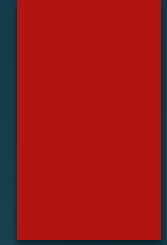




School of Social Work and Social Policy

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES TO BECOME
LECTURES IN THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL POLICY

ABOUT THE PROJECT



Trinity Teaching Innovation Grant

In 2016, Dr Michael Feely and Dr Edurne Garcia applied for a CAPSL Trinity Teaching Innovation Grant.

We proposed working with a group of self-advocates with disabilities to co-design and co-deliver a module for social work students called *How to Support People with Disabilities*

We also proposed conducting participatory action research about, and publishing on, the outcomes of this project.

Our hope was to inspire others to include people with disabilities in curriculum development and delivery.

We were awarded a grant.



Delivering the module

- ▶ We hired a group of self-advocates with intellectual disabilities as part-time staff.
- ▶ We co-designed and co-delivered our first inclusive disability module students in 2017
- ▶ We also co-assessed the module.
- ▶ Students were asked to complete an academic essay, which was marked by an academic, and an accessible presentation explaining the essay, which was marked by us.



Research on Student experiences



▶ Undergraduate students:

- ▶ welcomed the initiative but were initially anxious about how it might affect their grades and about causing offence (by using inappropriate language);
 - ▶ experienced the initiative as helpful in alleviating their discomfort around disability;
 - ▶ recognized and valued how the initiative created powerful roles for those with intellectual disabilities;
 - ▶ came to acknowledge self-advocates as experts by experience and to accept them as qualified to assess university students;
 - ▶ described how the initiative facilitated increased empathy with people with intellectual disabilities;
 - ▶ and, finally, felt the module left them with an increased appreciation for what intellectually disabled people can achieve and a commitment to 'aim higher' in supporting their life goals.
- ▶ See <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09687599.2021.1874301>



Self-advocates' experiences



WHY DID YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED? HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS FORMER LECTURERS SAID:



Claire: 'It's a great job opportunity in the oldest, most impressive university in Ireland. It'll look great on my C.V.!'



Mei-Lin: 'It is a fantastic opportunity to be a lecturer in Trinity College. I never knew it would be possible.'



Margaret: 'I love teaching and it's a great opportunity to show that people with disabilities can be lecturers just like you.'



Ryan: 'It's a chance to have a role that matters (and not be a nobody). I never thought I'd be a lecturer in Trinity.'



Andrew: 'I'm a graduate of Trinity and it's great to come back as a member of staff.'



Sean: 'It's brilliant to get to do something important with your life. It's a dream come true.'

Self-advocates' experiences



WHY DID YOU WANT TO GET INVOLVED? HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS OUR CURRENT LECTURERS SAID:



Orla: For me, as someone with extra support needs, I never thought it would be possible to become a teacher. I thought it was a fantastic opportunity for me and would look great on my C.V., too.



Brendan: I wanted to get involved because I like to speak my mind. I loved the thought of us teaching social workers instead of them telling us what to do. I like the way the tables are turned.

Self-advocates' experiences

**WHY SHOULD PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES LECTURE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS?
HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS FORMER LECTURERS SAID:**



Claire: 'We have first hand experience of disability: who better to talk about the supports we need?'



Mei-Lin: I strongly feel it's important for people with disabilities to have a voice in Irish society. People with all kinds of disability should be noticed



Margaret: 'People without disabilities don't know what it's like to walk in our shoes; We know best about the supports we need'



Ryan: It's important to hear people with disabilities' point of view. Not just what you read in books.



Andrew: It shows that everyone is equal. And anyone can be lecturer.



Sean: 'Through listening to us they can become better social workers and supporters.'

Self-advocates' experiences



WHY SHOULD PEOPLE WITH EXTRA SUPPORT NEEDS LECTURE SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS?

HERE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS FORMER LECTURERS SAID:



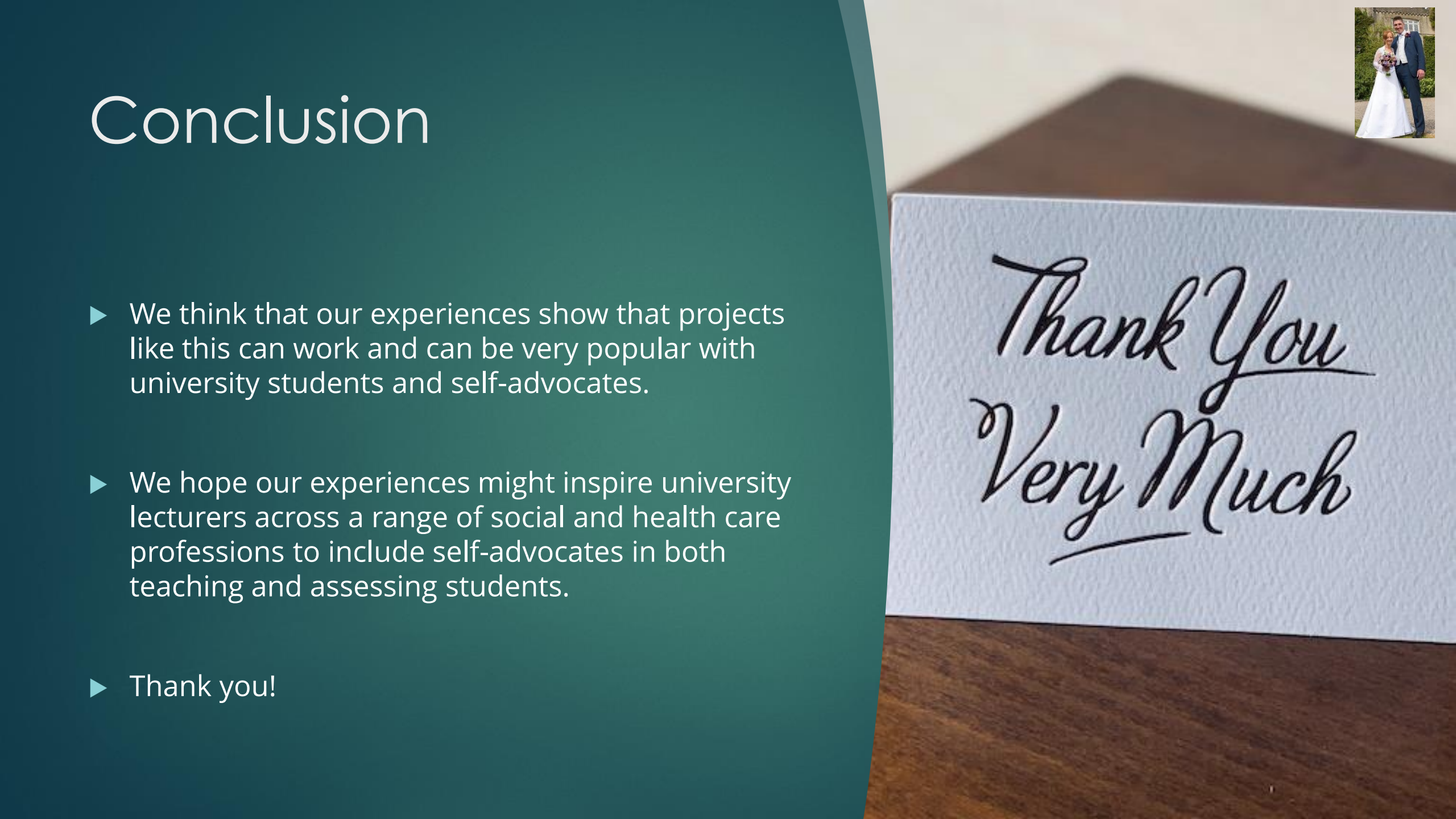
Orla: Because we're equal, we should have the chance to teach, too. Teaching allows us to share our knowledge and to show people what we can do.



Brendan: I've had bad experiences with social workers interfering in my business and my private life. It's important for us to teach student social workers to listen to us and support us with the things we would like help with.

Conclusion

- ▶ We think that our experiences show that projects like this can work and can be very popular with university students and self-advocates.
- ▶ We hope our experiences might inspire university lecturers across a range of social and health care professions to include self-advocates in both teaching and assessing students.
- ▶ Thank you!



*Thank You
Very Much*