MTU Library's Assignment Toolkit

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Image sourced from the MTU Library Assignment Toolkit (2023)

What is the Assignment Toolkit

The MTU Library Assignment Toolkit consists of a suite of 8 online modules that guide students through the assignment completion process, while also providing a grounding in academic integrity.

The modules include the following:

- **Getting to Know Your Library**
- **Critical Thinking Skills**
- **Misinformation**
- **Effective Searching**
- **Assignment Planning & Reading**
- **Understanding Plagiarism**
- **Assignment Writing**
- **Referencing**

Images sourced from the MTU Library Assignment Toolkit, (2023)

Project Background

- The Assignment Toolkit is the culmination of two years of work by the **MTU Library Learning Community.**

- The MTU Library Learning Community is one of many Learning Communities supported by the University's Teaching & Learning Unit.

- The project came about as a successful submission to a

- **2019 SATLE funding call** entitled: ***Developing Disciplinary Excellence in Learning, Teaching and Assessment.***

- The project was a collaborative process involving the **Library Learning Community**; *Le Chéile (*a section of the MTU Teaching & Learning Unit), a team of **Student Collaborators** and the **Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning.**
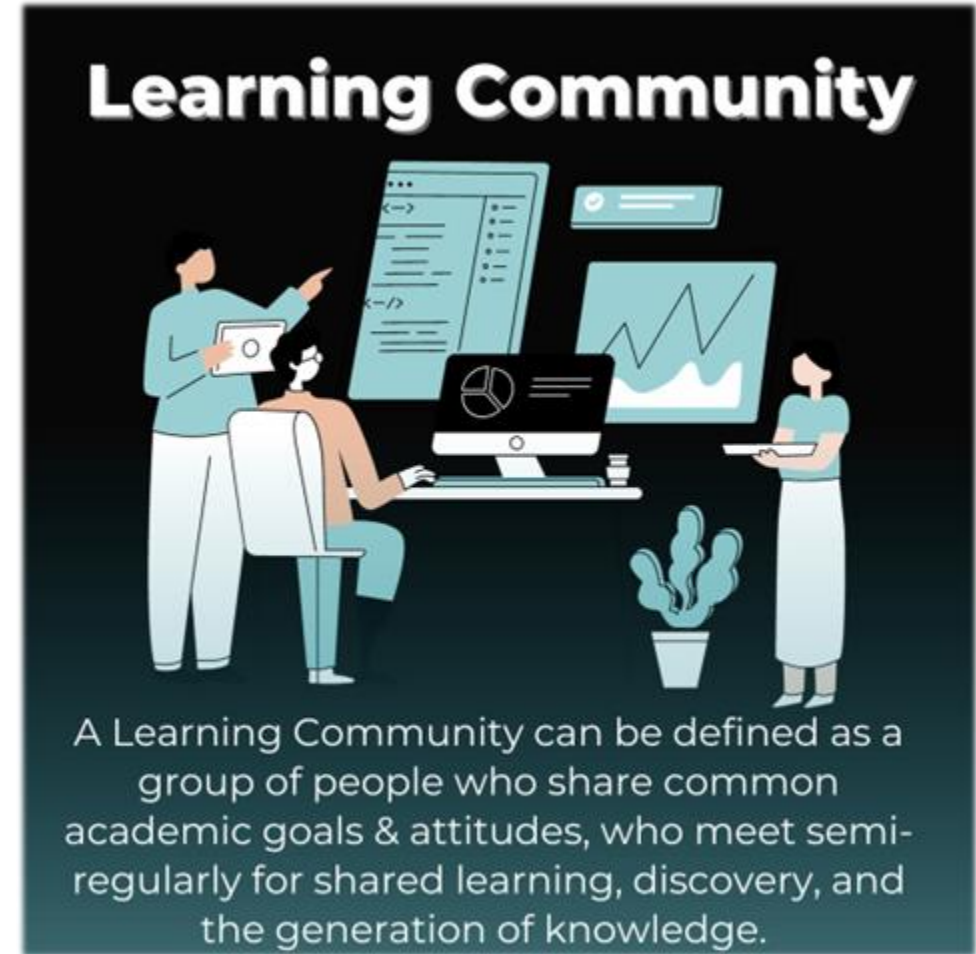
MTU TLU: *Learning Communities Overview*.
Available at: https://tlu.cit.ie/learning-communities-overview
(Accessed: 22nd Sept. 2023 2023).

Choosing a suitable platform

- The Library Learning Community set about developing an application that would enhance and extend information literacy delivery and engagement across all MTU campuses.

- Various technological solutions were reviewed to best support students through the assignment completion process.

- The concept of an online tool that students could freely access from anywhere, at any time emerged as being most beneficial.

- The Learning Community embraced the idea of a fully **Open Educational Resource (OER).**

- By designing content in OER format, modules within the Toolkit could be freely re-used, re-purposed and adapted by other academic institutions.

Image sourced from Microsoft PowerPoint Stock Images (2023)
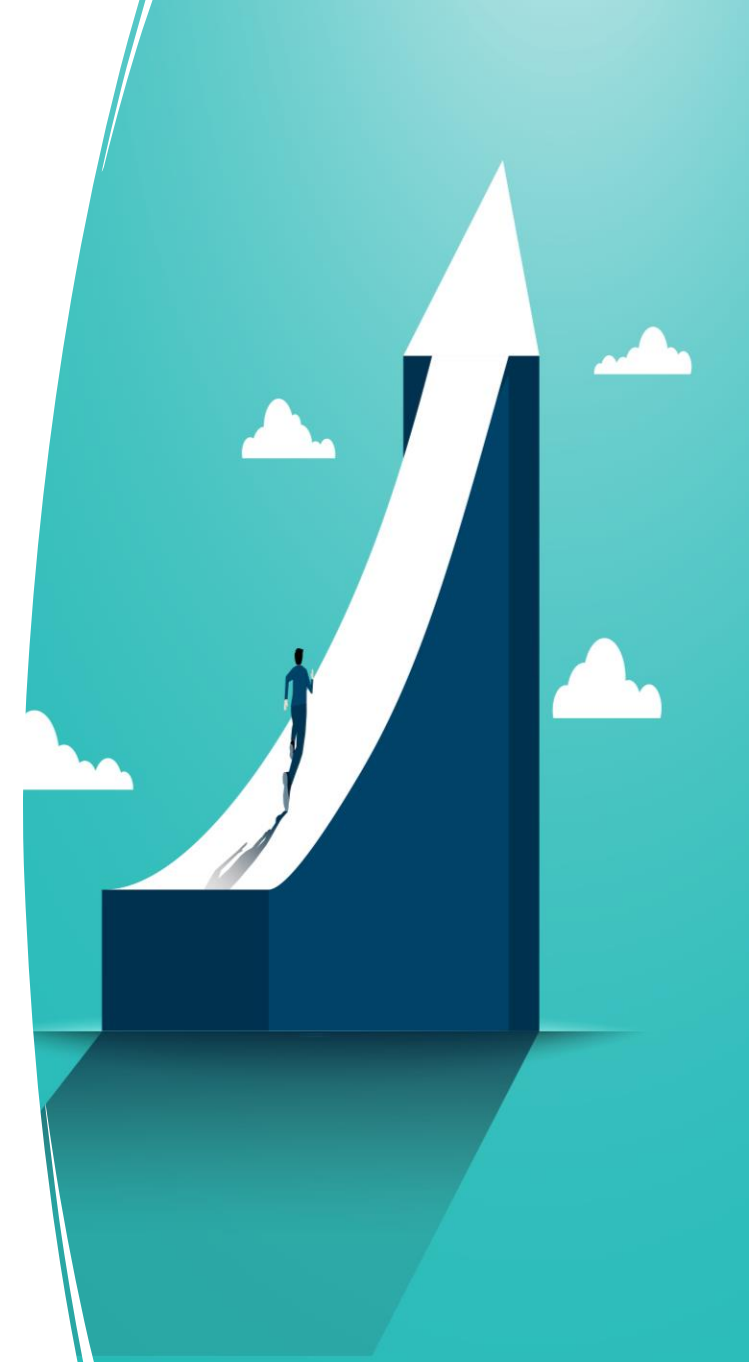
Walking the Talk

From the beginning, the project sought to be as **Student-Centric** as possible. This could be achieved through a Student Staff Partnership.

Students would become co-creators and working partners on the project.

The Learning Community sought to create a resource that was not only evidence-based but was also responsive to the stated needs of students & lecturing staff.

Our aim was to actively listen to students and lecturers, and not simply anticipate the information literacy needs of those stakeholders.

By collaborating with students, the Toolkit had the potential to become more appealing to our intended audience and ultimately more impactful.

Assessing the need for a Toolkit

Our first step was to conduct surveys of **Students** and **Staff**.

This would establish where information literacy needs were most acute. These could then be prioritised within the Toolkit.

617 Students and **94** Staff responded to the survey.

<u>Significant points emerged from surveys:</u>

❑ Students & Staff had very different perceptions of the quality of student coursework.

❑ Lecturing staff were the primary source of information for students (*Ranking higher than *Google,* Social Media & other information sources.

❑ There was an apparent lack of understanding among staff & students about the library's role and supports available.

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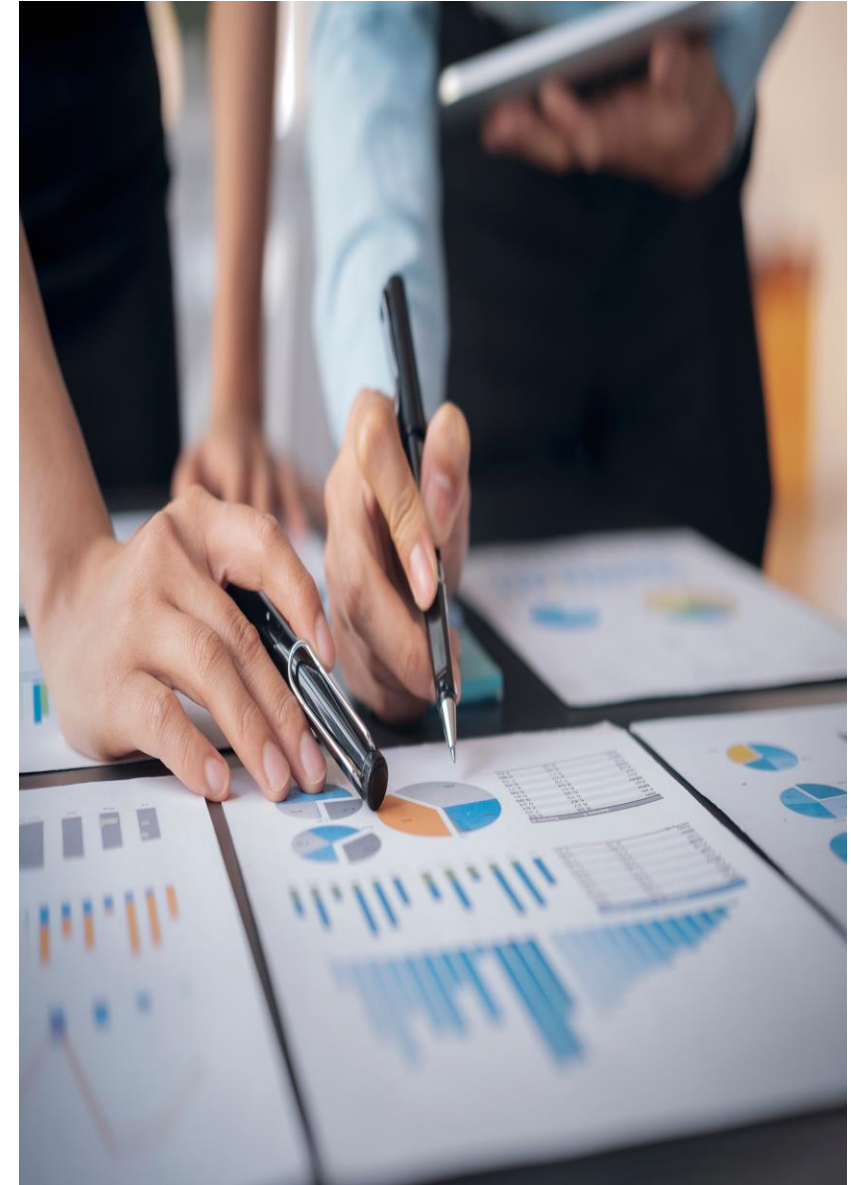
Acting on the Survey Results

-   Survey results clarified and reinforced the need for an Assignment Toolkit

-   Reflecting on the data, library staff audited and re-evaluated their own skill sets and undertook supplementary training on areas such as marketing, communication, and pedagogical upskilling.

-   The next step was to collaborate with staff from Le Chéile, to recruit students who would work as partners to develop content for the Toolkit.

-   Five students were eventually recruited to collaborate on the project. The relationship between library staff & student partners started off on an equal footing from the beginning.

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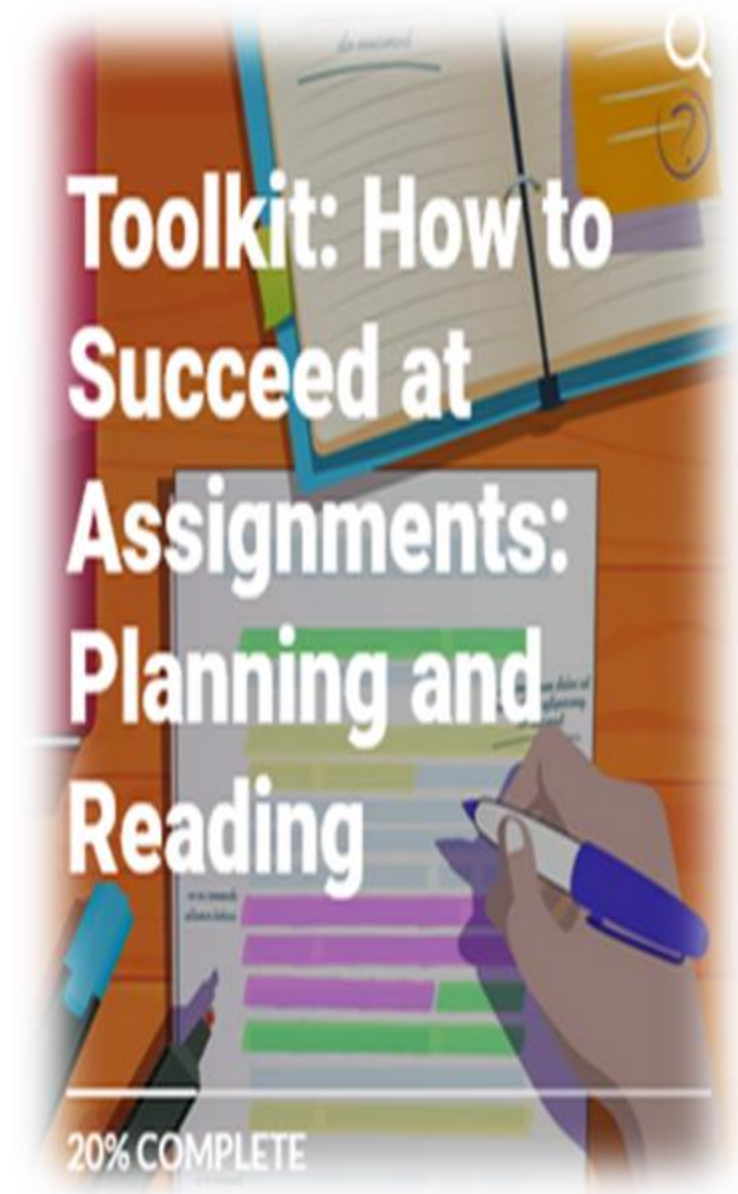
Making content relevant to Students

Examples from everyday life

Examples from everyday life were used to support the points made in the modules. For example, the Plagiarism module utilises examples from Popular Music and Art.

Knowing your Audience

The use of clear, concise, jargon-free, student-friendly syntax was essential.

Adding Appeal

Once content had been developed, colleagues from the Department of Technology-Enhanced Learning (TEL), were tasked with incorporating interactive digital design and graphics.

Plagiarism

What you should know

The Final Product

- In October 2021, the Assignment Toolkit was launched. Eight online modules were made available, with each addressing key information literacy skills.

- Each module was shaped by the insights, experience and information offered by students, academic staff, and library staff.

- This inclusive approach resulted in a suite of interactive digital guides which is now used widely by MTU students and staff.

- Modules are self-paced and can be completed individually or as a full suite, depending on student information literacy requirements during term.

- MTU students can access the Toolkit from the Canvas dashboard or via the Library website.

Images from the MTU Library Assignment Toolkit (2023)

The Final Product - Continued

- Over 500 students have already enrolled in modules within the Toolkit, with approximately 28,000 views of the Toolkit to date.

- From the start of this term, students are automatically enrolled on the Toolkit. This should encourage further use of the resource by students & staff.

- Library staff have partnered with academic colleagues to embed the Assignment Toolkit into specific academic courses. This involves library staff working alongside academic staff to utilise content within the Toolkit as a complimentary learning aid for students.

- We anticipate that a growing number of academic staff will choose to embed content from the Toolkit within courses going forward. This is one of our key objectives.

Getting To Know Your Library

Critical Thinking Skills

Understanding Plagiarism

Effective Searching

Assignments: Planning & Reading

Misinformation & News Media

Assignments: Writing

Referencing

Images from the MTU Library Assignment Toolkit (2023)

Looking Forward

- From September 2023, Digital Badges are being awarded to students that complete specific Assignment Toolkit modules and receive a grade of at least 80% in module tests.

- A higher-grade Digital Badge will be awarded to those students that successfully complete all Assignment Toolkit modules.

- Digital Badges should further broaden the appeal of the Toolkit among students and staff.

- There has been significant interest by other Academic Libraries in the Assignment Toolkit. A number of these have accessed the Open Access version of the Toolkit and have adapted this for use within their own institutions.

Thank you for your time.

Access the Open Access Version of the Toolkit

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PLEASE CONTACT ME IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS

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