



Mature Student Retention Begins Before Entry...



Thomond Coogan:
Co-Ordinator
Mature Years' Access Courses

Ronan Murphy:
Mature Students' Adviser
UCD Access & Lifelong Learning

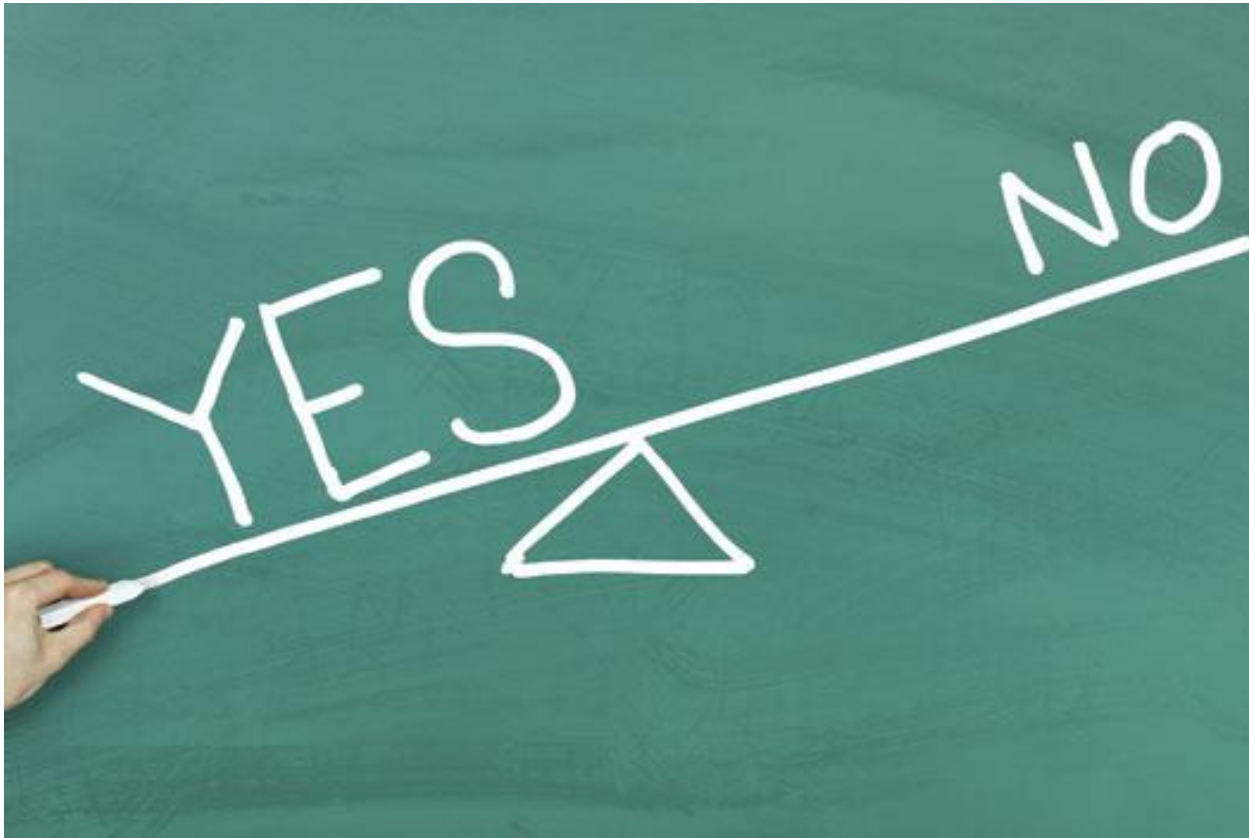


Context

Land of Saints and Scholars

Estimated national participation rate
(new entrants aged 18–20) **52%**

Full-time mature entrants to higher education
(as % of all new entrants) **13%**



As an acknowledged 'public good' university education is not consumed equally



You are **at least 8 times more likely...**



To progress to higher education as a school leaver ...



...than as a mature student





If you live here you are 7 times more likely to go to college ...



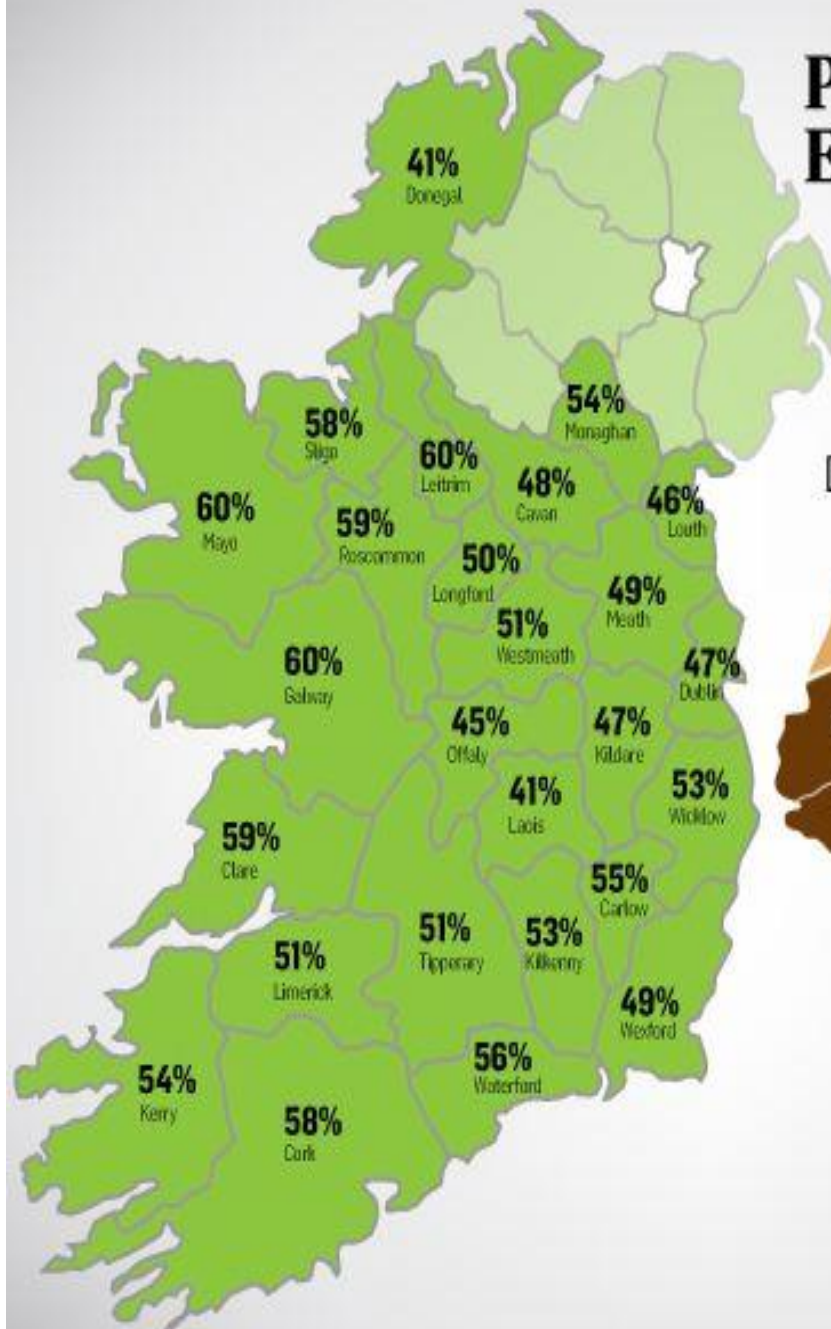


... than if you live here





Progression to Higher Education Institutions



Dublin Avg. **47%**



| | |
|-----------|-----|
| Dublin 1 | 23% |
| Dublin 2 | 26% |
| Dublin 3 | 60% |
| Dublin 4 | 84% |
| Dublin 5 | 47% |
| Dublin 6 | 99% |
| Dublin 6W | 82% |
| Dublin 7 | 41% |
| Dublin 8 | 28% |
| Dublin 9 | 55% |
| Dublin 10 | 16% |
| Dublin 11 | 28% |
| Dublin 12 | 37% |
| Dublin 13 | 36% |
| Dublin 14 | 76% |
| Dublin 15 | 47% |
| Dublin 16 | 79% |
| Dublin 17 | 15% |
| Dublin 18 | 58% |
| Dublin 20 | 32% |
| Dublin 22 | 26% |
| Dublin 24 | 29% |
| Dublin Co | 53% |

Source: hea.ie



Competition



Participation in Irish higher education has continued to increase year on year

Increased demand = increased competition



Progression rates

One in six students in the higher education system is failing to progress past their first year





HEA report on Retention 2010: prior educational attainment is the greatest influence on successful progression





"Le thriller de l'année" Télérama.



Usual Suspects

un film de Bryan Singer



UCD – Mature Student Entry



For matures: three routes

- Merit
- Access Courses
- MSAP



UCD Access Courses

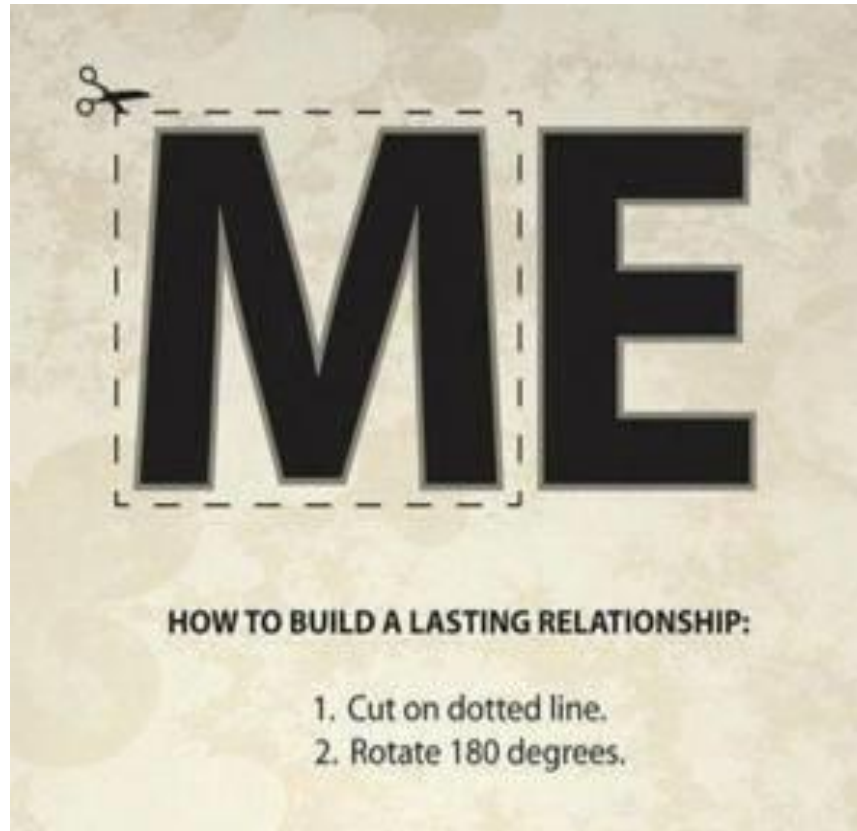
Access to Arts & Human Sciences

*Access to Science, Engineering &
Agriculture*





So what?





... Putting the We in Retention

WE

Me

The UnUsual Suspects





Access participants



**FISH
OUT OF
WATER**



Access participants – who are they?

Notice me...





Transition





Food for the brain

I feel alive for the first time – my brain feels alert. I'm snapping back in to action and I love it. And my children are looking at me differently. It's like I have something to say!





Elements in Access that contribute to retention

Show me how to play the game ...






Social





Social

A woman with short blonde hair, smiling, is holding a large blue rectangular sign. The sign contains white text. She is wearing blue jeans. The background is a plain, light grey.

*Meeting like-minded
people and having a
cuppa after class to
keep the buzz going!*

Elements in Access that contribute to Retention





UCD Access Courses

*I need the confidence
to take the next step*





UCD Access Courses



*I need a plan and
some help in getting
there*



Academic skills



I feel that I have been equipped with a study skills survival guide that will get me through any amount of academic challenges



There's more to learning than earning!

Positive self-concept
Problem solving skills
Better relationships
Social networks





Achieving the impossible



*Going to university
for me seemed like
an impossible
dream.*

*It was always at the
back of my mind but
I couldn't figure out
how to get there*



Ingredients to improve retention

GREAT DREAM

Ten keys to happier living

- GIVING**  Do things for others
- RELATING**  Connect with people
- EXERCISING**  Take care of your body
- APPRECIATING**  Notice the world around
- TRYING OUT**  Keep learning new things
- DIRECTION**  Have goals to look forward to
- RESILIENCE**  Find ways to bounce back
- EMOTION**  Take a positive approach
- ACCEPTANCE**  Be comfortable with who you are
- MEANING**  Be part of something bigger

ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

www.actionforhappiness.org

Connecting with people

Learning new things

Having direction/purpose

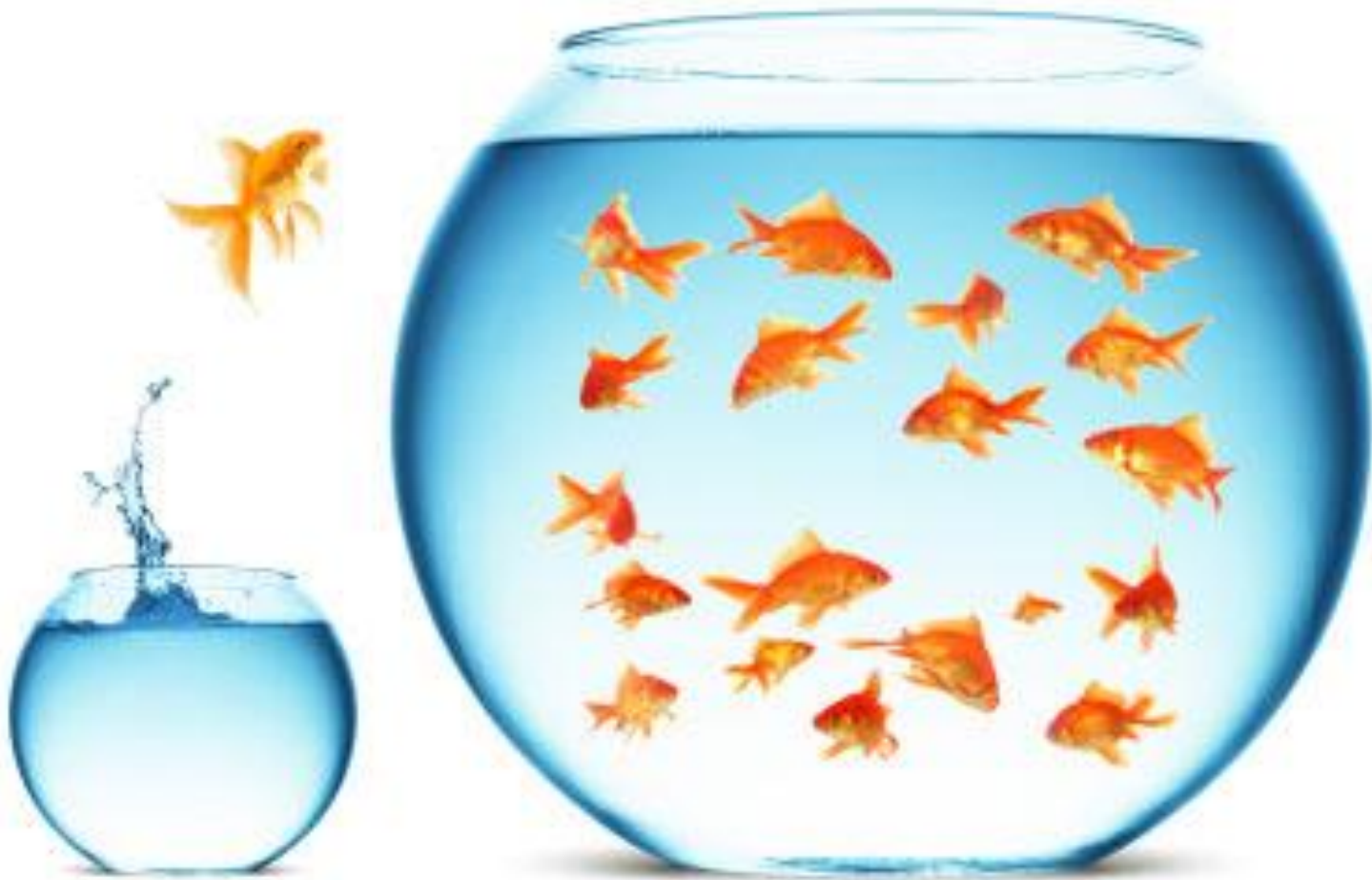
Build resilience

Develop identity as learner

Consolidate strengths



Putting the me into we....





Societal benefits



- First generation entrants
- Bringing culture and expectations into under-represented homes
- New role models munity and social networks
- Social cohesion
- Physical and mental health benefits

Mature Student Retention Begins Before Entry

Ronan Murphy
UCD Mature Students' Adviser
March 2016



Higher Education Authority Ireland

- 2010 HEA Study shows that the national average for non-progression for mature years students in Irish universities is 12%.
- Progression being progress to the following year.
- UCD's MY Student non-progression rate is between 6.5% and 7.6 %



Mature Student Retention



Who Are Mature Students in UCD

Those who have no third level experience or may not have completed secondary school

Those who have some association with third level

Those who come into UCD on secondary school results

Those who have degrees but are studying to a second undergraduate degree



Overview MY Students UCD/Ireland

| | Dr. Bairbre Fleming 2013 UCD Survey | MSI all Ireland 2103 Survey |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| | 438 /926 mature students surveyed responded | Approximately 2,000 respondents |
| Gender | 58% F 42%M | 55% F /45% M |
| Mean age | 36.4 | 46.5 |
| Median age | 32 | 34/35 |
| Parents did not complete 3 rd level | 80% | 80% |
| Married or w/partner | 40% | 36% |
| Child Dependents | 37% | 43% |
| Adult Dependent | | 45% |
| Receiving state financial assistance | 50% | 60% |
| Out of education more than 3 years | | 59% |
| No participation in post-secondary education before entering HE | 32% | 27% |
| Finances difficult or precarious | | 60% -66% |



MY Entering and Non-Progression

| | Year | Year |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|
| | 2013 | 2014 |
| Entering UCD 1st years | <u>153</u> | <u>157</u> |
| 1st year withdrawal | 4 (2.6) | 3 (1.9%) |



Access to Degree

2011 – 12

Access progressing into
UCD n=88

- 88 Completed 1st year of undergraduate degree (0% non-progression)

2012 – 13

Access progression into
UCD n=81

- 78/79 Completed 1st year of undergraduate degree (2.5% - 3.7% non-progression)



March Year 2 (4th semester)

| | 2013/2014 | 2014/2015 | 2015/2016 |
|---|-----------|------------|-----------|
| New Entrants | 153 | 157 | |
| Total MY Students | | 851 | 801 |
| 13/14 New Entrants Not Registered March 14/15 | | 17 (11.1%) | |
| 14/15 New Entrants Not Registered March 15/16 | | | 15 (9.6%) |



March Year 2 (4th semester)

2013/2014 (153/851) (17)

2014/2015 (157/801) (15)

3 Students were on a Leave of Absence

3 Students were on a Leave of Absence

3 Students were on maternity leave

1 was on a medical leave

1 student had come in as a transfer student in 2013 and had graduated.

1 is active but probably not engaged.

10 Actual Non-Progression = 6.5%

Max 12 Actual Non-Progression = 7.6%



Keys to Retention

Communication – targeted, early, often and concisely

Engagement – make mature students feel part of the campus

Support – ensure mature students know which supports are available and how to access them

Information –

Information Delivery

Application and Affirmation

- What is important for the entering mature student is to affirm that the leap of faith they made by applying to and accepting a place in higher education is reasonable and an attainable goal
- This affirmation to the entering mature student needs to make transparent that they are not alone, that they can succeed and that others like them have completed the course having come from similar circumstances, mindsets and backgrounds



Mature Students' Adviser

- 1st and perhaps most important support as it is from this office that institutional supports flow.
- This service also provides one-to-one advice regarding academic, social, personal or financial concerns and is an important first engagement with the university



Writing Academy

- 2-3 day programme bringing new mature years entrants up to speed on writing, critical thinking, library use and study techniques and alleviates some of the anxiety surrounding writing for 3rd level



Mathematics Support

In collaboration with our Mathematics Support Centre mature years students entering degrees with math are offered a 2 day mathematics refresher programme



Mature Student Orientation Day

All entering mature students are invited to a half day orientation programme held on the Saturday before the official university orientation

This event showcases

- UCD student services
- Provides an opportunity for mature students to meet other mature students within and without their academic discipline
- Have a campus tour
- Engage with a student panel Q&A with current mature students



Mature Student Orientation Day



The process/programme of retention

These targeted programmes are designed to get the mature students past the first hurdles regarding

- Their questioning of their academic ability
- Feeling isolated as the only mature student
- Having a grasp of the campus and its services
- Alerting them to the one-to-one service provided by my office

An awareness of the different supports especially is essential for retention



The process/programme of retention

Once term begins regular targeted communication through email and social media especially through the first 6 weeks of academic term

Connection with a student mature student society



Retention

- A January 2016 Irish Times study on retention rates for all HEI in Ireland suggested a retention rate of 85% or so for UCD
- In accordance with the data shown previously I believe it is safe to say that mature years students in UCD have a non-progression rate of 7.5% at the top margin or a retention/persistence rate of 92.5% at a minimum.



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go raibh maith agaibh

