist way, with the learners at the centre of the experience.

## Appendix 3

### Teaching for Understanding Framework

'Teaching for Understanding' (TfU) is used as a specific term for describing the pedagogical theory developed by the Teaching for Understanding team at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education. The principal investigators include Howard Gardner.

Teaching for Understanding helps educators to answer two essential questions: What does it mean to understand something? What kinds of curricula, learning experiences, and assessment support students in developing understanding? The Teaching for Understanding framework that was developed through this research helps educators take students beyond the simple mastery of facts to being able to apply knowledge flexibly in unfamiliar contexts.

The framework helps educators 1) identify topics, concepts, and skills that are worth understanding; 2) frame goals that help students focus on the most important aspects of those topics; 3) engage students in challenging learning experiences that help to build and demonstrate their understanding; and 4) develop assessment practices that help to deepen student understanding (Blythe, 1998).

#### The Teaching for Understanding Framework

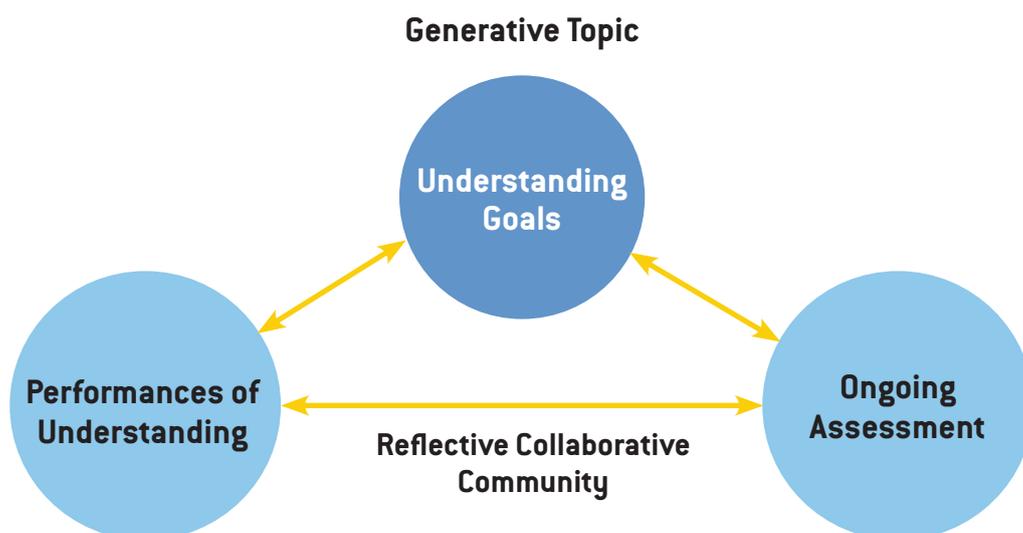
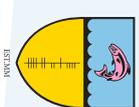


Fig. 9: Teaching for Understanding (TfU) Framework - The interplay between the elements of TfU framework (LuLee, 2010)

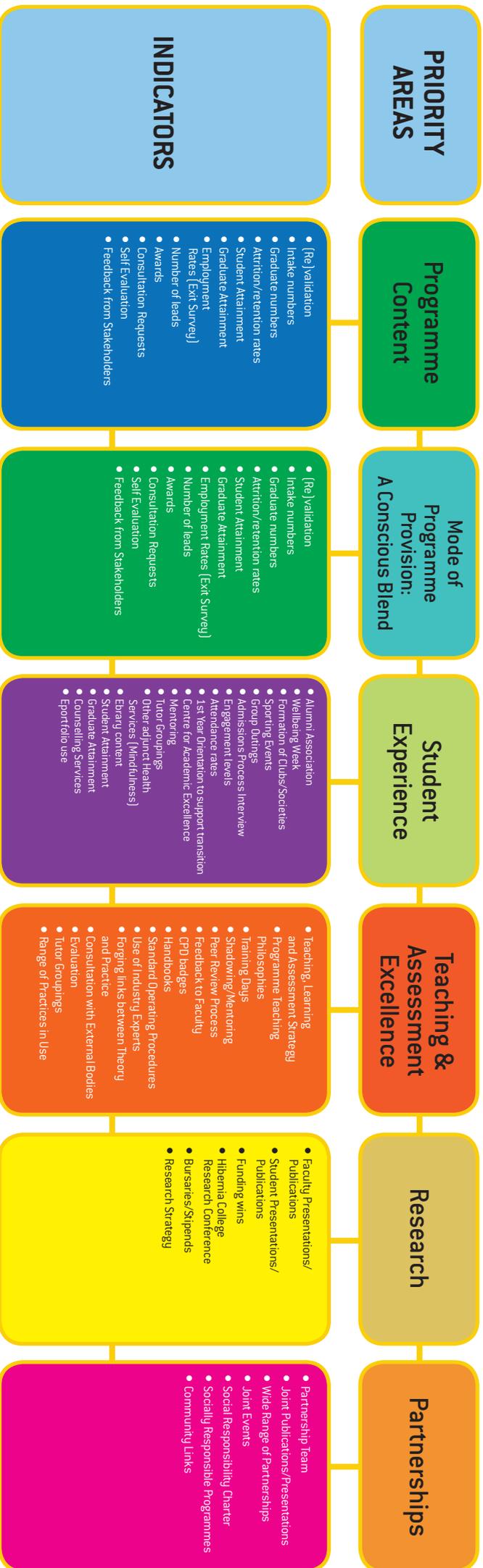


# HIBERNIA COLLEGE TEACHING, LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT STRATEGY ROADMAP

## OUR MISSION

To be a leading high quality educational institution of national, and international importance, delivering distinctive technology enhanced educational opportunities for our students in order to prepare them for complex professional roles in a rapidly changing technological world.

## PRIORITY AREAS



## INDICATORS

A HIBERNIA COLLEGE GRADUATE

A professional, knowledgeable, agent of change, innovative, collaborative and digitally competent







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