

CREATIVE & INNOVATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING FOR EDUCATORS

5 ECTS PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE | NFQ LEVEL 9 | UCD ACCREDITED

What

An experiential, practice-based course for educators who want to think differently, and lead change, together.

When

Online weekly live session* 18:30 - 20:30

Thursday 24th September - Thursday 19th November

*No live class the week of 26th Oct

[Book a call \(01\) 716 2065](tel:017162065)



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Course Overview

Education's most complex challenges don't have simple answers, and they won't get solved by one person working alone.

This fully online, eight session programme brings together educators from different contexts, spanning primary through community to higher education. You might arrive with a real problem from your own setting, or simply a curiosity about a stubborn challenge in the system you would like to understand better.

You'll build the confidence, agency and skills to solve problems collaboratively, working alongside people who see things differently to you.

You'll leave with more than fresh thinking: curiosity, a practical design toolkit, a community of educators from across the sector, and the mindset and experience to lead change, whatever your context.

Because the questions worth asking don't have easy answers, and the best ones are rarely asked alone.

Format

Fully online.

8 live sessions over 9 weeks.

Dates & Times

Thursday 24th Sept - Thursday 19th November

18:30 - 20:30 (Irish time)

*No live class the week of 26th Oct





Who is this course for?

This course is for people working in education who see problems worth solving in their own classrooms, schools, or institutions, and want to work through them alongside people from other parts of the system.

School leaders

Principals, deputies, and heads of department carrying decisions about culture, curriculum and change in their schools.

Classroom teachers

Educators at any level who want practical tools for the messy, human problems that they deal with in their classrooms or lecture theatres.

Higher education staff

Academic and professional staff working through complexity in teaching, research, or institutional life.

Community and further education

Youth workers, community educators, and further education staff.

Learning and development specialists

Trainers and L&D professionals shaping how others learn.

For any person working in education who shares our conviction that education can and should be better

Curriculum and assessment are being reimaged. Agency, creativity, and wellbeing are emerging as defining outcomes of quality education. AI is reshaping how we teach and learn. And there's real momentum around inclusion and belonging in all sectors of education.

These aren't challenges to survive, they're opportunities to build something better.

This is for anyone who wants to work through the opportunity and complexity alongside others and shape the future of education.

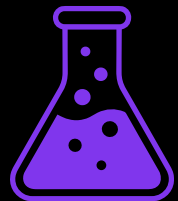
Want to double check if this course is for you?

[Book a call with our facilitation specialist](#)



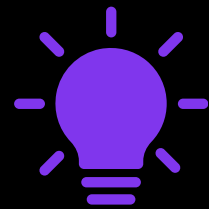
Learning Outcomes

By the end of this programme, you won't just think about complex problems and opportunities differently, you'll have the tools, the confidence, and the community to act on them.



Get comfortable with ambiguity

Sit with complexity instead of rushing to answers, test ideas before you're sure they'll work, and build the habit of reflecting on what each attempt, successful or not, actually taught you.



Think like a designer

Be guided through the stages of human-centred design on a problem of your choosing. Leave with a repeatable way to tackle any complex problem, one that gets you and others to root causes, not just surface symptoms



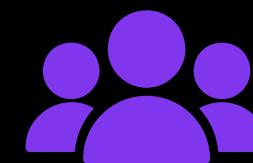
Solve problems together

Learn how to turn a room full of different perspectives into real momentum, facilitating creative collaboration, navigating group dynamics with skill, and co-creating solutions alongside the people a problem actually affects.



See challenges differently

Build creative confidence by reconnecting with your innate playfulness and curiosity. Explore how reframing challenges and spotting opportunities can unlock your next steps.



Experience the collective

Unlock the insight and experience of a diverse group to build something better together. Be part of a community that outlasts the programme itself.



Course Content

Session 1: Creative Mindset

Who gets to be creative, and what gets in the way?

Reconnect with your own creative confidence, explore the mindset shifts that make risk-taking possible, and start building the psychological safety the whole cohort will need to think freely together.

Session 2: Creative Collaboration

How do you create the conditions for others to think creatively with you?

Discover what makes creative collaboration flourish. Learn practical facilitation techniques, harness the power of diverse perspectives, and develop the skills to create environments where ideas can grow.

Session 3*: Human-Centred Design, Understand & Empathise

How do real people experience the problem?

Introduction to a well-established, internationally recognised method for working through complex, wicked problems collaboratively. Learn how to move beyond assumptions by developing empathy, listening deeply, and uncovering the real needs behind complex educational challenges. Begin your design thinking journey by seeing problems through fresh eyes.

Session 4: Define the real problem

What is the root problem worth solving?

Synthesise everything you've learned from your empathy. Great solutions begin with the right question. Learn how to turn your observations into insights, reframe challenges, and define meaningful opportunities for change before jumping to solutions.

*From Session 3 onwards you will identify a particular challenge in your context for an applied project.



Course Content

Session 5*: Ideate

What could we do? What will we do?

Stretch your thinking through creative ideation techniques that generate fresh possibilities. Learn how to move from many ideas to the ones with the greatest potential to create meaningful impact. Evaluate and select the most promising concepts to prototype through convergent thinking.

Session 6*: Prototype & Test

How do we make our thinking tangible enough to learn from?

Discover how experimentation accelerates learning. Test your ideas, gather meaningful feedback, and refine your solution through an iterative design process that values learning over perfection.

Session 7: Share your Learning Story

What did you learn, and how will you inspire others?

Share the journey you've taken, from exploring a complex challenge to developing and testing new ideas. Celebrate your learning with the cohort while discovering how storytelling can help you communicate ideas, influence others, and build momentum for change.

Session 8: Reflect & What's Next

What did this experience make possible, and what will you do with it?

Look back on your learning journey, reflect on what has changed in your thinking, and identify how you'll apply your new approaches in your own context. Explore ways to stay connected with a growing community of educators who are committed to shaping the future of education together.

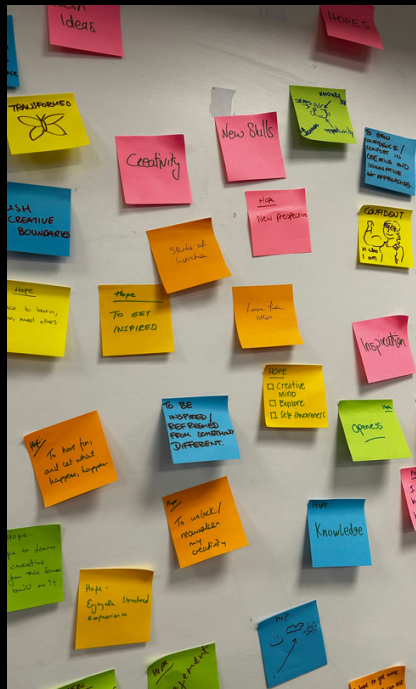
*Note there will be no live class the week between Session 5 and 6 (Thursday 29th Oct) but you will have a short independent activity to complete this week.



More than a course, it's the IA Way

The UCD Innovation Academy delivers transformational education experiences both in-person and online.

Our hands-on approach goes far beyond traditional education. Our 'IA' Way focuses on learning through doing, working closely with others, and developing the mindset & skills needed to navigate change with confidence.

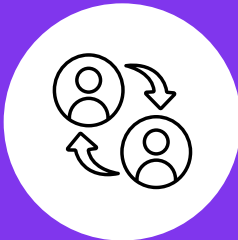


You can read more about the UCD IA on our website here.

Interactive & Experiential Learning



Expert Facilitators



Peer Learning



Learn through Doing



Real World Challenges



Playful & Surprising



Community

Deepen your Learning:

- **Weekly Applied Challenge:** After each live session you will be given a small real-world opportunity to apply your learning in your own context.
- **Resource Bank:** Curated resources and extra materials for deeper exploration and discovery.
- **Reflective Practice:** Guided questions to help you pause, reflect and make sense of your learning.



What to expect?

Participation in live sessions.

This is a live, online, and interactive course, not a lecture to watch with your camera off.

We are intentional in the design of the live online sessions to maximise the opportunity to learn from and with each other.

What does this mean for you?



Camera on, Mic enabled.

Show up ready to talk, listen, and think out loud together.



Group Work

Expect to be paired and grouped for different tasks throughout the course.



Breakout Rooms

Sessions will move between whole group and smaller breakouts

Assessment

This is a fully accredited NQF Level 9, 5 ECTS, course. It is pass / fail.

Attendance & Participation: Being present at and within live sessions*.

Weekly Learning Summary: A regular capture of your key insights and reflections in a format that suits you best.

Presentation: One presentation during a live session.

Personal Reflection: 2 weeks post the class, you will share personal reflection on the overall experience.

*We know life is busy so there is some discretion for occasional missed class.



Meet your facilitators

All of our facilitators at the UCD Innovation Academy are practicing educators with many years experience of designing and delivering innovative education to diverse groups of learners.



innovation.academy@ucd.ie



[Book a Call](#)



Rosie Leonard-Kane

Rosie is an educator and facilitator who loves bringing people together to explore big questions in education. A qualified post-primary teacher, former school leader and education network lead, she has spent her career supporting educators to learn, connect and grow. She creates playful, collaborative learning experiences that build creative confidence, meaningful connections and communities of practice.



Jacinta Owens

Jacinta is an experiential learning designer and facilitator dedicated to helping people discover, uncover, and recover their innate creativity. Using practical, engaging tools and techniques, she creates learning environments that inspire fresh thinking and meaningful change. Her work has supported education professionals in Ireland and around the world, including Malaysia, the Netherlands, and Vietnam.



Niall Walsh

Niall is a facilitator and experiential learning designer who creates engaging, energising experiences grounded in genuine human connection. His work invites people to slow down, notice what is often overlooked and approach challenges with creativity, curiosity and openness. He has helped shape cultures of learning with students, educators and leaders in Ireland, India and other parts of Asia, who have influenced his own practice in turn.



Testimonials from Educators

As a result of doing this course, I've been able to put a structure on my role, and market myself differently, and now I'm a guest presenter in 30 modules or programs across the university.

In doing this course I felt supported in what I was trying to do. I found myself within a dynamic culture of change. We were taught in an experiential and engaging way with a lot of reflection and two-way conversations. It was community-driven.

David Delaney, UCD Educator, Wellness and Community projects; Motivational speaker

The people who were on this course were from all walks of life, not just working in formal education. This was a real plus. The idea generation and the inspiration from collaborating with this group has been a massive resource. It feels like we're friends now for life.

Betty O'Neill Dixon, Secondary School Teacher, Scoil Chonglais, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow

I think there can be a misconception that what's interesting can't be useful and vice versa. This programme is both.

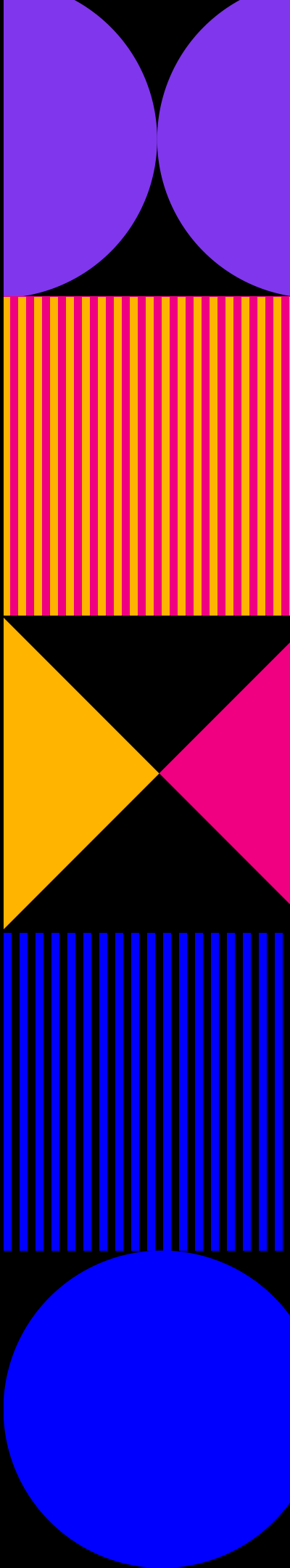
Ailish O'Halloran, Deputy Provost BDIC, UCD

This course has enriched and informed the way I teach. I'm now looking for ways to tap into each student's individual creativity. This course gave me the affirmation that you don't have to do everything the way it's always been done.

Chris Hickson, Primary School Teacher, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.

What attracted me to the course was the desire to foster creativity in education. I believe that if we are truly serious about our role as educators and principals, if we're serious about our teaching and learning priorities, this course should be something that all principals or school leaders take part in.

John Hayes, Principal Kildare Town Community School





Fees

Professional Certificate in Creative and Innovative Problem Solving for Educators:
€900 EU / €1800 Non-EU

Limited 25% bursaries available for applications received before August 21st

~~€900~~ instead €675

Enrolling as a team?

A problem shared is a problem halved as they say, so we would love to encourage you to sign up with some colleagues from your same institution.

Why?

- A shared learning opportunity
- Multiply your impact
- Develop a shared language and shared approach to collaborative problem solving



Collective action

Today's biggest problems require groups capable of thinking together, drawing on diverse perspectives and creating solutions that no single person could reach alone.

This programme is built on that same premise.

The mindset matters as much as, if not more than, any specific tool or method, because mindset is what travels with you.

You'll leave with a greater sense of personal agency to lead change in your own setting, whether that's a single classroom or an entire institution or network.

And you won't be doing it alone: you're joining us, and educators like you across the sector, in the work of education transformation.

We can't wait to meet you.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Join one of our upcoming info sessions to hear more about the course, meet a facilitator and have your questions answered.

[SIGN UP FOR INFO SESSION](#)

This is the first of our new suite of Educator programmes in 2026-2027.

Register your interest now to be the first to hear about our next releases.

- Entrepreneurial Mindset & Application for Educators
- Applied Action Learning for Educators

[APPLY NOW](#)

