

PsychFest

Abstract booklet

MIC
Psychology
Undergraduate
Research
Colloquium



MIC
MARY IMMACULATE COLLEGE
COLÁISTE MUIRE GAN SMÁL

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Programme Schedule

9.10 -10.10	Official Opening <i>Professor Dermot Nestor (Venue: G10)</i> Opening Remarks <i>Professor Niamh Stack</i> Keynote address: <i>Dr Madeleine Pownall</i>		
10.10-11.10	Parallel Sessions 1		
	G08 Theme: Mindful Cognition in the Classroom	G10 Theme: Gen Z Attitudes	
11.10-11.25	Tea/Coffee (Venue: G10)		
11.25-12.15	Parallel sessions 2		
	G08 Theme: Exploring Identities	G10 Theme: Wellness in Applied Settings	
12.15-13.00	Lunch		
13.00-14.00	Parallel sessions 3		
	G08 Theme: Sport	G10 Theme: Perspectives on Media and Technology	202 Theme: Personality in Education
14.00-15.00	Parallel sessions 4		
	G08 Theme: Modern-Day Development	G10 Theme: Interventions in Psychophysiology	
15.00-15.15	Break		
15.15-16.15	Parallel sessions 5		
	G08 Theme: Teacher Development	G10 Theme: Wellbeing in the Classroom	
16.15-17.00	"Psychology in the public eye" Q&A with Katelyn Divilly, OMT Global & the Traitors Ireland. <i>Venue: G10</i>		

Welcome to PsychFest 2026

*Welcome to the Psychology Undergraduate Research Colloquium, known more informally as **PsychFest**. PsychFest is a meeting where undergraduate researchers showcase their research work to the broader community of Psychology students at Mary Immaculate College (MIC). We are delighted to have you join us for this year's event.*

A colloquium is a meeting of people with similar interests. Less formal than a full conference, the aim is to provide students from different years of study the chance to discuss the experience of conducting research. More than 60 final year students will present their research at the event, and there will also be an opportunity for students from other years to speak with final year students to get their insight on what undergraduate research is like and what it involves.

Research skills are one of the key defining characteristics of Psychology graduates. Presenting research findings is also one of the core steps in the scientific process – for UGD students it is the means by which other researchers benefit from what you have learned, and allows future researchers to potentially replicate or build on your findings. PsychFest (both presenting at it and attending) therefore represents one of the essential activities of professional psychologists, and is a key milestone in the undergraduate journey.

Explore what undergraduate research has to offer and enjoy the day!

Keynote address: Dr Madeleine Pownall

Dr Madeleine Pownall is an Associate Professor in Psychology at the University of Leeds. Her work spans feminist social psychology, pedagogical research, open science, and psychological literacy, all threaded together by a commitment to inclusive, evidence-based teaching and research practices. Madeleine is especially passionate about how psychology can be taught and practiced in ways that foreground equity, critical thinking, and global citizenship. Madeleine has co-authored the award-winning textbook *A Feminist Companion to Social Psychology*, and her current work bridges research, teaching, and advocacy to broaden how psychology is understood and experienced across communities.



Q+A: Psychology in the public eye: Katelyn Divilly

Katelyn Divilly is an Organizational Development Consultant at OMT Global and recently was part of the *Traitors Ireland*. She is a BA graduate in Psychological Studies & English (NUIG) and of the MSc in Work and Organisational Behaviour from the University of Limerick. She is well-known for having appeared on the inaugural series of *The Traitors Ireland*, and subsequent media appearances. She is the host of the *A Place in the World* podcast, which aims to promote conversations about connection, community and belonging



Colloquium Etiquette

At a meeting like this (or at a conference) the ideal is that once you join a session with multiple talks you stay for the duration of the session. It's often the case that you just want to catch one or two talks in a specific session though and intend to move between rooms. You should only enter a session between speakers. Never interrupt a speaker. One of the tricks here is to wait outside until you hear applause. After the end of a talk there may be a question or two from the audience, so you should still be quiet as you enter and find a seat quickly.

Similarly, if at all possible, you should try not to leave a talk early. Try to time your movement between parallel sessions so that you don't interrupt the speaker; if you know you will have to leave in the middle of a talk, ensure you sit near the door or stand at the back of the room. Always be quiet and respectful as you leave. After a talk there will be a few brief minutes for questions. Asking a relevant question is actually quite a positive thing, as it shows that you are interested in the speaker's work and that you have paid attention. If you have any issues for clarification, or thoughts on the work, feel free to ask a question. Speakers will enjoy interacting with you and talking more about their research.

Instructions for Speakers

Speakers have an allotted 9-minute slot in which to present their research, but this includes a "handover" period. It is recommended that you prepare a maximum of a **7-minute** presentation, thereby allowing a further *1 to 2 minutes for discussion*. While you may have an audio-visual display (Power Point slides) to aid both you and the audience in your presentation; it is best not to rely too much on your audio-visual display. There is no substitute for your passion and clarity in explaining your research to the audience.



ABSTRACTS

**Parallel Sessions 1,
10.10 – 11.10**

**G08:
Mindful Cognition in the Classroom**

**MIND OVER MATHS: MATHS ANXIETY AND DISPOSITIONAL MINDFULNESS
ACROSS GENDER AND ATTAINED EDUCATION LEVEL IN THE GENERAL
POPULATION.**

ABSTRACT

Maths anxiety refers to negative feelings surrounding the manipulation of numbers in any way. It can have an impact on an individual's vocational trajectories, and lead to greater economic impacts. The differences in maths anxiety has been looked at across education level and gender and has been found to be greater in females than in males, and to decrease as education level rises in students. This has not been looked at in the general population after education has been attained, despite these environmental factors not being present. Nor has it accounted for maths anxiety's relationship with dispositional mindfulness. N = 84 individuals from the general population were recruited to investigate whether this relationship replicates and explore the difference in maths anxiety across gender and attained education level, while controlling for dispositional mindfulness. It was found that this small, negative relationship between maths anxiety and dispositional mindfulness does indeed exist ($r = -.19$, $p = .045$). There was also a small effect of gender on mindfulness was controlled for ($F(1,77) = 4.49$, $p = .037$, $\eta^2 = .055$), but maths anxiety did not differ depending on attained education level ($F(2,77) = 0.24$, $p = .789$, $\eta^2 = .006$). It supports research on how maths anxiety interferes with the working memory and demonstrates a need for mindfulness-based interventions in schools. More research is needed on explanations for higher MA levels in females, and why MA does not decrease after attaining education.

TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF SCREEN TIME AND ATTENTION SPAN IN PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

Attention span is one of the most fundamental cognitive processes an individual has; it affects every aspect of an individual's lives from learning to concentration and more, particularly in educational settings. Today, children are exposed to an excessive amount of screen use. This has led researchers and educators to question the relationship between attention span and screen use. The present study aims to explore this relationship from the perception of primary school teachers. A qualitative research approach was developed for this study to accurately capture the insights of the participants. A semi structured interview process was developed, and six Irish primary school teachers were interviewed on their thoughts and observations on the topic of screen time and attention span in children's development. Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis was used to identify themes from the data collected. After carefully following the six-step process of thematic analysis, four key themes were identified from the data collection. These themes were Attention Span Decline, Disruption and Behavioural Issues Within the Classroom, The Influence of Screen Use on Development, and Adaptation of Teaching Styles.

The majority of participants highlighted the decline in sustained attention amongst students in recent years. Participants also noted how there has been an increase in disruption in the classroom. Though the findings of this study cannot determine an accurate scientific relationship between attention span and screen time, it can however give a great insight into the perceptions teachers have on the topic which will hopefully lead to future research.

COMPARING MOVEMENT- BASED AND MINDFULNESS- BASED BRAIN BREAKS ON SUSTAINED ATTENTION IN EARLY PRIMARY CLASSROOMS

ABSTRACT

Attention is a key cognitive process underpinning learning and classroom engagement, particularly during early primary education when attentional control systems are still developing. Classroom “brain breaks” have been proposed as a strategy to support attentional functioning by providing brief interruptions to instructional activities. The present study examined whether short classroom brain breaks influence sustained attention performance among young primary school pupils, comparing movement-based and mindfulness-based breaks with a no-break control condition using a researcher- adapted ACPT task.

A between-subjects quasi-experimental design was employed across three Senior Infant classes in an Irish primary school. Fifty pupils aged five to six years were assigned at the class level to one of three conditions: a movement break or a mindfulness break, taking part in a YouTube video break, or a control condition, with no disruption to classroom routine. Following the activity, pupils completed a computerised auditory continuous performance task assessing sustained attention through reaction time and response accuracy.

A one-way ANOVA indicated that classroom break condition did not significantly influence reaction time, $F(2, 47) = 0.24, p = .791$. Similarly, a Welch one-way ANOVA revealed no significant differences between conditions for response accuracy, Welch’s $F(2, 26.21) = 2.22, p = .129$, partial $\eta^2 = .08$.

Overall, the findings suggest that a single brief classroom brain break did not produce statistically significant improvements in sustained attention. However, descriptive patterns indicate that different types of brain breaks may influence pupils’ physiological activation in distinct ways, highlighting the potential importance of intervention type and timing in classroom practice.

HOW PREFERRED NOTE-TAKING METHODS INFLUENCE MEMORY RETENTION IN UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether students' preferred note-taking method influences factual and conceptual memory for lecture material immediately after learning and after a one-week delay. Building on Levels of Processing theory (1972) and Skill Acquisition theory (1982), the study compared three preferred note-taking conditions: handwritten notes, digital notes, and no notetaking. A 3×2 mixed-factorial design was employed, with preferred note-taking method as the between-subjects factor and time (immediate recall vs. delayed recall) as the within-subjects factor. Thirty-eight undergraduate students used their preferred note-taking method (handwritten, digital, or none) and completed immediate and delayed tests of factual and conceptual recall following a lecture. Mixed-factorial ANOVAs revealed significant main effects of time and preferred note-taking method for both factual and conceptual recall, as well as significant interactions between time and note-taking method. For factual recall, both handwritten and digital notetaking produced higher overall performance than no notetaking, with no significant difference between handwritten and digital methods. However, handwritten notetaking produced superior conceptual recall, particularly at the delayed test compared to digital notetaking and no notetaking. These findings suggest that while both handwritten and digital note-taking support factual retention, handwritten notetaking may provide a particular advantage for the long-term retention of conceptual understanding.

MUSICAL GENRE AND IMPLICIT MEMORY: EFFECTS ON REACTION TIME IN A LEXICAL DECISION TASK

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether musical genre influences implicit memory, measured through reaction time in a lexical decision task. Previous research suggests that music can influence cognitive performance; however, its impact on implicit memory remains unclear. The study draws on theoretical distinctions between implicit and explicit memory, as well as Levels of Processing theory, which proposes that deeper processing leads to stronger memory outcomes. A 3×2 mixed factorial experimental design was employed. Forty-four participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions (classical music, jazz music, or voiceover only). Following exposure to an advertisement stimulus, participants completed a lexical decision task in which reaction times to brand and neutral words were recorded.

A mixed analysis of variance was conducted to examine the effects of music condition and word type on reaction time. The results revealed no significant main effects of music condition or word type, and no interaction between these variables. These findings indicate that musical genre did not significantly influence implicit memory performance under the conditions of the present study.

Overall, the findings suggest that implicit memory processes, which rely on automatic processing, may be relatively insensitive to background auditory context. The results also highlight the importance of task demands, suggesting that the effects of music may be more evident in tasks involving deeper levels of processing.

DOES WHITE NOISE INFLUENCE MEMORY RECALL? EVIDENCE FROM IRISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

ABSTRACT

Environmental noise has traditionally been considered disruptive to cognitive performance in learning and memory tasks. However, recent research suggests that certain forms of noise, such as white noise, may influence cognition under specific conditions. The present study examined whether exposure to white noise affects word recall performance in Irish third-level students without diagnosed attentional disorders. A within-participants experimental design was employed in which participants completed a controlled verbal recall task under both white noise and silence conditions. Fifty Irish third-level students ($N = 50$) were presented with four lists of semantically unrelated nouns and asked to recall as many words as possible following each list presentation. Auditory condition was counterbalanced across lists to control for potential order effects. Recall performance was analysed using a 2×2 repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) examining the effects of auditory condition and list order. The results indicated that the main effect of auditory condition was not statistically significant, suggesting that recall performance did not reliably differ between white noise and silence conditions. However, a significant interaction between auditory condition and list order was observed, indicating that recall performance varied depending on the sequence in which auditory conditions were experienced. These findings suggest that white noise does not reliably enhance verbal recall performance in Irish third-level students without diagnosed attentional disorders, and that its effects may depend on task context or exposure sequence. This contributes to the mixed body of research on the cognitive effects of white noise.



ABSTRACTS

Parallel Session 1

10.10 – 11.10

G10: Gen-Z Attitudes

**“WE’RE ALL F*CKED ANYWAYS, SO WHY CAN’T I JUST GET THE SHEIN TOP?”
A DISCURSIVE EXPLORATION OF GENERATION Z’S ENVIRONMENTAL
VALUES AND FAST FASHION CONSUMPTION.**

ABSTRACT

Despite widespread awareness of the environmental harms of fast fashion, consumption continues to rise, particularly among Generation Z. This study moves beyond framing this as a simple value-action gap by adopting a discursive psychology approach to examine how young people actively negotiate this contradiction in conversation. Two focus groups were analysed to explore how participants constructed and justified fast fashion consumption alongside environmental concern. Across discussions, participants consistently oriented to a shared moral repertoire in which “fast fashion is bad”. However, this position was persistently disrupted by competing cultural narratives that framed consumption as reasonable, necessary, and socially expected. References to affordability, social media influence, and ideas of deservingness positioned fast fashion not as a moral failure, but as a practical and socially embedded choice. Participants used discursive strategies such as humour, disclaimers, and collective reasoning to maintain alignment with environmental values while accounting for continued consumption. Responsibility for fast fashion was also continually re-negotiated across individuals, corporations, and wider systems, without resolution. These findings highlight an ongoing ideological dilemma in which environmental responsibility coexists with powerful social norms that sustain consumption. By capturing how these tensions are actively managed in interaction, this study offers a more nuanced and compassionate understanding of sustainable behaviour, with implications for how environmental responsibility is communicated and addressed.

CREATING TO COMFORT THE SOUL: YOUNG ADULTS' EXPERIENCE OF CREATIVE EXPRESSION IN RELATION TO THEIR EUDAIMONIC WELLBEING

ABSTRACT

This study explores how young adults engage in creative expression and the impact it has on their wellbeing on a day-to-day basis. While a consensus exists that engaging with the creative arts can have measurably positive effects on an individual's wellbeing, this study attempts to understand the complex and varied nuances of how these effects are experienced by an under-researched age demographic. A qualitative design was adopted whereby six participants between the ages of 20 and 24 took part in semi-structured interviews. Thematic analysis was employed which led to the identification of four main themes. Firstly, creative expression helped participants strengthen their sense of self and was foundational to their identity. Secondly, it acted as a trusted form of emotional regulation, not only by relieving stress and processing trauma, but by facilitating reward, achievement and satisfaction. Thirdly, creative expression was viewed as a never-ending process – a way of life that provided participants with a sense of purpose and an incentive to view the world with an open mind. Lastly, creative expression enabled participants to form meaningful social bonds and experience intimate human connection. Ultimately, the benefits of creative expression permeated throughout numerous facets of life. These findings align with the eudaimonic perspective of wellbeing, in which human flourishing is not solely defined by the presence of pleasure or pain, but rather authenticity, meaning-making, reflection and connection.

THE GREAT OUTDOORS: THE IMPACT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVES OF OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the impact of outdoor experiences on college students’ psychological well-being, with emphasis on students’ perspectives and engagement with natural environments. Rising levels of academic pressure and digital immersion have been associated with increased psychological distress among college students, underscoring the need for accessible and sustainable well-being strategies. While existing research highlights the restorative potential of nature, less attention has been given to how students interpret, integrate and value outdoor experiences in their daily lives especially in an Irish context.

A qualitative design was used, involving six semi-structured interviews with undergraduate students. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis, allowing for an in-depth exploration of lived experiences and meaning-making processes. Four interrelated themes were developed: psychological restoration and emotional regulation; cognitive restoration and academic functioning; nature as a psychological escape; connection to nature and meaning.

Findings indicate that outdoor environments are perceived as important resources for emotional regulation, attention restoration, stress reduction and cognitive recovery. Participants described nature as facilitating psychological “escape” through temporary disengagement from academic demands and digital devices, while also fostering a sense of perspective, connectedness, personal meaning and self-identity. Engagement with outdoor environments, particularly through low-effort activities such as walking, emerged as a key mechanism underpinning these benefits.

Overall, this study contributes to growing evidence supporting the role of natural environments in promoting student well-being and highlights the importance of accessibility and everyday engagement. These findings have practical implications for higher education institutions seeking to support student mental-health and psychological well-being through initiatives and preventative strategies.

IT'S NOT YOU, IT'S THE ALGORITHM: THE IMPACT OF TIKTOK MENTAL HEALTH CONTENT ON CONCEPT BREADTH OF MENTAL DISORDER.

ABSTRACT

Concept breadth of mental disorder refers to the range of experiences and behaviours an individual attributes to a mental disorder (Tse & Haslam, 2023a). It is hypothesised that widespread misleading mental health related content on TikTok may broaden conceptualisations of mental health disorders among laypeople, both vertically and horizontally (Haltigan et al., 2023). This study utilised a cross-sectional design to investigate whether frequency of watching TikTok videos and proportion of TikTok videos watched which relate to mental health are predictive of a broader concept of both vertical breadth of mental disorder (VBMD) and horizontal breadth of mental disorder (HBMD). 111 TikTok-using adults completed a survey which measured their frequency of TikTok engagement (engagement), proportion of TikTok videos they watch which relate to mental health (proportion) and their VBMD and HBMD. Results indicated that proportion and frequency did not predict VBMD [$F(2,105) = 0.42, p = .656$]. Further, results suggested that proportion alone was not predictive of broader HBMD ($p = .066$), however the influence of engagement caused proportion to reach significance ($p = .046$). These results indicate that broader HBMD may be related to watching a higher proportion of mental health related TikTok content, when their overall TikTok engagement is high. These findings have implications may inform our understanding of lay concepts of mental disorders and thus have implications for both healthcare and psychology practice.

THE STUDY-STRUGGLE PARADOX: EXPLORING STUDENTS AWARENESS AND CHOICES IN LEARNING STRATEGIES

ABSTRACT

The present study explores the discrepancy between students' knowledge of effective study strategies and their actual study behaviours, with a focus on how cognitive dissonance may influence academic motivation, emotional experiences and perceptions of academic performance. Research on effective learning strategies consistently demonstrate that techniques such as active recall, spaced repetition and the Pomodoro method improve long-term retention of learning and academic performance. Even with this understanding, many students continue to use less effective study strategies, including cramming and passive review. A qualitative research design using semi-structured interviews was adopted to obtain an in-depth understanding of students' experiences and perceptions. Participants – undergraduate students completing the B.Ed Psychology programme in Mary Immaculate College, Limerick – were asked about their study habits, their awareness of evidence-based learning strategies and their reflections on the gap or dissonance that arises between what they know to be effective and what they actually do in practice. Interview data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) Six-Phase Framework for Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The analysis identified five central themes: awareness-behaviour inconsistency, dissonance regulation through self-protective strategies, normative and structural influences on study behaviour, performance orientation over mastery, and identity-level conflict amongst pre-service teachers. Findings indicated that although participants demonstrated clear knowledge of effective study methodologies, this awareness did not consistently translate into behaviour. Instead, the resulting dissonance was managed through justification, and external explanations. Overall, the study highlights the importance of considering social, psychological and structural influences when addressing students' study behaviours within third-level contexts.

UNDERSTANDING LECTURE ATTENDANCE DECISIONS: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF STUDENTS' BELIEFS USING THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR

ABSTRACT

Lecture attendance is closely linked to academic performance, belonging, and self-efficacy, yet students' decisions to attend are increasingly shaped by post-pandemic conditions, including the availability of online materials and cost-of-living pressures. Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour as a sensitising framework, this study explored the salient beliefs underpinning lecture attendance decisions among Education and Psychology students at Mary Immaculate College, Limerick. Eight semi-structured interviews were conducted and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Four themes were identified: strategic judgements about lecture value, social influences, accountability, and practical constraints. Attendance was more likely when lectures were perceived as relevant to assessments, placement, or delivered by engaging lecturers; however, peer dynamics, institutional monitoring, workload, employment, fatigue, and access to online materials all shaped decision making.



ABSTRACTS

Parallel Sessions 2, 11.25 – 12.15

**G08:
Exploring Identities**

DEAR DIABETES: A NARRATIVE STUDY OF IDENTITY IN ADULTS LIVING WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES

ABSTRACT

Living with type 1 diabetes (T1D) involves ongoing physiological regulation and continuous psychological negotiation. Although illness identity has been studied within structured psychological frameworks, much of this research has relied on quantitative methods that view identity as relatively stable. Less attention has been given to how adults with a lifelong condition narratively construct and renegotiate their identities across changing social and developmental contexts. This study explored how adults with T1D narratively position their relationship with the condition within their developing sense of self. Guided by a social constructivist epistemology, fifteen adults in Ireland wrote reflective "Dear Diabetes..." letters, analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Findings show that illness identity in T1D is not a fixed psychological state, but an evolving configuration shaped by sustained mental vigilance, shifting social visibility, biographical disruption, and ongoing adaptation. Participants described their condition as a persistent mental presence demanding continuous monitoring and anticipation, while also portraying it as socially invisible yet demanding repeated legitimacy work. Diagnosis often marked a narrative rupture between a pre- and post-diabetes self, and adaptation emerged as dynamic and ongoing rather than resolved. These findings refine existing models of illness centrality, disruption, and identity integration by proposing that centrality in T1D may function as an index of attentional burden rather than identity preference, and by introducing legitimacy work as a dimension of illness identity management that precedes and operates independently of stigma, suggesting that the psychological demands of invisible chronic illness extend beyond what existing frameworks have fully captured.

IDIR DHÁ THEANGA, IDIR DHÁ SHAOL: EXPLORING LANGUAGE SWITCHING AND ITS IMPACT ON IDENTITY AND PERSONALITY IN IRISH-ENGLISH BILINGUALS

ABSTRACT

Language does so much more than just allow people to communicate. It has the power to shape how people think, feel, and who they believe themselves to be. The present study explored how Irish-English bilinguals in the Gaeltacht perceive their personality and identity when switching between Irish and English, focusing on whether participants report differences in confidence, emotional expression, sociability, and self-perception across languages and contexts. A qualitative design was employed, using semi-structured interviews to capture participants lived experiences and subjective interpretations of language use. Seven adult bilingual participants, all of whom grew up in Gaeltacht regions and regularly use both Irish and English, took part in the study. Interviews were conducted either in person or online and were audio-recorded to ensure accurate data collection. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify patterns across participants' accounts. The findings indicated that while participants perceived their core personality as stable, they reported meaningful differences in how they expressed aspects of their personality across languages. Irish was associated with greater authenticity, emotional expressiveness, confidence, and a heightened sense of belonging, whereas English was linked to formality, increased self-monitoring, and more socially demanding contexts. Overall, the findings suggest that language plays a significant role in shaping a more salient and authentic sense of identity and self-perception. These findings are discussed in relation to their implications for understanding bilingual identity and language use within minority-language communities. Future research could explore larger, more diverse samples and use mixed methods to further examine language, identity, and self-perceived personality.

**“YOU PUT ON THE CLOTHES AND IT’S LIKE A DIFFERENT PERSONALITY
COMES OUT”: THE DIALOGICAL NEGOTIATION OF TEACHER IDENTITY AND
IMPOSTER THOUGHTS**

ABSTRACT

Research has highlighted the complex nature of developing a teacher identity for pre-service teachers, a process often accompanied by uncertainty and self-doubt during initial teacher education (ITE). While Imposter Syndrome has been examined in educational contexts such as higher education, limited research has explored how these experiences relate to teacher identity development within ITE. The present study therefore explored how final-year pre-service teachers experience the development of their teacher identity and how imposter thoughts emerge within this process from a dialogical perspective. A qualitative research design was adopted to explore participants’ lived experiences in depth. Eight final-year undergraduate pre-service teachers attending an Irish teacher-training college participated in this study. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis. The findings revealed four interrelated themes. Teacher identity developed through dialogical negotiation within a liminal space between student and teacher roles. Within this space, imposter thoughts emerged through interactions between internal self-doubt and external social influences. Confidence developed through practical teaching experience, helping to mitigate imposter thoughts over time. Furthermore, enduring personal values and vocational aspirations provided continuity within the developing teacher identity. These findings highlight the dialogical and socially situated nature of imposter thoughts within teacher identity development during ITE. The findings are interpreted in light of relevant literature, with implications for practice and future research discussed.

UNMASKING IMPOSTER SYNDROME: EXPLORING LATE DIAGNOSED AUTISTIC WOMEN'S EXPERIENCE OF IMPOSTER SYNDROME

ABSTRACT

Many autistic women remain undiagnosed until adulthood, a delay often driven by assessment tools geared toward male-typical presentations. This is further complicated by masking, where autistic traits are hidden to conform to social norms, and by diagnostic overshadowing, with autistic traits frequently misattributed to co-occurring psychiatric conditions. Although receiving a diagnosis can bring relief and validation, little research has examined the psychological impact of this delayed identification, particularly the development of impostor feelings after diagnosis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven autistic women, and data were analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis. Four themes were identified: (i) Impact of late diagnosis, (ii) Language and Labels, (iii) Perceptions of autism, (iv) Belonging. The findings illustrate that impostor syndrome is a common experience for many late-diagnosed autistic women, particularly those in the early stages post-diagnosis. This experience is heavily influenced by the interplay between risk and protective factors. Self-acceptance, family support, and community belonging appear to mitigate feelings of imposterism, while external invalidation and rigid societal narratives about autism exacerbate it. Implications of findings and recommendations for future research are discussed in this paper.

USING IRISH THROUGH SOCIAL IDENTITY: HOW PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS DESCRIBE THEIR MOTIVATION TO USE THE LANGUAGE

ABSTRACT

Despite the Irish language's longstanding significance in culture, identity, and education in Ireland, recent years have seen a renewed interest in its use and endorsement. Nevertheless, limited research has explored whether social identity influences pre-service teachers' motivation to use the language. This study explored whether and how social identity influenced pre-service primary teachers' motivation to use the Irish language. A qualitative design was employed. Nine pre-service teachers from teacher education institutions across Ireland participated in semi-structured interviews, and the data was analysed using Reflexive Thematic Analysis.

Across the interviews, participants reported that their use of Irish fluctuated across different social and geographical contexts, using the language more frequently in settings where it was prominent, positively acknowledged, and socially endorsed. Participants also reflected on legitimacy, frequently evaluating themselves against more fluent speakers or individuals from Gaeltacht and Irish-medium environments, with these comparisons influencing their confidence and motivation to use Irish. Irish was further described as something that both promotes and challenges sense of belonging; whilst Irish speaking communities facilitated connection and enhanced engagement, participants expressed limiting or suppressing their Irish proficiency in situations where it had the potential to cause social discomfort or exclusion.

Overall, motivation to use Irish was characterised by participants through legitimacy, belonging, and social alignment, rather than solely linguistic skill, indicating that individuals were more inclined to use Irish when they perceived it socially accepted and encouraged



ABSTRACTS

Parallel Session 2, 11.25 – 12.15

**G10:
Wellness in Applied Settings**

HOW DO EDUCATION AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE RELATE TO SELF-EFFICACY, COPING, AND WORK-RELATED QUALITY OF LIFE AMONG SOCIAL CARE WORKERS IN IRELAND?

ABSTRACT

The introduction of CORU's statutory registration marked a significant milestone in the professionalisation of social care work in Ireland. Entry into the profession is recognised through both formal academic qualifications and pathways for experienced practitioners without such qualifications. Despite this, limited research has explored whether these differing routes are associated with variations in psychological functioning among social care workers. Therefore, the present study aimed to examine whether educational attainment and years of professional experience are related to self-efficacy, coping strategies, and work-related quality of life (WRQoL) in this population. Additionally, relationships among these psychological variables were investigated.

A quantitative, cross-sectional 3×2 between-subjects factorial design was employed. The sample consisted of 41 social care workers currently employed in the sector who were either registered or in the process of registering with CORU. Participants completed a demographic questionnaire, the Work-Related Quality of Life Scale, the General Self-Efficacy Scale, and the Brief COPE inventory. Data were analysed using a two-way multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), two two-way analyses of variance (ANOVAs), and Spearman's rank-order correlations.

Findings indicated that educational attainment was not significantly associated with coping strategies, self-efficacy, or WRQoL. However, individuals with five or more years of professional experience reported significantly higher WRQoL. Furthermore, active coping was strongly and positively correlated with WRQoL. These results suggest that professional experience and the use of active coping strategies are important factors associated with enhanced work-related quality of life. Implications and recommendations for future research are discussed.

“THE JUGGLING ACT”: LIVED EXPERIENCES OF SUPPORTING AUTISTIC PUPILS IN MAINSTREAM CLASSROOMS

ABSTRACT

This study explores the experiences and views of teachers, student teachers, and Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) in supporting ASD students in mainstream primary classrooms in Ireland. A qualitative design using semi-structured interviews was selected to examine detailed accounts from six primary school staff members. The data was analysed thematically following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) approach. The findings highlight five themes including experiences of supporting autistic pupils, challenges and barriers, strategies and resources, perceptions of inclusion and training and emotional responses of staff. Results indicate that support involves ongoing interpretation and adaptation, shaped by staff role, experience, classroom environment, and available resources. Staff emphasised the importance of routine, visual supports, collaboration and professional development but noted that practical implementation often differs from policy and theory. Participants also reported stress and uncertainty alongside the rewards gained from meaningful pupil engagement. The study concludes that effective inclusion is not a result but instead an active environment dependent process that requires continuous reflection, collaboration and responsive strategies with implications for teacher training, school leadership and classroom support practices.

‘I COULD NEVER DO THAT’: INVESTIGATING THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF TEACHERS WORKING IN IRISH HOSPITAL SCHOOLS.

ABSTRACT

Hospital schools are schools located in hospitals with the purpose of continuing a child or adolescent’s education and development during a period of hospitalization. The current study investigated the lived experiences of hospital school teachers working in Irish hospital schools.

This was examined using reflective letter writing. Where teachers wrote their past self a letter about their experience, which was then analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis. Nine fully qualified teachers currently working in Irish hospital schools participated. Five themes were identified. These included; the definition of success, normality in the unknown, the emotional load, boundaries and supports, learning from those around you and sharing knowledge and recognising the value of hospital school teachers and their work. The importance and range of what hospital school teachers provide for their students is illustrated throughout. Hospital school teaching is a complex profession and the understanding gained from teachers experiences can be used to help support current and new hospital school teachers.

EXPERIENCE OF PARENTS WITH TRANSGENDER CHILDREN

ABSTRACT

Research on transgender youth has grown in the recent years, however, comparatively there has been little attention on the topic of parents raising a child who is transgender. This study will look at how parents navigate their experiences of parenting a transgender child, with particular attention to their emotional adjustments, support systems, and their interaction with social systems. This study also uses the term “transgender” as an umbrella term as there is plenty of identities that do not identity with cisgender. A qualitative research design was used in this study to see the parent’s experiences in detail. Data was collected online with qualitative surveys having of 27 open-ended questions that allowed participants to describe their experiences in their own words. The study surveyed thirteen parents of transgender children. The participants were recruited through the GOSHH (Gender, Orientation, Sexual Health, HIV) organization in Limerick City, Ireland. Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis (2006) method was used to show the patterns and themes in the data while still being able to see the individual parent’s perspective. The parent’s experiences were different, for example, the parent’s initial feelings were shock, grief, and uncertainty. However, they all worked to support their children. The study shows the significance of professional advice, peer support, and access to information for the parents. Overall, the study revealed the changing experiences of a parent with a transgender child

for the development of the parent and the child. Informed support, advocacy, and affirming relationships are all key components in their experiences.

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEERING ON AN IRISH MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE

ABSTRACT

Mental health helplines are a key component of community-based mental health support in Ireland, yet little research has explored how volunteers experience their role within a system that relies heavily on voluntary labour. The present study examined how volunteers on an Irish mental health helpline made sense of their role, its impact on wellbeing, and its place within the wider mental health system. A qualitative design using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed. Ten current volunteers participated in semi-structured interviews conducted online via Microsoft Teams, which were transcribed verbatim and analysed using IPA. Three Group Experiential Themes were identified: emotional labour as both a privilege and psychological weight; becoming a volunteer through identity, values, and moral positioning; and situating helpline work within community and the Irish mental health system. Findings indicated that volunteers experienced the role as emotionally demanding yet deeply meaningful, requiring sustained emotional presence, boundary management, and self-protection. Volunteering was closely tied to identity and moral responsibility, while also understood as contributing to broader social communities. Participants additionally positioned helplines as vital sources of connection but reflective of gaps in formal mental health provision. Overall, helpline volunteering emerged as a complex relational practice through which individuals negotiate care, identity, and the constraints of a mental health system reliant on voluntary labour



ABSTRACTS

**Parallel Sessions 3,
13.00 – 14.00**

G08: Sport

BELONGING AND PRECARIITY: EXPERIENCES OF AMERICAN PROFESSIONAL BASKETBALL PLAYERS COMPETING IN IRELAND.

ABSTRACT

The increasing presence of international athletes in Irish basketball has created a growing need to understand how overseas players experience adapting to the Irish sporting context. While research on athlete migration frequently highlights culture shock, homesickness, and communication barriers, little attention has been given to the experiences of professional basketball players competing in Ireland. The present study explored the psychological, social, and performance-related experiences of American professional basketball players currently competing in the Irish Super League and Division 1 league. A qualitative design was employed, with semi-structured interviews conducted with six American athletes. Data was analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Three themes were identified: mutual respect and belief between players and coaches, settling in through the team environment, and performance, pressure, and professional accountability. Participants described positive relationships with coaches and teammates and generally reported smooth social adjustment supported by shared language and welcoming team environments. However, these experiences existed alongside a strong awareness of the performance-based nature of professional basketball. Contracts and roles were often perceived as conditional, contributing to a sense of professional precarity. In contrast to much of the existing literature, culture shock and communication barriers were not central challenges. Instead, the findings suggest that the experiences of American basketball players in Ireland are shaped by the coexistence of strong social belonging within teams and the professional precarity associated with performance-based contracts.

WOMEN IN SPORT: PLAYING ON OR WALKING AWAY? THE BARRIERS AND ENABLERS TO SPORT PARTICIPATION

ABSTRACT

Women's participation in sport significantly declines during adolescence. There are many factors that come into play including, social, psychological and structural influences. This study explores the subjective experiences of female athletes and how they navigate the barriers and enablers within sport and what role these influences play on their level of participation. The study uses a qualitative semi-structured interview approach to allow participants to narrate their individual personal experiences. 9 females from the south of Ireland took part in one-on-one semi-structured interviews. The findings identified 3 key themes, belonging and social validation, empowerment and vulnerability in sport and cultural and structural constraints. Supportive peer relationships, belonging and positive coaching environments encouraged engagement, whereas decline in confidence, injury, and other priorities and pressures disrupted engagement. These themes highlighted that engagement is determined by the interaction of interpersonal, psychological and structural influences. Broader structural influences such as gender inequalities and rural access barriers shaped participation. Motivation is not an individual experience, influences are interconnected. Sport engagement is a socially constructed and structurally constrained experience rather than an individual choice. Participants discussed that supporting sustained participation therefore requires more inclusive coaching practices and improved structural support within sporting environments. The findings look to understand women's experiences and try to support and sustain participation to increase long-term engagement in sport.

**CLUB VS. COUNTY: PERSONALITY TRAIT DIFFERENCES
AMONG GAA ATHLETES.**

ABSTRACT

This study examined the personality traits of GAA athletes participating at club and inter-county level. The aim of the study was to determine whether differences in personalities existed between club and inter-county athletes and if distinct personality profiles were associated with elite levels of participation by assessment of the Big Five Personality Traits linking to the Trait Theory. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was employed as respondents completed the NEO-FFI personality questionnaire and a question for determining levels of athletic identity. The sample consisted of male and female GAA athletes ($n = 116$) competing at either club or inter-county level. The results of the study indicated that inter-county GAA players had significantly greater levels of extraversion, agreeableness and conscientiousness in comparison to those competing at club level. While no significant difference was observed for the trait of openness, reported values of neuroticism were significantly lower for inter-county athletes against their club level counterparts. A significant difference was also observed with inter-county athletes reporting greater levels of identity attached to their sporting efforts. The findings of the study suggest that personality traits and their associated skills are highly advantageous in order to reach the elite level. While physical skills are also a requirement, traits embodying discipline, team cohesion and self-belief are immensely important. A lack of inter-county representation was a limitation to the study and further studies may also examine the potential causal relationships of training in an elite sporting environment and the development of personality from this exposure.

**YOU ARE WHAT YOU REPEATEDLY DO, BUT WHAT IF YOU CAN'T? –
EXPLORING ATHLETIC IDENTITY AND INJURY IN AMATEUR CROSSFIT
ATHLETES.**

ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between injury and athletic identity (AI; Brewer, 1993) in amateur CrossFit athletes using an interpretive qualitative design. Given its utility in explaining the psychological impact of injury, Cognitive Appraisal Theory (Wiese-Bjornstal et al., 1998) was used to interpret findings. Research examining athletic identity and injury in amateur CrossFit athletes is limited and undeveloped. Despite its potential commercial/ health benefits, research examining amateur CrossFit athletes, and the use of such research by CrossFit stakeholders, is non-existent. Seven semi-structured interviews were conducted to elicit experiences of AI and injury from amateur CrossFit athletes ($N = 7$; 57.14% female, 42.86% male) between the ages of 27 and 52. Interview transcripts underwent reflexive thematic analysis in order to identify patterns of shared meaning, while recognising the active interpretive role of the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2023). Findings illustrated that participants appraised injury differently. Some participants became frustrated with the impact of injury on their AI and engaged in maladaptive behaviours such as overtraining - particularly in the absence of clear guidance. Other participants positively reframed injury as an opportunity to engage in identity diversification and the redefining of priorities. A broader AI, strong support network and resilient disposition were identified as being beneficial in coping with injury. This study contributes to the limited literature in this area; it also offers practical suggestions such as focusing on positive reframing, engaging in AI-focused conversations in a class setting and offering spontaneous; informal support to athletes.

**THE IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONAL, FINANCIAL, AND ORGANISATIONAL
SUPPORTS ON THE WELL-BEING OF INTERCOUNTY ATHLETES BALANCING
THIRD-LEVEL EDUCATION AND SPORTS.**

ABSTRACT

This study explored how institutional, organisational, and financial supports affected the well-being of intercounty athletes balancing full-time third-level education with the demands of intercounty sport in Ireland. Although previous research has shown that combining sport and education can involve both benefits and strain, less is known about how intercounty athletes experience these demands and supports in the Irish context.

A qualitative design was used. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six female undergraduate intercounty athletes aged 20–22 competing in camogie or Gaelic football while enrolled in full-time third-level education. Five interviews were conducted in person and one online via Microsoft Teams. Interviews were transcribed, anonymised, and analysed using reflexive thematic analysis.

Five themes were identified. Sport was experienced as a source of identity, structure and psychological support. However, balancing college and intercounty sport also created pressure through competing demands, reduced recovery and negative spillover into academic functioning and mood. Support was most positive when lecturers and management recognised athletes' dual commitments and responded with understanding and flexibility. Participation also involved hidden logistical and financial burdens, particularly travel, food, fuel, and limited time for paid work, with existing supports often viewed as insufficient. Athletes also described missing aspects of college life, while identifying stronger belonging with teammates who understood these demands. Overall, sport provided identity, structure, and relief from academic stress, but balancing it with college often reduced time for rest, study, work, and social life. Support was most helpful when these demands were understood and accommodated.

**BELIEVE TO ACHIEVE: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-CONFIDENCE
AND SELF-PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE IN GAA PLAYERS.**

ABSTRACT

Self-confidence is widely recognised as an important psychological factor in sport, with research consistently demonstrating an association with performance outcomes (Lochbaum et al., 2022; Woodman & Hardy, 2003). However, much of this research has focused on objective performance in elite settings, with less attention given to athletes' self-perceived performance despite its relevance for understanding performance experiences (Jekauc et al., 2025; Levy et al., 2011). The present study examined the relationship between self-confidence and self-perceived performance among adult Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) players, with a secondary aim of exploring whether this relationship differed across gender. A prospective correlational design was employed with self-confidence measured prior to training and self-perceived performance assessed immediately after. A total of 125 adult GAA players completed two online questionnaires ($M_{age} = 21.57$, $SD = 3.71$). The results indicated that self-confidence significantly predicted self-perceived performance, explaining approximately 50% of the variance, $R^2 = .50$, $F(1,123) = 124.54$, $p < .001$. This suggests that higher levels of self-confidence were associated with more positive evaluations of performance, accounting for a substantial proportion of athletes' performance perceptions. Exploratory analyses indicated that this relationship was consistent across male and female athletes, with comparable effect sizes. These findings align with theoretical perspectives suggesting that self-confidence shapes how athletes interpret and evaluate their performance experiences (Bandura, 1997; Vealey, 1986). Overall, the findings support existing literature while extending research by demonstrating the relevance of self-confidence to athletes' self-perceived performance within the GAA context. Implications of findings and recommendations for future research are presented.



ABSTRACTS

**Parallel Sessions 3,
13.00 – 14.00**

**G10:
Perspectives on Media and Technology**

FROM HEADLINES TO JUDGEMENT: THE IMPACT OF IRISH NEWS MEDIA FRAMING ON PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF AN OFFENDER WITH MENTAL ILL HEALTH.

ABSTRACT

This study examined how mainstream news media framing impacts public attitudes toward an offender with mental ill health in an Irish context, drawing on framing theory to examine perceptions of social distance and recovery potential. A quantitative between-subjects experimental design was employed with three vignette conditions: sensationalist, recovery-focused and neutral. A total of 163 participants ranging from 18-77 years old were randomly assigned to read a short news-style vignette of an individual experiencing a mental health episode who was apprehended by Gardaí. Participants could leave an optional comment under their assigned vignette and then respond to the iScore scale and an adapted version of the Recovery Assessment Scale. Significant differences were found across framing conditions for both recovery attitudes, $F(2, 153) = 77.49, p < .001, \eta^2 = .50$ and social distance $F(2, 156) = 57.75, p < .001, \eta^2 = .43$. As hypothesised, recovery-oriented framing was associated with lower preferred social distance and greater optimism regarding recovery. By contrast, participants exposed to sensationalist framing displayed low acceptance of the individual and pessimism for future recovery. The neutral condition had moderate results across both social distance and recovery capacity. Overall, findings demonstrate Irish news media framing can enact a powerful role in shaping public perceptions of a person with mental ill health within a criminal justice context. Findings suggest the potential of recovery-focused reporting in reducing stigma and fostering supportive public attitudes towards this population, highlighting its need for consideration in media policy integration.

**THE EXTENT TO WHICH VISUAL ARTWORK PIECES BEING CREATED BY AN
EMOTIONLESS ARTIST (AI) AFFECTS THE AESTHETIC AND EMOTIONAL
EXPERIENCE OF THE VIEWER.**

ABSTRACT

The increasing prevalence of artificial intelligence (AI) in creative domains has raised questions regarding how the absence of human emotion in AI-generated art influences viewers' aesthetic experiences. Traditional accounts of art emphasise emotional expression and intentionality as central to artistic value, yet emerging research suggests that aesthetic judgements may also be shaped by contextual beliefs about authorship. The present study examined whether artwork origin (AI-generated vs. human-created) and the framing of an AI as human-like influenced aesthetic and emotional responses to visual art.

A laboratory-based mixed experimental design was employed in which 36 participants viewed and rated 14 artworks (seven AI-generated, seven human-created). Participants were randomly assigned to either a generic AI description condition or a humanised AI condition. Aesthetic experience was measured using Likert-scale ratings of beauty, interest, sincerity, and quality, while emotional responses were assessed using composite indices of positive and negative affect. Multiple regression analyses were conducted to examine the effects of origin and framing.

Results indicated that the piece of visual artworks' origin significantly predicted aesthetic experience and emotional responses, with human-created artworks receiving higher ratings overall. The humanised AI condition also significantly increased both aesthetic and emotional ratings. Notably, a significant interaction effect demonstrated that humanising the AI had a strong impact on responses to AI-generated artworks. Aesthetic experience was further found to predict overall emotionality.

These findings suggest that aesthetic responses to AI-generated art are influenced not only by the artwork itself but also by perceptions of the creator's humanity, highlighting the importance of cognitive framing in shaping aesthetic experience.

2 FAST 2 ATTRACTIVE: A QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF IMAGE RETOUCHING AND EXPOSURE TIME.

ABSTRACT

Previous research has suggested that aesthetic evaluations can differ between short and long exposure times, particularly when one has higher expertise or interest in the subject of the stimulus. Additionally, previous literature has linked the use of appearance-enhancing filters with higher ratings of physical attractiveness. The current study aimed to test the interaction of exposure time and retouching in the context of political social media marketing as well the potential interest/expertise effects of social media political participation (SMPP). Adopting a cross-sectional, quasi-experimental approach the current study employed an online experiment with a built-in survey measure ($N=36$). Results found that neither image filtering, exposure time, nor their interaction had a significant effect on liking evaluations of candidate appearance. Furthermore, no significant difference in effects was found among participants who had higher levels of SMPP. From these findings, the present work discusses theoretical and practical implications of these results and how they may inform future research.

THE EFFECT OF REPEATED EXPOSURE ON THE PERCEIVED CREDIBILITY OF AI-GENERATED AND REAL IMAGES.

ABSTRACT

The increasing realism of AI-generated images in an expanding online age raises a lot of concerns about how individuals and our society can evaluate visual credibility in these digital environments. The present study investigated whether repeated exposure influences perceived credibility, and whether this effect differs between AI-generated and real images.

A within-subjects design was used in which participants were asked to view a series of randomised images during what was called the “exposure phase”, then followed by a “judgment phase”.

Images were either repeated or non-repeated and consisted of both AI and real photographs. Participants rated each image using a Likert-scale measure of perceived realism. Mean credibility scores were calculated for four different conditions: AI-repeated, non-repeated, real repeated and non-repeated. Data were analysed using a 2 x 2 repeated- measures ANOVA.

The results revealed a significant main effect for image type, with real images being rated as more credible than those that were generated by AI. There were no significant main effects for repetition, and none for the interaction between repetition and image type, indicating that repeated exposure did not significantly influence or have effect on credibility rating for either image type.

These findings suggest that perceived credibility is more strongly influenced by whether an image is real or AI-generated rather than by familiarity through repetition. While the results for this particular study were insignificant, they do still contribute to understanding how individuals evaluate visual information in an increasingly AI-mediated context.

HOW DOES THE USE OF GENERATIVE AI INFLUENCE STUDENT'S ACADEMIC CONFIDENCE.

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between AI and academic self- efficacy with a group of students based in Ireland. Three story stems were created by the researcher and their supervisor. The story stems were based on three college students, one of the students was encouraged to use ChatGPT while a second student was discouraged from using it. There were 30 participants who responded to the story stems, and they were from different academic backgrounds. There was a mix of responses from the participants to the story stems. Some of the responses were that the students would feel relieved to use ChatGPT to support with their college work and that it would encourage them to do more work while others felt that they would feel guilty for using ChatGPT to complete their work. The positives from this study were that it is one of the first papers to use story stems with a group of adults as previous research in this field

has looked at groups of children. There were some limitations to this study too, a longitudinal design could have been used to look at the opinions from the students over a period of time and see if their opinions towards ChatGPT changed at different points. This is an interesting study that looks at the impact of AI tools such as ChatGPT on university student's self-efficacy.

BEYOND THE BOT: CONSCIENTIOUSNESS AND ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY IN TYPES OF CHATGPT USERS.

ABSTRACT

The increasing use of generative artificial intelligence tools such as ChatGPT in higher education has raised questions about how students engage with these technologies in their academic work. The present study examined whether academic self-efficacy and conscientiousness differed according to patterns of ChatGPT use, defined by frequency and purpose. A quantitative, cross-sectional 3×3 between-subjects design was employed, examining three levels of use frequency (low, moderate, high) and three purposes of use (idea generation, refinement, and direct writing). A total of 106 undergraduate students from a single higher education institution completed an online questionnaire measuring academic self-efficacy, conscientiousness, and ChatGPT use for academic purposes. Data was analysed using two-way analysis of variance. The results indicated no significant differences in academic self-efficacy or conscientiousness across levels of ChatGPT use frequency or purpose ($p > .05$), and no significant interaction effects were observed. These findings suggest that academic self-efficacy and conscientiousness may not meaningfully distinguish patterns of ChatGPT engagement among undergraduate students. The findings highlight the importance of examining broader contextual and behavioural factors in future research and in understanding students' engagement with generative artificial intelligence in higher education.



ABSTRACTS

**Parallel Sessions 3,
13.00 – 14.00**

**202:
Personality in Education**

EXPLORING TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES OF EXPRESSING INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY IN THE CLASSROOM CONTEXT.

ABSTRACT

The present study explores the experiences of teachers expressing intellectual humility in the classroom context. This research explores experiences of admitting mistakes, admitting ignorance and being open to learning from student perspectives in the context of primary education. Although much research explores teachers' responses to the fallibility of their students, little research to date has explored how teachers respond to their own shortcomings and limitations. To explore this, the current study adopted a qualitative design. This allowed for rich and nuanced reflections to be revealed, in a way that quantitative research has yet to achieve in this area of research. Reflexive thematic analysis identified a wide variety of distinct and unique experiences of expressing intellectual humility. For the most part, teachers recognise its value, while also being humble enough to recognise that there are intrapersonal and social factors which impact upon their expression of their own intellectual humility. These teachers extend the current understanding of intellectual humility by offering a new way to understand this construct beyond recognition, to include rectification and acceptance. Other teachers struggle with expressing intellectual humility in the classroom, and therefore, struggle to reflect on what may impact their expression of intellectual humility. Potential implications for practice and research are identified based on these findings. The days of the teacher being the oracle may be gone, but this is not to say that intellectual humility is a perfectly refined construct for teachers.

DOES SOCIAL MEDIA USE PREDICT STUDENTS' WELLBEING, AND PERSONALITY TRAITS?

ABSTRACT

Social media use has grown significantly among college students, leading to concerns about its possible effects on mental wellbeing and personality development. This study aimed to explore whether social media use can predict a student's personality traits, focusing on introversion and extroversion, with student wellbeing explored as well. A correlational research design was employed to examine these relationships.

This study recruited 72 college students between the ages of 18 and 25. The participants completed an online questionnaire containing 46 items. The questionnaire measured students' social media use, overall wellbeing and personality traits. The three scales used were a 4-point Likert Scale Student Wellbeing Scale, a 5-point Likert Scale of the Mini International Personality Pool, and the 5-point Likert Social Network Time Use Scale.

The results of this research showed a weak but significant negative relationship between student social media use and personality traits ($r = -.278$, $p = .018$). The results also showed a significant relationship between social media use and student wellbeing ($p = .032$). These findings suggest that social media engagement may be associated with variations in personality characteristics, particularly introversion and extroversion. The significant relationship between social media use and students' wellbeing may suggest that differences in usage may be associated with differences in how students feel.

Overall, this study contributes to the growing body of research examining the psychological implications of social media use among college students and highlights the need for further research into how digital behaviours may influence personality development.

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE PREDICTIVE ROLES OF MALADAPTIVE
PERFECTIONISM, ADAPTIVE PERFECTIONISM, AND SELF-COMPASSION IN
ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AMONG THIRD LEVEL STUDENTS IN
IRELAND.**

ABSTRACT

Academic Procrastination (AP) is prevalent among and negatively effects college students internationally. The present study examines the predictive roles of Self-Compassion (SC), Maladaptive Academic Perfectionism (MAP), and Adaptive Academic Perfectionism (AAP) in AP, as well as the mediating role of SC in MAP and AAP relationship with AP among college students in Ireland, aiming to support the development of interventions to support college students in reducing AP. A cross-sectional quantitative design was employed. A sample of 114 third level students in Ireland completed an online questionnaire assessing demographic information, SC, MAP, AAP and AP. Hierarchical multiple regression and correlational analysis was conducted. Results indicated that MAP was a significant positive predictor of academic procrastination, whereas AAP was a significant, albeit weak, negative predictor. Together, these variables accounted for 23.5% of the variance in AP. Results from model 2 revealed that SC was not a significant predictor of AP independent of AAP an MAP. Accordingly, self-compassion did not mediate the relationship between AAP or MAP and AP. However, SC was strongly negatively corelated to AP and MAP at bivariate level. Overall, the findings suggest AAP and MAP predict AP positively and negatively respectively with MAP been a stronger predictor. SC does not predict AP independently of MAP and AAP and its bivariate association with AP likely reflects shared variance with MAP. Additionally, other unexamined factors appear to contribute to variance in AP. Implications of these findings for practice and future research are discussed, as well as the study's limitations.

DO EXTRAVERTS EXPERIENCE AND COPE WITH ACADEMIC STRESS DIFFERENTLY THAN INTROVERTS?

ABSTRACT

Academic stress is a growing concern in university settings and understanding how personality traits can play a role on how individuals perceive and cope with that stress may help explain the differences in students' university experience. This study aimed to investigate if the personality trait of extraversion predicted perceived academic stress, proactive coping or avoidant coping among undergraduate university students. A cross-sectional design was employed to investigate these relationships, with simple linear regressions conducted to analyse the data received. A self-report questionnaire was distributed to 100 participants. The questionnaire included the big factor five markers of extraversion, the perceptions of academic stress scale and the proactive and avoidant subscales of the proactive coping inventory. Linear regressions indicated that extraversion significantly predicted perceived academic stress ($\beta = .344, t = 3.63, p < .001$), and proactive coping ($\beta = .204, t = 2.06, p < .04$), but was not significantly related to avoidant coping ($\beta = -.151, t = -1.51, p = .13$). Extraversion was associated with higher perceived academic stress and greater use of proactive coping strategies. The findings overall suggest that extraversion plays some significant role in the processes involved with stress, and further research into the role various personality traits have with stress appraisal and coping in university students could inform strategies to support student wellbeing and performance.

**MOTIVATION, PERSONALITY, AND IDENTITY IN THE DECISION TO PURSUE
PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHING: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF TRAINEE
TEACHERS IN IRELAND.**

ABSTRACT

The decision to pursue a career in primary teaching is influenced by a complex interaction of motivational, personality, and identity-related factors. While previous research has highlighted the importance of intrinsic, altruistic, and extrinsic motivations in shaping teaching career choices, less attention has been given to how these motivations interact with personality traits and personal identity. This study aimed to explore the motivations and personality characteristics that influence trainee teachers' decisions to enter primary teaching in Ireland.

A qualitative research design was employed, involving semi-structured interviews with trainee primary teachers. Data was then analysed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify key patterns within participants' experiences and perspectives. The findings revealed four central themes: teaching as a continuation of early identity, teaching as a moral and purposeful vocation, personality alignment and professional self-expression, and balancing idealism with professional reality. Participants frequently described long-standing aspirations to teach, strong altruistic motivations to support children's development, and personality traits such as empathy, sociability, and conscientiousness that aligned with the perceived demands of the profession.

These findings highlight the importance of considering both motivational and personality-related factors when understanding career choice in teaching. The study provides insight into how identity and personal values shape entry into the teaching profession, offering implications for teacher recruitment and training within the Irish educational context.

LEARNING TO BOUNCE BACK: EXPLORING HOW PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS PROMOTE RESILIENCE.

ABSTRACT

Learning to bounce back: exploring how primary school teachers promote resilience is a study that examines how primary school teachers encourage and portray resilience within the classroom, highlighting the important role educators play in shaping children's emotional and academic growth. Resilience is more than an academic skill; it is the capacity for children to navigate challenges, recover from setbacks and develop confidence in their own abilities.

Through semi-structured interviews with six primary school teachers, all working in catholic schools, this study captures live experiences and strategies teachers use to support resilience. Findings reveal that resilience is nurtured through everyday classroom interactions, including encouraging persistence, reframing mistakes as learning opportunities and teaching emotional regulation techniques such as breathing exercises and reflective discussion. Teachers emphasised that strong relationships built on trust, understanding, and support are the foundation on which children feel safe to take risks and embrace challenges. Interactions with peers were also recognised as opportunities for guided social learning, empathy and problem solving.

This study highlights the classroom as a place where children not only learn facts and skills but also discover the strength within themselves to face life's challenges. Through teachers' patience, encouragement, and unwavering belief in their potential, children are guided to grow resilient, courageous and confident learning not just to overcome obstacles, but to embrace them as opportunities to grow.



ABSTRACTS

**Parallel Sessions 4,
14.00 – 15.00**

**G08:
Modern-Day Development**

CAN PARASOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS SERVE AS A PROTECTIVE FACTOR AGAINST STRESS?

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether activating parasocial relationships (PSRs) influences psychological and cardiovascular responses to an acute laboratory stressor. PSRs are one-sided emotional bonds with media figures that may provide a sense of perceived social connection, yet their role in physiological stress regulation remains unclear. A quantitative laboratory design was employed with 34 undergraduate participants. PSR strength was measured using the Celebrity-Persona Parasocial Interaction Scale, and state anxiety was assessed using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory. Participants completed a reflective writing task about a preferred social media influencer to activate PSRs, followed by a mental arithmetic stress task. Systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure, and heart rate were recorded across baseline, stress, and recovery phases.

Results indicated that the stress manipulation did not produce a significant increase in self-reported anxiety. Repeated-measures analyses of covariance revealed no significant effects of phase or PSR strength on cardiovascular responses, and no interaction effects were observed.

These findings suggest that PSR activation did not influence psychological or physiological stress responses in this context. The results indicate that PSRs may not engage the same stress-buffering mechanisms as reciprocal interpersonal relationships and may instead influence well-being through longer-term psychological processes.

MEASURING DIFFERENCES IN PERCEIVED PARENTAL ACADEMIC PRESSURE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS BASED ON BIRTH ORDER.

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether perceived parental academic pressure differs according to birth order among young adults from multi-child families. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed, with 141 participants aged 18–25 completing measures of perceived parental academic pressure and sibling differential experience. Participants were categorised as first-born, middle-born, or last-born, and differences were analysed using one-way ANOVA and Kruskal–Wallis tests. Results showed a significant effect of birth order on perceived parental academic pressure, with first-born participants reporting the highest levels, middle-born participants reporting intermediate levels, and last-born participants reporting the lowest levels. Significant differences were particularly evident between first-born and last-born participants. Additional analyses indicated that first-borns also reported greater differential parental treatment. These findings support the view that sibling position may shape how parental expectations are experienced and internalised. The study contributes to developmental psychology by highlighting the role of family dynamics in shaping academic pressure during emerging adulthood.

BECOMING A MAN ONLINE: A PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF ENGAGEMENT WITH THE MANOSPHERE.

ABSTRACT

The manosphere has emerged as a controversial online space centered on discussions of masculinity, misogyny, and men's issues. Contemporary manosphere ideologies are rooted in earlier men's movements of the 1970s, which have evolved into the modern online phenomenon known as the manosphere. The significance of the manosphere lies in its potential to shape

young people's beliefs, attitudes, and values, particularly in relation to sexual relationships, gender norms, and power dynamics. The present research employed a qualitative approach to critically investigate the psychological factors underpinning young men's engagement with manosphere communities and to examine the mechanisms that contribute to and sustain such engagement. An online qualitative survey was conducted, comprising 34 responses from male participants aged 18 and above, with data analysed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019). Findings illustrate that loneliness, the drive for self-improvement and sexual narratives function as key psychological drivers influencing engagement with manosphere communities. Overall, these findings highlight the importance of considering broader social and cultural factors in shaping engagement with manosphere communities and underscore the need for more inclusive and psychologically sustainable constructions of masculinity. Potential implications for future research, and targeted interventions aimed at young men are discussed.

BREAKING THE GENDER BARRIER: UNDERSTANDING CROSS-GENDER FRIENDSHIPS IN THE CONTEXT OF SINGLE-SEX SCHOOLING EXPERIENCES.

ABSTRACT

Previous research on single-sex education has traditionally centered on academic outcomes, with less attention given to its social and developmental dimensions, particularly in relation to cross-gender friendships. Emerging literature within the field indicates that gender segregation within the schooling system coincides with reduced cross-gender interaction, heightened gender salience, and differences in peer relationships within single-sex settings. However, limited research has explored how these dynamics are subjectively experienced and interpreted by students, particularly within the Irish context where single-sex schooling remains prevalent. The present study adopted a qualitative approach to gather a nuanced understanding of other-gender relations, specifically friendships, within the context of single-sex schooling environments. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight undergraduate students aged 18–23 that attended gender segregated secondary schools. Data were analysed using Braun and Clarke's

thematic analysis, with findings that illustrate how participants described experiences of social distance, unfamiliarity, and uncertainty in relation to the other gender, alongside the romanticisation of cross-gender interactions. These themes were interpreted as both structural and psychological obstacles to accessing cross-gender friendships. Participants also reflected on the perceived value of cross-gender friendships during transitions into mixed-gender environments. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the social and relational dynamics of single-sex schooling within the Irish context. Potential implications for future research, and educational practice and policy are discussed within the paper.

ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS AND PLATONIC RELATIONSHIPS: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM.

ABSTRACT

The present study investigated whether attachment patterns in romantic relationships correspond with attachment patterns in close platonic friendships, addressing the theoretical debate between trait-like and context-specific models of adult attachment. A within-subjects cross-sectional design was employed, in which the same participants completed attachment measures for both relational contexts, allowing for direct within-person comparisons. 97 adults aged 18 to 62 years ($M = 28.42$, $SD = 11.17$) were recruited via social media and completed adapted romantic and platonic versions of the Relationship Questionnaire and the Experiences in Close Relationships Scale, yielding categorical attachment style classifications and continuous scores on attachment anxiety and avoidance for each relational context. Attachment anxiety demonstrated strong cross-context consistency ($r = .67$, $p < .001$), while attachment avoidance showed a weaker but significant association ($r = .38$, $p < .001$); secure attachment was more prevalent in platonic (75.3%) than romantic (52.6%) relationships. The findings support a mixed model of adult attachment in which anxiety functions as a relatively stable, generalised interpersonal tendency, while avoidance is more sensitive to relational context.

EXPLORING CHILDREN'S ADJUSTMENT TO PARENTAL SEPARATION AND DIVORCE.

ABSTRACT

Parental separation and divorce are increasingly common family transitions in Ireland that can have significant implications for children's emotional, social, and developmental adjustment. Although a substantial body of research has examined the effects of parental separation, less acknowledgment has been given to how professionals interpret children's adjustment through integrated developmental and grief-informed perspectives. The present study therefore explored professionals' interpretations of children's responses to parental separation and the elements they perceive as influencing adjustment.

A qualitative research design was employed to capture detailed professional accounts. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven female professionals including support workers, social workers, psychotherapists and lecturers working with children and adolescents in Ireland. Interviews investigated professionals' observations of children's emotional, behavioural, and social responses to parental separation, as well as the supports and barriers encountered in practice. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis with a contextualist framework.

Four main themes were identified: behaviour as a manifestation of unrecognised distress, parental separation as a form of grief, the importance of parental and environmental stability, and the role of professional's responses and support strategies. Behavioural difficulties were frequently interpreted as expressions of underlying emotional distress, while parental separation was viewed as a significant and often unrecognised process of grief and loss. Overall, the research highlights that parental separation can represent a significant emotional disruption in children's lives and addresses the importance of recognising children's grief, promoting stability, and providing developmentally sensitive and grief-informed support.



ABSTRACTS

**Parallel Sessions 4,
14.00 – 15.00**

**G10:
Interventions in Psychophysiology**

NEGATIVE ATTENTIONAL BIASES IN ONLINE NEWS CONSUMPTION: THE ROLES OF INTOLERANCE OF UNCERTAINTY AND OPENNESS TO THE FUTURE.

ABSTRACT

Doomscrolling, which is defined as the compulsive, habitual consumption of negative online news, has been associated with increased psychological distress and negative future orientation. However, the attentional mechanisms and individual differences associated with doomscrolling require further research. The present study investigated individuals' implicit attentional biases when viewing fictitious online news content and compared these biases with subsequent content preferences. Intolerance of uncertainty (IU) and openness to the future (OTF) were also tested as predictors of negative attentional bias. Thirty participants viewed a fictitious news webpage comprising 6 positive and 6 negative articles for 3.5 minutes before selecting an article of interest, while binocular eye-tracking data were recorded using the Tobii Pro Fusion 250 Hz. No overall negativity bias was observed. Participants spent more time viewing positive articles than negative articles and predominantly chose positive articles after the task. A significant interaction between dwell time and article choice was found, suggesting attention allocation while viewing the webpage was consistent with subsequent content preferences. IU and OTF failed to significantly predict attentional bias, although the two measures were significantly negatively correlated. These findings suggest that individuals do not exhibit negativity bias during passive news consumption, although the controlled, counterbalanced nature of the task may have limited its emergence, highlighting the need for more ecologically valid methods in future doomscrolling research.

FROM STRINGS TO STRESS RELIEF: THE EFFECT OF ACTIVE MUSIC ENGAGEMENT ON STRESS REDUCTION IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS.

ABSTRACT

Music has frequently been proposed as a tool for reducing psychological and physiological stress; however, comparatively little research has examined the effects of active music engagement. The present study examined whether active music engagement would reduce physiological and psychological stress responses in university students compared to a non-musical creative activity. A 2x3 mixed-factorial quasi-experimental design was conducted with 30 university students. Participants completed a modified Trier Social Stress Test followed by either active music engagement or a jigsaw puzzle task. Measures were obtained at a baseline, post-stress induction, and post condition. Psychological stress was measured using the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory Subscale, while physiological stress was assessed using heart rate and blood pressure measures. Results indicated that active music engagement did not produce significantly greater reductions in psychological and physiological stress compared to the control condition following Bonferroni correction. These findings suggest that while music engagement may support stress regulation, active musical performance may not necessarily be more effective than other cognitively engaging activities. This may indicate that the effectiveness of music-based interventions is influenced by factors such as task structure, engagement duration, and the extent to which the activity facilitates immersion rather than cognitive effect.

DOES SCROLLING HELP US RELAX? A COMPARISON WITH COLOURING ON PHYSIOLOGICAL STRESS RECOVERY.

ABSTRACT

Scrolling our phones has become a default tool to facilitate relaxation due to habit and ease of access. Research suggests moderate use of scrolling may increase relaxation, but findings vary on if it is a better method than a less stimulating activity carrying less risk of addiction. This experiment compared the impact of scrolling to colouring on heart rate deceleration and self-report assessments of relaxation. A total of 30 participants took part. Results report that neither scrolling nor colouring meaningfully impacted physiological heart rate deceleration. Pre and post mood scales did not report significant change, but the impact differed in direction. Therefore, the important aspect of relaxation may be to set aside time to focus on an activity allowing your body to self-regulate rather than what activity is done for short-term stress recovery. The physiological indices and self-appraisal of relaxation diverged, emphasising this gap between affective and bodily awareness.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SLEEP REGULARITY AND COGNITIVE PROCESSES.

ABSTRACT

Sleep is an important aspect of all our lives, and is a topic widely studied by psychologists for its effect on cognitive functioning, mental wellbeing and cardiovascular health. Studies in the past have focused on sleep quality and duration, with newer research emerging on the importance of the regularity of sleep, and the consistency of sleep and wake times from day to day.

This present study looks at sleep regularity's relationship to the cognitive functions of short-term memory and attention, in a multiple regression based within subjects design. Sleep regularity scores were obtained from participants sleep schedule data and were paired with their age and gender as predictor variables in relation to their search score slopes measuring attention and maximum scores on the Corsi block task measuring short term memory.

A total of 31 participants (18 male; 13 female) were recruited for this study, with a mean age of ($M = 24.93$). They were each provided with a digital sleep diary to track their sleep for 7 nights before entering their sleep data online on PsyToolKit, where they would complete the rest of the study, including a sleep quality questionnaire and the short-term memory and attention task. Results found no relationship between sleep regularity scores and search score slopes ($p = .896$) and maximum Corsi scores ($p = .790$).

GRATITUDE, DOES ONE SESSION MAKE A DIFFERENCE: THE IMPACT OF A SINGLE-SESSION GRATITUDE INTERVENTIONS.

ABSTRACT

Untreated stress can lead to psychological disorders. Third-level students are continuously reported as having poorer mental well-being than their non-student age-matched peers. College counselling services don't have adequate staffing or resources to best support student mental well-being. Positive psychology promotes preventative measures to intervene with stress and negative affect through gratitude journals. Gratitude is associated with a reduction in stress and depressive symptoms and an increase in happiness, life satisfaction, and positive effects.

A between participants, pre- and post- intervention experiment was undertaken to analyse and compare the impact of three different interventions on stress, gratitude, and positive and negative effect.

One hundred and forty-seven undergraduate students were assigned to one of three gratitude interventions: The Longform gratitude group, The Three Good Things Gratitude Group, and the Control group. Each participant completed a pre- and post- intervention questionnaire about stress, gratitude, and positive and negative affect and the intervention for their assigned group.

A mixed between-participants ANOVA is expected to show significant increases in gratitude and positive affect, and significant decreases in stress and negative affect from pre- to post-intervention for the gratitude interventions and little to no change in the control group.

THE IMPACT OF DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING ON STATE ANXIETY AND COGNITIVE PERFORMANCE IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

Anxiety has become increasingly prevalent among university students and is associated with negative impacts on well-being, academic performance, and cognitive functioning, and therefore, identifying effective strategies to regulate anxiety is of growing importance. Brief, mindfulness-based interventions, such as diaphragmatic breathing, have been proposed as accessible strategies to regulate state anxiety, a temporary emotional state characterised by tension and physiological arousal in response to perceived threat. However, research has largely focused on clinical populations or longer-term interventions, with little emphasis on the effects of brief interventions on both state anxiety and cognitive performance. The present study aimed to examine whether a brief diaphragmatic breathing intervention could reduce state anxiety and improve cognitive task performance in university students. A quantitative experimental design was employed. Forty-eight undergraduate students were randomly assigned to either a diaphragmatic breathing condition or a control video condition, and completed measures of state anxiety, physiological arousal and cognitive task performance. 2×2 mixed ANOVAs were conducted to examine the effects of condition and time on each dependent variable. Participants in the diaphragmatic breathing condition showed a greater reduction in state anxiety ($p < .001$)

and heart rate ($p = .004$) compared to the control group. No significant differences between conditions were observed for systolic blood pressure ($p = .101$), diastolic blood pressure ($p = 1.000$) or cognitive task performance ($p = .338$). These findings suggest that brief diaphragmatic breathing may be effective in reducing state anxiety and physiological arousal but may have limited effects on cognitive performance.



ABSTRACTS

**Parallel Sessions 5,
15.15 – 16.15**

**G08:
Teacher Development**

PASSION AND PERSISTENCE IN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS: SUSTAINING THE JOURNEY TO TEACHING.

ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between passion and persistence among pre-service teachers in Ireland. It is underscored by the ‘Dualistic Model of Passion’ which proposes that there are two types of passion- harmonious and obsessive. Harmonious passion is suggested to be most adaptive in relation to overall life outcomes whereas obsessive passion often comes into conflict with other areas of life. Research has shown the connection with flexible and rigid persistence also. This study aimed to identify if there is a relationship between passion (harmonious and obsessive) and persistence (flexible and rigid) among pre-service teachers in Ireland. A mixed-methods design was employed. A survey was carried out with two scales to measure passion and persistence as well as two open-ended questions to gain a qualitative understanding of pre-service teachers’ passion and persistence for college studies. The sample comprised of 106 pre-service teachers across a range of years and initial teacher education institutions. The data were analysed using regressions for the quantitative element and thematic analysis for the open-ended questions. Findings indicated that harmonious passion was predictive of flexible persistence, and obsessive passion was predictive of rigid persistence. The narrative accounts of pre-service teachers’ experiences suggested that personal interest, autonomous motivation, and identity congruence with college studies led to an adaptive engagement style while high pressure environments were related to compulsive and rigid persistence styles. Findings further suggested that engagement can be shaped by temporal and competing demands. Implications of the findings and recommendations for future research are discussed.

VALIDATION OR FRUSTRATION? THE IMPACT OF FEEDBACK PERCEPTIONS ON IRISH PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY.

ABSTRACT

This study examined whether feedback perceptions from feedback given by tutors on school placement predicted self-efficacy among Irish pre-service teachers. Rooted in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, feedback perceptions were conceptualised as a form of social persuasion and explored how these perceptions impacted teachers' efficacy beliefs. This study employed a repeated cross-sectional, correlational design across two timepoints – measuring the relationship between feedback perceptions and self-efficacy, prior to and upon receipt of feedback. 46 4th year B.Ed. pre-service teachers were recruited at Time 1 (pre-feedback) and 48 at Time 2 (post-feedback), all of whom were completing their final placement. Feedback perceptions were assessed using three subscales- Utility, Retention and Sensitivity, as well as an overall feedback score. Regression analyses were conducted to determine whether feedback perceptions were predictive of self-efficacy at both timepoints. At Time 1, the overall feedback perceptions model was non-significant. However, within the 3 subscales model 'Utility' emerged as a significant predictor ($p = .015$), with the overall model accounting for 18.2% of the variance in self-efficacy. At Time 2, overall feedback perception was non-significant, however, 'Sensitivity' emerged as the only significant predictor in the subscales model ($p = .017$). These findings suggest that while overall feedback perception did not predict self-efficacy, distinct dimensions of feedback perceptions did. Feedback viewed as useful was associated with higher self-efficacy whereas greater sensitivity to feedback on placement was associated with lower self-efficacy.

LEARNING TO LOOK BACK: DIFFERENCES IN SELF-REFLECTION AND INSIGHT BETWEEN SECOND-YEAR AND FOURTH-YEAR INITIAL TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

ABSTRACT

The concept of reflection has been linked to learning, particularly for higher education students (Rogers, 2001). However, there are inconsistencies in the literature regarding the development of students' reflection over their time in third-level education. This study employed a cross-sectional, between-subjects design in order to investigate the differences in self-reflection and the related concept of insight in second-year and fourth-year initial teacher education (ITE) students. ITE students were chosen for this study due to the importance placed on developing the ability to be a reflective practitioner in the profession (The Teaching Council, 2020). 84 second-year students and 60 fourth-year students completed an online questionnaire where they responded to the Self-Reflection and Insight Scale (Grant et al., 2002). This scale consists of three subscales, which are 'engagement in reflection', 'need for reflection' and insight. Engagement in reflection and need for reflection were combined in order to measure self-reflection. Independent samples t-tests were conducted, and while there was no significant difference in reported insight scores, second-year students reported significantly lower self-reflection ($t(142) = -2.09, p = .038$). Further independent samples t-tests were conducted, and second-year students reported significantly lower engagement in reflection ($t(142) = -2.29, p = .023$), but not a significantly lower need for reflection. These results suggest that both groups recognise the importance of reflection, but fourth-year students report engaging in it more frequently. These findings will inform third-level institutions about students' reflective habits and the need to introduce structured supports to promote engagement with the reflective process.

**FROM CONCERN TO CARE: AN EXPLORATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL
TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS AND RESPONSES TO BEHAVIOUR OF CONCERN
THROUGH A BIOPSYCHOSOCIAL LENS IN LIGHT OF PREVAILING POLICY.**

ABSTRACT

Given that prevalence of behaviours of concern is increasing, impacting on dynamics, interactions, opportunities to learn, safety and student well-being, teachers face a greater challenge to understand their perceptions and responses to these behaviours. The present research explores how primary school teachers perceive and respond to behaviours of concern through a biopsychosocial lens in light of prevailing policy. Participants included seven practicing primary school teachers who represented a range of professional experience and settings. Participants engaged in semi-structured interviews designed to elicit awareness and subjective understanding of behaviour, their interpretation of influencing factors and responses to behaviour of concern. Questions were asked that explored the relationship between biopsychosocial factors influencing behaviours of concern and responses to same. Following in-person interviews, reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) was applied to the data. Numerous initial codes were identified, analysed and organised into four central themes. Results indicated that teachers consider behaviour and behaviours of concern as complex and multi-faceted forms of communication shaped by multiple influences, primarily biological, psychological and social. Strategies to effectively respond to behaviours of concern included proactive and reactive techniques, guided by professional experience and school policy. A key finding that emerged from this research is the urgent need for regular experiential CPD focusing on training that is biopsychosocial in nature. An implication for the future is the necessity to explore the perceived disconnect between teachers' engagement with different school policies and national guidance in order to maximise the potential for better outcomes for children and teachers in the classroom.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY OR PLAYING IT SAFE? EXPLORING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' INTENTIONS TO IMPLEMENT PLAYFUL PEDAGOGIES IN IRISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

ABSTRACT

Recent curriculum reform in Ireland has placed increased emphasis on play-based approaches, positioning playful pedagogies (PP) as a key approach within the revised Primary Curriculum Framework for Primary and Special Schools (DoE, 2023). However, the extent to which pre-service teachers (PSTs) intend to implement PP in primary classrooms remains underexplored. The present study examines PSTs' intentions to implement such pedagogies. A qualitative research design was employed, incorporating 9 semi-structured interviews with final-year undergraduate PSTs. Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Findings revealed that PSTs held positive attitudes towards PP, particularly valuing its role in enhancing engagement and inclusion. However, their intentions were shaped by anticipated social judgement, parental expectations, and practical constraints such as time, resources, and classroom management. Confidence in implementing PP was found to be context dependent and developed primarily through school placement experiences. Overall, while PSTs demonstrate positive attitudes towards PP, their intentions to implement them are influenced by a complex interplay of attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control and self-confidence. Key implications for education and policy are discussed, alongside recommendations for supporting the implementation of PP in primary schools.

THE SPECIFIC IMPACTS OF NEURODIVERGENCE ON LEARNING AND SOCIAL EXPERIENCES IN TERTIARY EDUCATION SETTINGS

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the specific impacts of neurodivergence, particularly Autism and ADHD, on students' learning and social experiences within tertiary education.

Existing research highlights that higher education environments often rely on neurotypical norms of communication, organisation, and participation, creating systemic barriers for neurodivergent learners. As discussed in the dissertation, the difficulties faced by neurodivergent students arise not from individual deficits but from structural and cultural norms embedded in higher education.

To explore these experiences, the study used the research method of qualitative story-completion design. Seven neurodivergent students aged 18–25 completed an anonymous online prompt about a fictional student, Charlie, navigating group work in university. This method allowed participants to project their own perspectives while maintaining psychological safety. Data was analysed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase reflexive thematic analysis, enabling the identification of patterned meanings across narratives.

Three overarching themes emerged: navigating social worlds, cognitive overload and academic burnout, and the labour of self-advocacy. Participants described withdrawing socially, staying quiet to avoid confrontation, and feeling "out of sync" with peers. Cognitive overload manifested through anxiety, overworking, and stress arising from unclear communication and uneven group-work dynamics. Self-advocacy appeared as an ongoing emotional labour, with many Charlies struggling to set boundaries or ask for help, despite recognising the need for support.

The discussion situates these findings within broader structural inequalities in higher education, emphasising that neurodivergent students often carry additional, invisible labour to participate in academic life. The study concludes that more inclusive and flexible institutional practices are essential to support neurodivergent students' well-being, engagement, and sense of belonging.



ABSTRACTS

**Parallel Sessions 5,
15.15 – 16.15**

**G10:
Wellbeing in the Classroom**

CONFIDENCE IN CARE: PRIMARY TEACHER SELF-EFFICACY IN MANAGING STUDENTS WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES MELLITUS.

ABSTRACT

An increasing number of children in Irish primary schools are living with chronic health conditions, including Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus (T1D). This condition requires consistent monitoring throughout the day, with blood glucose fluctuations being highly prevalent with younger children. As children spend a significant portion of their time in school, teachers are often required to take on health-related responsibilities in addition to their educational role. However, limited training and unclear support structures may affect teachers' confidence in managing these responsibilities safely and effectively. This study explores the factors that influence primary school teachers' self-efficacy when managing pupils with T1D. This considers the perceived confidence teachers have in their own abilities surrounding the management of T1D in the mainstream classroom. Adopting a qualitative design, semi-structured interviews were conducted with seven primary teachers who have had at least one year's experience in teaching a mainstream class in which there was a child with T1D. Findings indicate that teachers' confidence develops gradually through experience rather than formal training alone. Lack of pre-service preparation contributed to early anxiety. Hands-on experience, parental support, and particularly the presence of SNAs in the classroom reduced stress and increased confidence. Emotional burden was most pronounced during periods of uncertainty or reduced support. Over time, successful management experiences strengthened teachers' self-efficacy. This study contributes novel insights into the development of teacher self-efficacy in chronic health management, offering practical suggestions for teacher training and policy development, and the implementation of support structures to enhance pupil safety and teacher wellbeing.

CAUGHT BETWEEN PRIORITIES: IRISH PRIMARY STUDENT TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON WELLBEING AND ITS PROMOTION IN SCHOOLS.

ABSTRACT

This study examines Irish primary student teachers' attitudes and perspectives towards wellbeing and its promotion in schools. Wellbeing has become an educational priority due to the rising number of mental health disorders among young people. It has recently been positioned as a broad curriculum area integrating Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and Physical Education (PE) in Irish primary schools. A qualitative research design was employed to explore participants' subjective perspectives and experiences. In-person semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine final-year primary student teachers and reflexive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings indicate that student teachers conceptualise wellbeing in varying ways, with some expressing uncertainty regarding the extent of their responsibility in promoting it. While student teachers generally hold positive attitudes towards wellbeing and recognise its importance in schools, they identify several barriers to its promotion, including limited time, external expectations, insufficient training and competing curricular demands. Participants suggest that increased training and integrated whole-school approaches to wellbeing could enhance their confidence and competence in promoting wellbeing practices. Overall, this study provides insight into an underexplored area and highlights implications for policy and initial teacher education programmes.

KEEPING UP IN THE CLASSROOM: SOCIAL COMPARISON AND BURNOUT AMONG STUDENT TEACHERS.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between social comparison and burnout among student teachers, with particular attention to whether burnout differs across years of study. While burnout has been widely examined among qualified teachers and to a lesser extent, student teachers, relatively little research has explored the role of social comparison in the development of burnout during teacher training. Given evidence that burnout symptoms may emerge during initial teacher education, this study aimed to investigate whether higher levels of social comparison are associated with increased burnout and whether burnout differs across stages of the Bachelor of Education programme. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was employed. A sample of 243 undergraduate student teachers from Mary Immaculate College completed self-report questionnaire measures of burnout and social comparison. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were then conducted to examine whether social comparison and year group predicted burnout and its three subdimensions. Results indicated that social comparison significantly predicted overall burnout ($\beta = .16, p = .014$) and emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .19, p = .003$). However, social comparison was not significantly associated with the burnout dimensions of depersonalisation or personal accomplishment. Additionally, no significant relationship was found between year of study and overall burnout. These findings suggest that social comparison may represent an important psychological mechanism in the early development of burnout during teacher training and present important practical and theoretical implications for teacher education and student teacher well-being.

EXPLORATION OF TEACHER'S MOTIVATION AND SELF-EFFICACY IN TEACHING THE IRISH LANGUAGE.

ABSTRACT

This study investigates primary school teachers' motivation and self-efficacy in teaching the Irish language, with particular focus on how personal experiences, early exposure to the language, and school contexts influence their professional practice. Conducted in a DEIS Band 1 primary school, the research involved semi-structured interviews with six female teachers, exploring their perceptions of teaching Irish, challenges faced, and strategies used to foster student engagement. The findings indicate that teachers' confidence and motivation are closely linked to their own schooling experiences and early personal aspirations to enter the teaching profession. Teachers reported deriving intrinsic satisfaction from student engagement, that are moments where learners demonstrated understanding, and meaningful communication in Irish, highlighting the centrality of observable learning outcomes in sustaining professional motivation.

Despite high levels of personal commitment, structural constraints in the DEIS context including limited resources, prioritisation of literacy and numeracy, and lack of dedicated support for Irish were identified as significant challenges that undermine teachers' efficacy and impact instructional practices. Teachers employed strategies such as positive reinforcement, interactive games, and visual aids to maintain engagement, yet these efforts were often constrained by contextual pressures.

Overall, the study demonstrates that teachers' motivation to teach Irish is shaped by a combination of intrinsic factors, personal history, and environmental support, with implications for professional development, policy, and resource allocation. Enhancing support structures for Irish language teaching, alongside strategies to strengthen teachers' self-efficacy, may improve both teacher satisfaction and student learning outcomes, supporting the long-term sustainability of Irish language education.

**SUPPORTING THE SUPPORTERS: EXPLORING SPECIAL NEEDS ASSISTANTS’
SENSE OF BELONGING IN MAINSTREAM IRISH PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**

ABSTRACT

Sense of belonging is a fundamental psychological need that influences wellbeing, relationships and motivation across various social contexts. While much research has examined sense of belonging among school students, less attention has been given, both nationally and internationally, to staff working in educational settings, including Special Needs Assistants (SNAs). Thus, the present study seeks to explore how SNAs experience a sense of belonging within mainstream Irish primary school settings. A qualitative research design was adopted to capture in-depth perspectives from participants. Eight full - time SNAs working in mainstream education in Ireland took part in semi - structured interviews, conducted in person or via videoconferencing. Interviews were audio - recorded and guided by an integrative framework, which included questions on competencies to belong, opportunities to belong, motivations to belong and perceptions of belonging (Allen et al., 2021). Data were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Findings indicated that relationships with teachers, students and fellow SNAs, alongside opportunities for professional recognition and contribution of SNA opinions, were crucial in fostering a sense of belonging amongst SNAs. Organisational, systemic and policy factors were also highly influential in shaping experiences. Participants described sense of belonging as an active, dynamic process, that evolves over time, rather than a static, passive concept. The results highlight the importance of supporting SNAs in establishing a sense of belonging within schools in the Irish education system. Implications of findings and recommendations for future research are outlined.

THE SHOW MUST GO ON: THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL JOB DEMANDS AND THE EMOTIONAL LABOUR STRATEGIES, SURFACE ACTING AND DEEP ACTING, IN THE PREDICTION OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS' EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION ON TEACHING PLACEMENT.

ABSTRACT

The current study examined the role of Emotional Job Demands (EJDs), and Emotional Labour Strategies (ELS), namely Surface Acting (SA) and Deep Acting (DA), in predicting Emotional Exhaustion (EE) amongst Pre-service teachers (PSTs) on teaching placement. Retrospective cross-sectional quantitative data was collected through online surveys, based on experiences on teaching placements. A sample of 102 participants, enrolled in either 3rd or 4th year, in an Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Programme were assessed using validated measures, to evaluate rates of emotional job demands, surface acting, deep acting and emotional exhaustion. Results from the multiple linear regression found that surface acting was a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion on teaching placement ($\beta = .67$, $p < .001$), whereas deep acting was a non-significant predictor ($\beta = -.15$, $p = .101$). A hierarchical multiple regression found that emotional job demands was a strong predictor, but the addition of surface acting improved the prediction of emotional exhaustion, beyond the scope of emotional job demands. Surface acting emerged as a partial mediator in the relationship between emotional job demands and emotional exhaustion ($B = 0.38$, 95% CI [0.20, 0.59]). Therefore, surface acting appears to play a particularly important role in emotional exhaustion, whereas deep acting appears to be a less harmful emotional labour strategy. This highlights the need to address emotion regulation training amongst pre-service teachers, to optimally support the well-being of pre-service teachers on teaching placement. Implications of findings and recommendations for future research are presented.