ANTHONY: And we have first off a key note presentation from AHEAD Ireland's FET project. Now, I remembered what FET stands for, further Education and Training. And Thomas is giving me the thumbs up. I've got it right. So we also then have a presentation of the ATEND life members this afternoon and we have a presentation from Sheelagh Daniels-Mayes from Sydney University presenting on creating places of belonging for those living with disability going beyond diversity and inclusion in post secondary education. Finally - and this is one that we will all enjoy particularly, I think, is a student panel experience. It will be facilitated by Graeme Innes. And we will be on this same webinar link for the whole day. So you can come and go back using the same link. So first to AHEAD Ireland's further education and training project. We have three presenters guests here today, Dr Thomas Tobin, Roisin Doherty and Ann Heelan. Now, Roisin and Ann are dialling in from Ireland. It's early hours of the morning. So they're very generous to give us their time. And Thomas is dialling in from Madison Wisconsin. I'm not sure what time it is there for you, Tom. But I think it's probably late night.

TOM: It's about 9 o'clock in the evening here in state college Pennsylvania.

ANTHONY: Pennsylvania. Sorry.

TOM: A lot closer to New York but we've got you.

ANTHONY: Sorry, Tom. Thank you for correcting that. So firstly, I will just read the bios of our three presenters. So Roisin Doherty is currently the director of further education and training learner support with SOLAS. SOLAS is the further education and training authority in Ireland. Roisin drives the development of integrated, inclusive and supportive further education and training, learning systems delivered through strategic oversight frameworks with a focus on supporting whole of life learning. Roisin currently supports and contributes to the future transformation of further education and training across Ireland through a keen focus on easier access, more powerful identity, better learning experience, more simplified pathways, supporting priority cohorts and enhanced literacy and numeracy supports. And I have to slow down because I'm speaking too fast for the interpreters who will struggle to keep up. So I will slow down. Roisin is a registered teacher and chartered marketer, as through her previous roles as director, further education and training national training policy, director further education and training national strategy and organisational development, director of further education and training operations Midlands region, director of further education and training operations Dublin, north-west, north-east and west regions, as well as customer relationships manager in the manufacturing sector. And Roisin has contributed, supported and facilitated the continuous quality improvement of further education and training systems for the last 25 years. Roisin, we welcome you today. Our second presenter is Ann Heelan. And Ann is a universal design for learning consultant and CEO of AHEAD for 20 years, Ann's expertise in teaching and learning inclusive education and universal design for learning. Originally, a teacher in both higher education and further education and training, Ann has experience of curriculum planning and assessment and has written many guidelines on needs assessment and all aspects of inclusive practice. Ann has played a leadership role introducing the UDL to higher ed and further education and training supporting institutions and individuals in becoming more inclusive in their practice. Ann is a skilled facilitator and has worked collaboratively setting up networks of inclusive practice supporting professionals to share information and solve difficulties arising from the complex nature of diversity and inclusion questions. Ann has written a number of articles on inclusive study abroad for the EAIE publications, many guidelines for AHEAD, and has recently written with Dr Thomas Tobin, the SOLAS guidelines on UDL and FET 2020. So I guess FET is the equivalent of our VET, vocational education and training. And our third presenter today is Dr Thomas Tobin. And Thomas is the program area director of distance teaching and learning on the learning design, development and innovation model at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who is today in Pennsylvania, as well as an internationally recognised speaker and author on topics relating to quality in technology-enhanced education, especially copyright, evaluation of teaching practice, academic integrity and accessibility/universal design for learning. Before joining UW-Madison, Tom served for five years as the coordinator of learning technologies in the centre of teaching and learning at north-eastern Illinois university in Chicago and spent seven years in the learning and development arm of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois. Since the advent of online courses in higher education in the late 1990s, Tom's work has focused on using technology to extend the reach of higher education beyond its traditional audience. He advocates for educational rights of people with disabilities and people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Tom holds a PhD in English literature, a second Master's degree in information science, a professional project management certification and Masters online teaching certification, quality matters education, and recently completed his certified professional in accessibility core competencies. Tom tells his nieces and nephews that he is in 42nd grade. Tom serves on the editorial board of InSight, a journal of scholarly teaching and the online journal of distance learning administration. Tom's books include Evaluating Online Teaching, implementing best practices with Jean Mandernach and Ann H Taylor. The Copyright Ninja: Rise of the Ninja, teach everyone, universal design for learning in higher education with Kirsten Behling. Going Alt-Ac, A guide to alternative academic careers with Katie Linder and Kevin Kelly. Tom is also proud to represent the United States in its spring 2018 Fulbright Scholar fellowship under which he helped the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest – I tried – Hungary.

TOM: You got it right.

ANTHONY: Thank you. To develop its first faculty development program and he provided workshops and training to 12 other colleges, universities and military programs throughout Hungary. And happy birthday, Thomas. Thanks for sharing part of your birthday with us this week at Pathways. I will now hand over to Ann, Roisin and Tom to deliver our first session of the day.

TOM: Ann, do you want to undo the mute real quick?

ANN: Sorry. That okay? We okay now? Good. Okay. Hi everybody in Australia. I'm talking to you with Roisin from Ireland and Tom from America about the UDL for FET project. Now, two years ago I got together with Roisin and we kind of thought that UDL would be a really good way to create an inclusive culture in higher education in Ireland and we've been working on this project ever since. So just to get the ball rolling I will hand over to Tom.

TOM: And Ann, I believe this is still you.

ANN: Okay. Well, with two big themes here in our conversation today. The first theme is inclusion in the community and the aim of the UDL and FET project is to create a sense of belonging, both in the community for our learners, but also for our staff. The second main theme of the UDL project is accessibility. So Tom, I will hand over to you.

TOM: Thank you. And folks, on your screen right now is an image of a pyramid that has four levels to it. The first level at the base is universal design for learning for the majority of students, and there are some students near the base of the pyramid. Level 2 is smaller. It's students who have similar needs grouped together, level 3 is smaller still. That's individual accommodations for students who need them, and level 4 at the top of the pyramid is for personal assistants, and that's a small group of students who need that particular information. And the other primary idea for the UDL for FET project was to make accessibility just part of what everyone does in the FET sector, while minimising the need for individual accommodations, especially the cookie-cutter ones that became baked into disability support officers' routines over time. “Oh, you have ADHD, so your accommodation must be this." And if you were here for the keynote where we kicked things off I talked a little bit about how that can get ossified or hardened into our practices. I will turn it back over to Ann.

ANN: Not all of our FET learners fit into the traditional model of teaching and learning. We have - in FET today we have students from all kinds of different backgrounds, different ability levels, people with learning difficulties, and people with language difficulties, as well as those from different cultures, different religions. So huge differences. Ordinary school-leavers as well come into that mix. But we believe that universal design is a model that will give all these students different options on how they actually get the content, different choices in how they can demonstrate their knowledge, and we also give them lots of different tools that they can learn with. Tom, next. Move it on a bit. What I want to show you today is to meet with the earlier doctors in FET of UDL and let them share with you what - the changes they've made in their practice. I think we're going to show you a video now, meeting some of these people who are teachers in FET in Ireland.

(VIDEO PLAYED)

ANN: Okay. You've met some people in Ireland, teachers who have made changes, simple changes to their practice and who have really changed their minds in how they see the students. So part of the UDL project is to move the supports from - individual supports into the mainstream. And what I would like to ask you now is to stop and think about the supports that you make in your practice for students with disability. So just what would be the most common supports that you would make? If you just have a think about it.

TOM: And we will put maybe two minutes on the clock.

ANN: Okay. Maybe put the answers into the chat box.

TOM: And you should hear some music for about two minutes here. If you would like to turn your audio off and concentrate in silence, I will let you know in the chat when the music is going to end.

And we have a lot of good ideas in the chat. Let me read off a few of these. Julie is talking about easier access for extensions, Sandra says extensions and exam adjustments. Elaine says extra time for assessments and exams. Beth says addressing learning styles. Barbara says enlarged print, coloured paper and tutorial support. Bianca says listening skills. Liz says interpreting, notetaking and tutorials. And we've got a lot of folks putting in that they are requesting on the daily basis extra time for assessments or notetakers or support people and interpreters in the classroom. I'm scrolling through here to see if there's some other ones but those are the main ideas, giving people extra time on tests, study skills information is another one that's coming up from a lot of different people, Lauren, Janet, Carmella, thank you for those. Some of the common themes are giving extensions, alternative exam assessments, but a lot of those are forming around adjustments for exams and notetaking.

ANN: It's interesting that there's so many problems with time, you know, because I don't know - if you don't know a subject, then getting extra time doesn't really help you all that much sometimes, you know.

TOM: This was something - yeah, this was something that we saw in FET as well, and I turn it over to our colleague Roisin and she will talk a little bit about why universal design for learning was something that we picked up.

ROISIN: Thank you. Thank you very much, Tom and thank you, Ann. Delighted to be here today. I just want to talk for a few minutes with regard to SOLAS. SOLAS is the authority in Ireland that's responsible for the integration, coordination, funding and monitoring of further education and training VET, as you say in Australia. We have roughly between 200,000 and 250,000 learners and we have a budget of 930 million and we coordinated programs like apprenticeship, post secondary vocational courses, community education, added literacy, numeracy and digital education, online courses, skill development for people in employment and particular focus on, I suppose, provision for priority learners. So that leads me on to actually just reflect for a few minutes on this particular poem. And I aren't really a person for poetry but when I came across this particular poem a few weeks ago, it's really, really chimed with me with regard to what I actually thought about the UDL project and the difference that it has made for the whole of further education. So for me universal design is a once in a lifetime opportunity. To make hope and history rhyme. The hope that we can move from identifying problems, which is the long forward tidal wave of justice for learners. We're trying to move away from identifying the problem with the learner, to moving to a place where we are looking to remove the barriers and move to a new place of hope. And really to be able to have a great sea change. And for me personally, this is what UDL has done. And I have worked in the further education and training sector for 20 years. And what I would ask you is: do you believe a further shore is reachable from here? You can see where we've even bolded that on the particular screen there for you to see there. For me those are the key phrases. And what does that look like for you? And for me, of course, the further shore reachable from here is where we would remove the barriers to learning. For me, universal design helps us achieve that. And this poem really helped me, it's particularly in the last few weeks, to help me overcome the blockages that one definitely can reach when you're trying to ensure an inclusive journey for all learners. I know I now am not alone. I know that there is a further shore reachable from here. And, really, on the poem there you see the line, If there's fire on the mountain or lightning in the storm, what would this mean to your everyday practice? Do you want to see a great sea change? And if so, I would encourage you to reach out, start the change. It's actually in your hands. And I did not know that for myself for a long time. And then, really, justice can rise up and the hope that you have and you can actually then make history, in my view. So as I say, for a long time I was searching for this new approach where we could move to a better place. I had been an instructor for a long number of years. And a once in a lifetime opportunity landed on my desk. And a sea change happened for a number of reasons. And this is where I think change happens in very small bites. It's not one big massive change. I had just taken over a new role. And AHEAD through Ann had met with myself and had started making new conversations and talked about universal design. And I felt this further shore was reachable for me. Also I thought it was really critical, a number of education training boards had gone ahead in their own community of practice and set up pilot programs. For me that gave me the confidence to actually say there's other people working on this. This isn't a massive risk that I have to take at a national level, that change can happen at a local level. And I think that, for me, is the most important thing, that actually you can make change today. You can start sharing conversations, talking to other people, planting that seed and make small change. So then just to put it - again that leads me on to my next slide where I talk about how did this come about? This is the new further education and training strategy for the whole of Ireland and how did inclusion become a major pillar along with skills and pathways? How did that happen? Well, really, I suppose the whole thing really stemmed a lot from the sustainable development goals to ensure inclusive and equitable education and training and also I suppose by the UN Convention for the rights of persons with disabilities. Inclusion is a key pillar. I don't need to explain to you here today how important inclusion is. I suppose how did we make it happen in our practice? We made inclusion very simple to understand. We set the scene. We started developing briefing papers, we mapped all of the government inclusion strategies and, most important, we started having conversations. And as I said earlier, we started, through Ann, the pilot programs in a number of ETBs, and then we listened to feedback, and we integrated all that feedback into the strategic funding arrangements for the organisations that we fund. UDL has become a core enabler of this key pillar of inclusion and the sector has moved from the ground up. Local education training boards supported by AHEAD are now working on their own plans. And I'm delighted to say that this year our Minister for Further and Higher Education has set out his vision for our department which is to be a vehicle for economic and social inclusion. And to help us fully implement inclusion, we need to empower people in the system to become agents of change, with values, knowledge and attitudes that permits the learner to succeed and to be successful. We need to focus less on identifying problems with our learners and students and to move towards identifying the barriers to learning, and actually continuing professional development is key to this project, and I have to add in here that actually over 700 of our tutors actually have undertaken the UDL digital badge program and that has been instrumental in progressing UDL in our system. So just to, I suppose, finish off in one or two little slides, I suppose UDL will form part of the strategic framework that we will be developing for learner access and support. The framework will enable a whole of systems and a whole of life approach to supporting learners. The UDL project sets out guidance for future supports to students and this will be, as I said earlier, will be embedded in our particular system. So that leads me just to sort of a pause and reflect slide. And here what I'm really going to ask for, again, for a minute or two, is where do you - or what do you already do for your students, or where do you already do for your students when you can support their agency, given if you had more time, resources or a community support. Really the question is what do you already do for your students when you could support their agency. I might ask you to think about that for a few moments.

TOM: And we will put two minutes on the clock again and you will hear music. If you would like to mute your audio, I will let you know in the chat when those two minutes are up. And thank you for participating in this little fun exercise. And Roisin we have a couple of folks who are sharing in the chat about their doing for versus supporting the agency of their learners. For example, Grace Allan put a mention about academic liaison interactions. And Elaine says, “Here at Curtin University we encourage self-advocacy and step in when required”. So that's a good balance there already. Sandra says, “Accessing materials in required formats, where if students just had access to those formats already it wouldn't require the assistance from the disability officers”. And Beth is saying, “Disability assistants. Learners need to have the support strategically and methodically reduced to increase their independence”. Marion says, “Developing skills and managing complex communication or communication on complex requests with academic staff. Also increased reflection on ways of working so that students can identify their own solutions and ways forward through skill development or applying existing strategies and skills in new ways”. One other comment from Smoxi, “We provide several email templates to students so they can negotiate with academics themselves and learn how to”. It seems we have a wide variety of different experiences here.

ROISIN: Absolutely. It's brilliant to see that feedback. And thanks so much for that. Thank you.

TOM: I will turn it over to Ann now. She's going to talk a little bit about the specifics of this project. Ann, do you want to take yourself off mute, real quick?

ANN: Sorry about that. Well, as we all know, research can often sit on a shelf and it's not really used. So we knew that we had to bring people with us. So in order to bring people with us, what we did was a very thorough scoping exercise on what UDL was. So we tracked the evolution of UDL in this scoping exercise from its origins in the physical environment, right through to where it is today. We knew that we had to bring people with us because policies and research can just sit on shelves. And in order for this to work we had to bring the whole sector with us. So we started off by talking to very key people, the disability officers, and we wanted to see what they were doing, what they felt was really good inclusive practice in their institutions, what they felt about it, what their fears were, their concerns. And what we got back from them was that they were very proud of the specialist services that they delivered. They felt that they had developed significant expertise around, say, including people with dyslexia or difference, they were - spent a lot of their time, as just been mentioned, on liaising with other staff or academic staff on how to be inclusive in a classroom. They protected the institution against - to be legally compliant, and they made a lot of arguments in their college for inclusion. But most of all they were proud of the work they did with individual students, supporting those students. But most of their work, they were saying, was done in a segregated way. It wasn't in the mainstream, it was through specialist services. And as they were - the students were increasing, the complexity of disability was increasing, they were beginning to feel pretty overwhelmed, and they just felt the system was creaking and not coping very well. So collectively, they knew things had to change. The difficulty was they weren't quite sure where to go with it. So we felt, okay, what people need is a structure here. What they need, they want to move, they know they have to move but what they need is a framework and a structure that they can move with. So we’ll look at the next slide, please, Tom. So we knew we had to provide that structure, and we had to provide them with guidance and tools so they could move with UDL, because UDL was a way that they could reduce the barriers in the environment for all of their students, not just students with disabilities, and it would enable them to give that specialised support to the students that really needed it. So all of their energy could go where they needed it. So, again, we went out again and we talked to people. We decided that this was not a quick fix. It was something that was going to take time. And I agreed with Roisin and with SOLAS that we would spend the time doing it. We went out, presented at director’s workshops, we presented at meetings, we went out and set up workshops with staff at all levels across the whole sector on what UDL was, we explained it, we talked to them about where they were going, we interviewed people, and the best thing of all about all this process was we gathered really good data on good practice because there was excellent practice out there in the sector, individuals were doing incredible work, doing, you know, bringing in technology, as you heard earlier from staff, making simple changes, changing their mindsets about students that made a huge difference to student success because they all want to do their best for those students. So we ended up with some really great data. We ended up with great stories that we could build into a guidance because it was very important that what we presented at the end of the day, in terms of a tool set or in terms of guidance for the sector, would actually mirror what was happening on the ground. If we challenged current practice but people would be able to see themselves in what we presented them with. So this was something that was very important to us. Another stage in this process of the consultation was to get the more formal adoption, to get the agreement of the, I suppose, key stakeholders in the sector. So we set up - I think SOLAS set up a group which was the access - sorry, it was the - just let me get the correct title here - National Advisory Committee on universal design for learning for FET. And that included key stakeholders such as the guidance counsellors, teachers, directors, the disability sector. So everybody who needed to come along on the journey, the UDL journey with us, was at this table. We also had a subcommittee which looked at the actual detail of the documentation as it was being drafted. And what this group agreed was that whatever we produced had to be very practical, it had to reflect what was going on, on the ground, it had to be grounded in practice, and it had to, I think, really importantly, align with current initiatives in the sector, such as thematic learning, because what we didn't want was for people to feel that this was something being helicoptered down on to them, and, you know, bore no relationship to what they were doing already. So it had to, sort of, be very, very clearly aligned. So they all became, in a way, co-designers in the process because we had all those different perspectives coming into our document. One of the very important events that we had on, actually, was the World Café Event. I go back to Roisin's poem now about looking at the future because what we did, we brought people together, we invited them to a World Café and we invited them to think about that future, because it was empty. There was nothing there. They had a role in painting that future and creating that future. So what we asked them to do was think about what that future would look like. What a UDL FET sector would look like in the future. What were they proud of? What did they want to keep? What did they want that sector to look like in the future? And it was very - I think a very insightful day. We got a lot of robust information from people. And I think it really gave people a sense that they had a role to play in moving things forward. So I would like you all to just think for a moment about a goal that you would like from this ATEND conference. If you were looking to the future, what goal would you like for ATEND?

TOM: And we will put one minute on the clock. And if you would kindly key into the chat, what's one thing that you would want ATEND to advocate for on your behalf? A minute goes by really quickly when you're thinking and typing. We have a couple of really good comments in here. And we're also grateful the ATEND leadership is here in the session with us. So Ann is saying, “A national framework of ADL to be rolled out to all higher education institutions”. Pathways15 says, “Automated alternative exam options”. Sandra says, “Let's make UDL mandatory across all universities”. And Elaine is saying, “National UDL guidelines at least”. Jen says, “Training requirements”. Jasmine says, “Let's make UDL embedded in the normal workings of the university, inclusive of the academic and professional staff with appropriate pre-service and ongoing training”. So it sounds like the theme, Ann, that we're hearing here is that universal design for learning and other supports should be something that is in the advocacy - the advocacy toolkit for ATEND. So really appreciate everybody's ideas in this one here. Thank you. Do you have thoughts about what you see in there too?

ANN: Well, I think that - I think it's difficult, I think, one of the big advantages of working with SOLAS, I think, was that we spent a lot of time bringing people with us because I think sometimes if things are imposed on people they say, oh, well, we will just keep doing it the way we want to do it but I think what people are invited to go along - to buy into it, to hear about it, to respond to it. I think they're far more likely when they hear their colleagues go along with it rather than being told to.

TOM: Absolutely. Thank you, Ann. I'm going to talk a little bit about the UDL for FET practitioners guidelines that we put together as a result of this project. On your screen is a title page for that document. It reads, “UDL for FET Practitioners. Guidance for implementing universal design for learning in Irish further education and training programs”. And there are some cartoon figures of students in further education and training, a nurse, a carpenter, student with a handbag, and people in different clothing and with different racial and ethnic make-ups and people with different ability profiles. There's a learner with a guide dog, a learner in a wheelchair, for example. And in collaboration with our FET colleagues and AHEAD Ireland, we created this practical how-to guide for people who are practitioners in the FET sector. Now, here is a brief peak into how we created it, and how you all can use the ideas from it to advocate with your classroom-based colleagues. Just a little word on the background here as well. Our initial work with disability support officers in FET recognised the way that UDL could make individual supports less standardised and more meaningful for specific learners. That research led to the publication in March of 2020 of a conceptual framework of UDL for the Irish FET sector. And that document came before the one that we're talking about. And it reflects the evolution of the theory of inclusion, the progress of legislation in Ireland around accessibility, the difference between universal design, UD, in the physical environment, and UDL, the design of interactions, and key concepts that need to be considered for the FET sector. The research helped us to adopt the cast model of UDL based on research in neuroscience and the learning sciences. It helped us to move from that cast model to engage with the FET community and get buy-in to build UDL professional learning networks. And we involved a community approach to building inclusive culture that recognises diversity of practitioners and program types. Now on your screen is a teacher, cartoon of a teacher in front of students in a classroom and the students are all thinking, "I want to be able to write." One of the students says, "I want to be able to write a blog”. One is thinking about a to-do list, one an invoice, one an application for a job, and another a curriculum vitae. We took a problem-based learning approach in this document, structuring it around several real world stories from FET practitioners who shared challenges that they addressed through the application of various UDL principles, such as a maths instructor who used a community garden project to create multiple ways for her students to engage with and counter and demonstrate their mastery of everyday calculation needs. Practitioners who read the early drafts of the guidance were thankful that it wasn't just another list of must-do items, but that the learning came through stories of people whom they actually knew. Now, on your screen is text that reads, “Starting Small. Put together a list of materials and information that you want your learners to experience in just one of the learning interactions that you have with them, whether it’s an individual activity, a module, or an entire course. Then, brainstorm ways to create plus-one format alternatives for that information”. The concepts in UDL are, if we apply them fully, a lot of work. And to help practitioners, the principles of UDL are introduced in the guide only after examples of how to start small are shared, such as the one that you see on your screen now. And an incremental, iterative approach is consistently shown in all of the examples, problems and narratives throughout the guidance. Now, on your screen the words, reflection, startup and growth tools, along with three images. One is a hand dipping into a body of water. Another is a runner in the getting ready pose at the start line. And a third is a very large tree, seen from the base looking up. Our guidance document also pauses after every story, segment of information, and how-to section, in order to ask readers to reflect on their own practices, kind of like what we're doing here in this webinar. Now, we want them to make a plan to start, try or strengthen their UDL practices, and then expand beyond their own individual efforts by reaching out to colleagues in various ways. This gets us back to the two big themes for this presentation, inclusion as community and broadening accessibility for everyone without removing needed supports. On your screen now is a screenshot of our website, the UDL for FET Resource Hub. There are small cartoons of instructors around tables with items and content, and there are a number of resources such as the UDL guide and scoping document, reflective tools, links and external resources, and video examples of UDL in FET. A key part of this project is the creation of this resource hub with examples, references and ideas to go beyond just the guidance document itself. Because the guidance document purposefully simplifies UDL to allow practitioners to take a step zero, if you will, the resource hub becomes a natural next step to help FET practitioners to expand their work, their networks, and their interactions. The resource hub also expands practitioners' community, placing them in touch with people from around the globe. Perhaps you will be part of this community one day as well. And I will turn it back over to Ann. She's going to talk about this last piece. And this is crucial, the active inclusion networks.

ANN: Yes, hi, Tom, thanks. One of the very important aspects, I think, of the cast model of UDL is the community aspect that UDL implementation is not just about one person, but it's about a community of people who think in the same way. And the active inclusion network we set up in Cork in the south of Ireland, invited people who had a passion and commitment to inclusion, to come together to set up a network to move UDL forward. We invited people to a meeting. We had no agenda. We let them set the agenda. And this led to a year-long pilot with a very clear structure. It had bi-monthly meetings where they could discuss and talk about things they wanted to talk about, share their insights, discuss difficulties or problems, come up with solutions, share their knowledge about AT or whatever particular skills that they had, but it also then had a series of seminars on areas that they had identified they needed expertise in such as mental health, executive functioning, UDL itself. So it was - it actually worked really well because I think people enjoyed coming together, they enjoyed talking together and having that sort of dialogue. We had people who had a lot of experience and people who were new, people who had a lot of knowledge about AT who could share all that expertise. But I think one of the beauties about the network was that it led to a different power balance, because people who felt that they didn't have a voice, who felt that they couldn't influence policy, were able to, I suppose, collectively share their information, do some research, and bring the data that they gathered to the leaders in the particular FET area they were working in, and they felt, I think, that their values of inclusion had been given a lot more authority and a lot more - it was given a lot more value. So they advocated very strongly for UDL for their students in the area and they got results. So it really was very effective, Tom.

TOM: Fantastic. And Ann, Elicia Ford is saying, “What a powerful quote on this slide. I wouldn't change my children for the world but I will change the world for my children”. Elicia says, “Love that”.

ANN: Yes.

TOM: So that's a wonderful segue into wrapping up for our session today. On your screen now is a cartoon of one of our colleagues, Helena, teaching a health lifestyle plan and she's pointing to a chalk board, and there are a number of students and they're all thinking, "Why does this matter to me?" And we would like to ask the same thing of all of you. We will put a couple of minutes on the clock. And let's pause one last time. Now that you've heard more about the model that we created, we would love to hear what you will take away from our time together. What's one thing you want to try, one thing that you're already doing that we have underlined as important, or one question that you still have that we can address. Let me put two minutes on the clock. You will hear a little bit of music. And I will note in the chat when the music is going to end. Thank you for sharing your ideas with us. Thank you everybody for the ideas that you've put into the chat. Ann and Roisin, there are a couple of questions here and I would love it if you would jump in and answer, but let me give a voice to some of the things that have come in as ideas in the chat as well. Jen says her takeaway is “Having the conversations and bringing everyone along for the journey”. That's an inspiring way to put that. Ann Harris says, “It's important to get the right people involved for buy-in”. That's one of the reasons why Ann was instrumental in putting together that world café and having those listening sessions. Absolutely. Jo says, “Bringing all the stakeholders to the planning table”. Meredith says, “To invest more time in a shift from doing for to supporting agency for students”. Debbie says, “Starting small and mirroring good practices in guidelines so people can relate to them”. Ann also says, “Academics want to see their students succeed and you need to work with the champions. We know who they are to be involved and then teach other academics”. Maybe this is a good pause point. Roisin and Ann, with regard to the way that we structured this, I would be interested in your ideas about how working with those UDL champions has had an impact on their colleagues in the FET sector.

ROISIN: Well, maybe I will come in there, Tom. I think when we talked to the UDL champions, they were actually quite – they were prepared to make a change in their practice. So individually and professionally, they were taking a bit of a risk, but I think when they worked as a community with other people and they talked maybe at coffee breaks or they talked more informally with their colleagues about what they were doing and the problems they were solving and how ultimately it made it a bit easier for them to do their work because the students were more engaged, they were happier, they belonged more, they felt that they were - they were learning better. I think it created a more positive atmosphere. And it was like contagious. It went from one person to the other. And more people became involved. And those people that were on the edges, maybe not that interested, were saying, "What's going on over there? That sounds good. We'll get involved in that." So it grew legs really, I think. Somebody had to start it and take a risk, and they did.

TOM: And that actually leads nicely into Julie's comment. She says, "Here is my observation. It's so good to hear that disability officers on the ground were seeing that students were involved and listened to." But here is a question for Roisin from Jasmine, “How can we encourage ownership of UDL by all levels of education, especially the decision-makers?”

ROISIN: Yes. I would love to take that question, and I think that's very important. And I think it takes a multi-faceted approach to this. And Ann talked about the champions. If it starts small you have the evidence base. Then from that, what we've done is we set up a National Advisory Committee. And that was extremely important. So we had the key decision-makers on our oversight board. Not alone did we have the oversight of our sector, we had the oversight from our Department of Education, from the quality assurance authority of Ireland, of the National Disability Authority, the National Special Education Authority, all the management boards and all the funding organisations at one table. So we had about 20 different organisations. But what moved it along was that we had the evidence base on the ground. We had the pilots, we had the community of practice, we had the evidence that was available across the world, we had the cast model. And I think it was for me - and Ann probably has a different focus with regard to on the ground - but for me from a policy perspective it was having that oversight structure and having a project management approach to that, and then having a subcommittee where we were able to get into the detail of what actually the voice of the student wished to bring forward and the voice of the practitioner, and we had - we had linked in with our learner voice project which operates across our sector where we work across getting views of our learner voice. So it was sort of bringing everything together into one place, but for me it would not be possible without having that formal oversight committee, which was in place at a very senior level. We brought - just one last point, when we looked for nominations for that committee, we asked for nominations by the CEO of those organisations. So we got commitment at a very early stage and took a small approach and we kept saying there's a further shore reachable from here. So thank you.

TOM: And Roisin that actually chimes really well with two comments that we have in the chat. Ann Harris says, “A speaker on Wednesday discussed having their pro-VC, their Vice Chancellor, involved and this had a remarkable effect on the take-up. It is amazing when you have your senior leaders at the table, what push happens”. Brandon is also saying, “Ensuring everyone is on board and understands that UDL should be the starting point applicable to all learners, rather than a reactive response to some”. So both of those chime really well with the ideas that you're sharing there. Beth is sharing her takeaway here too, “Problem-based learning allows for a bottom-up approach to addressing learning needs. The learners come up with their own solutions, not us trying to provide what we think would be their solutions”. And that's a really good note on which to end this part of our conversation, because we treated our FET practitioner colleagues as learners themselves. We didn't want to give them yet another dry, boring policy manual but we wanted to share some stories where they could take lessons away and they could see themselves in those stories. I would like to turn it over to Ann. She has two calls to action for you to end our session today.

ANN: Yes, we're looking at a picture on the screen of - it's a gay pride parade where everybody is campaigning for justice, and they look like they belong, they look like they are having a great time. And I think they're obviously changing the world. And I think that's what we have to do, a call for action. Whether you have an official seat at a leadership meeting or not, doesn't matter. Your voice matters. It may sound counterintuitive but when we advocate for how to lower barriers for everybody, we clear the way for us to be able to spend more time and energy on the individual supports where they will do the most good. And get out of the way of those who would rather we didn't do for them in the first place. We also make it more likely that our colleagues will come to us, and this is what happens when they encounter barriers themselves. And that's the goal of adopting a UDL approach. So I think the disability officers are well placed in the sector to provide all that advice. So we're now showing you on screen a picture of a network and the success factors of the network, and it actually shows people talking together, doing work together, filling in a sort of a board, and these are people with a shared passion, they're all different perspectives, they don't have to be in the same role, they're all working together towards a shared goal. They have values and commitment and they're focused. So they're all working together as a community supporting each other. And I think that is really, really important. So think of inclusion as a means of creating connections and community. In your roles as disability support professionals, you are best positioned to help your colleagues identify and lower barriers, not only for the students but also for themselves. Help them to see how a more inclusive environment helps us just as much as it helps students. So yes. So I think I want to say thank you very much. It was really brilliant, even though we had to get up at 2 o'clock in the morning, I really enjoyed. I'm sorry we missed the rest of your conference. It sounds like it was really very productive and very enjoyable. Really, thank you very much for inviting us all and enjoy the rest of your conference. And perhaps next year we will get there and meet each other in person. Thank you. Goodbye.

ANTHONY: On behalf of everyone here at Pathways today I would really like to thank you all so much for this very important presentation. I'm particularly taken by the notion of practitioners as agents of change. And I think that's a really significant concept for us to bear in mind. We often get so caught up in the work we do one-on-one with students and advocating at an individual level that sometimes we overlook the fact that what we do have the capacity to do is bring our expertise into the institution to advocate for change. And I've often thought in my role that my biggest task is actually to get the university out of the way and let students express their abilities, and that's why years ago I switched the name for my service from Disability Support Service to accessAbility. What we do is we get the university out of the way so students can express their innate abilities and we advocate at a systemic level for the embedding of universal design, and the continual process of change, and I think you all today have really reminded us very much of that, and our opportunity to keep fighting the good fight as agents of change, justice can rise up. I was just looking for the quote. Justice can rise up. And I think that's a beautiful note on which to end, Roisin. Thank you for sharing \*\* 1.06.02 your poem with us all. For someone who is not disposed to poetry, you said that's a pretty nice piece of poetry to bring forward. So thank you. Thank you, Ann, and thank you Tom. Thank you for getting up in the middle of the night or joining us in the evening. We appreciate that. I wish you a pleasant sleep, when you get back to bed. There's a couple of little questions that are here, not little, but it's an important question, actually, and it builds on the theme. What is the right language to use, disability or accessibility or access or students with disability or disabled or something else? How can we ensure the correct choice of words are reflected in our work, operations, governance and marketing?

TOM: And I caught that one while we were having the presentation as well. And we prefer to talk about students with disabilities, and use person first language so that the focus is on the human being and not on the disability barrier itself. Especially because disability barriers are not medical challenges. They're actually barriers in our environments, in the way that places and things and interactions are designed. And if we can make the argument that it's not disabled people, but it's people who have disability barriers that we can design around or we can address, that's the kind of language that we want to use. Now, there are many communities who embrace the label. So there's a deaf community, there's a we are disabled people community. So one response is not going to fit everybody's self-image or self-labelling. At the same time when I'm advocating on behalf of others - and I've heard Ann and Roisin saying this as well - that we should be talking about the individuals themselves, and there's some wonderful ideas in the chat from Joe Holland Society creates the disabilities, and those are ideas that we can use as responses to that question. So thank you, Anthony, for giving voice to that question from the Q&A.

ANTHONY: Great. Thank you, Tom. I will say good night to you all, and thank you once again on behalf of ATEND and the NDCO program in Australia, and all of the 124 people that are here today sharing this journey with us. Thank you very much.

ROISIN: Thank you.

TOM: Thank you. Enjoy the rest of the conference.

ANN: Bye.

ANTHONY: Thank you. Bye.