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A study into the effects of a Social Collaborative Learning Strategy to Enhance Student Engagement with Mathematics
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The challenges that we face in relation to engaging the student with mathematics have been well documented over the past number of years and have been highlighted in the many reports on the way forward with regard the development of Ireland's knowledge economy. These reports have highlighted that the skills requirement of students, transitioning from second level to third level, are under developed with regard mathematical problem solving and that a paradigm shift is required in relation to the way we teach and engage students with mathematics.

In this paper we present an initiative that attempts to address the issue of student engagement with mathematics through the use of a collaborative learning strategy. In particular we present an overview of a social collaborative approach to student engagement with mathematics through small group peer to peer learning. This approach requires that the student take responsibility for their own learning and drive the direction of this learning which is facilitated and scaffolded by student mentors.

In this paper we first present the rationale behind the chosen approach and the mechanics of the collaborative sessions. We also present a discussion on the challenges and hurdles encountered by the student and the mentors. We present the results of an evaluation of the initiative, conducted through recorded focus group sessions, with both the participating students and the student facilitators. And finally we present our conclusions and proposed way forward with this programme.