



Roundtable Event

23 October 2015

The University of Queensland

**How can student-staff partnerships transform
the university learning experience?**

Kelly Matthews' 2015 National Teaching Fellowship
will explore this question broadly while piloting partnerships
initiatives in UQ sciences.

<http://itali.uq.edu.au/matthews-studentsaspartners>

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Students as Partners Roundtable

Friday 23 October 2015

The University of Queensland, St. Lucia Campus, Brisbane, Australia

Aims

- Deepen our understanding of *Students as Partners*
- Share *Students as Partners* work happening in Australia
- Generate new ideas to transform disciplines and universities
- Build a national *Students as Partners* network
- Harness collective wisdom to guide the fellowship activities

Location

Room 202, [Learning Innovation Building \(LIB\) \(#17\)](#)

Program

Part A: Motivations and understanding *Students as Partners*

10.00am: [Seminar/Workshop](#), Emeritus Professor [Mick Healey](#) including Morning Tea

12.00pm: Lunch

Part B: Exploring *Students as Partners* opportunities in Australia

1.00pm: Welcome from [John Rice](#) (Executive Director, Australian Council of Deans of Science) and overview of Fellowship ([Kelly Matthews](#))

1.20pm: Sharing practices ([Eimear Enright](#))

2.00pm: Brainstorming partnership possibilities ([Mike Bryant](#))

2.40pm: Afternoon Tea

Part C: Planning *Students as Partners* activities in our universities

3.00pm: Designing studentL staff partnership projects ([Philippa Levy](#))

3.45pm: Issues in developing staffL student partnerships ([Peter Felten](#))

4.30pm: Forming a national *Students as Partners* network ([Kelly Matthews](#))

4.45pm: Overview of Day (Sam Dvorakora)

5.00pm: End. Taxis arrive for participants headed to airport



2015 Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) National Teaching Fellowship
[Students as Partners](#)





Students as Partners Fellowship

Questions

Activities

Aims

Outcomes

1

What are the current *students as partners* approaches, broadly and in the sciences?

2

What views do students and academics hold on the potential of *students as partners*?

3

How does participation in *students as partners* activities influence views of students and academics?

Establish an Australian Fellowship Network with international ties

Map *students as partners* activities across Australia

Pilot student-academic partnership activities in the context of the UQ Bachelor of Science review

Develop guiding principles and case studies

Facilitate workshops and roundtables

Raising the Profile of *students as partners* and

question the assumed position of students as passive consumers of education

Gaining Insight into *students as partners* activities nationally and into the views of students and academics on the transformative potential of student-academic partnerships, particularly in the sciences

Building the Capacity of science academics and students to partner as co-inquirers into curriculum level learning outcomes

Fostering Links among national scholars in *students as partners* research and practice, connecting scholars internationally, and building this network to include students.

National Fellowship

Network on *students as partners* linked into international networks with an open access website as the fellowship hub

National Profile for *students as partners* in science curriculum development linked to the Australian Council of Deans of Science Teaching and Learning Centre

Case Studies of *students as partners* in science mapped to Higher Education Academy framework with specific UQ-piloted cases

Guiding Principles based on evidence and practice for *students as partners* in science curriculum, also applicable to other contexts and disciplines.

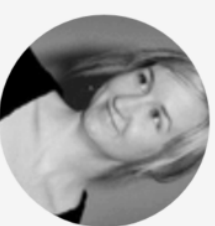
National Teaching Fellow:

[Kelly Matthews](#)

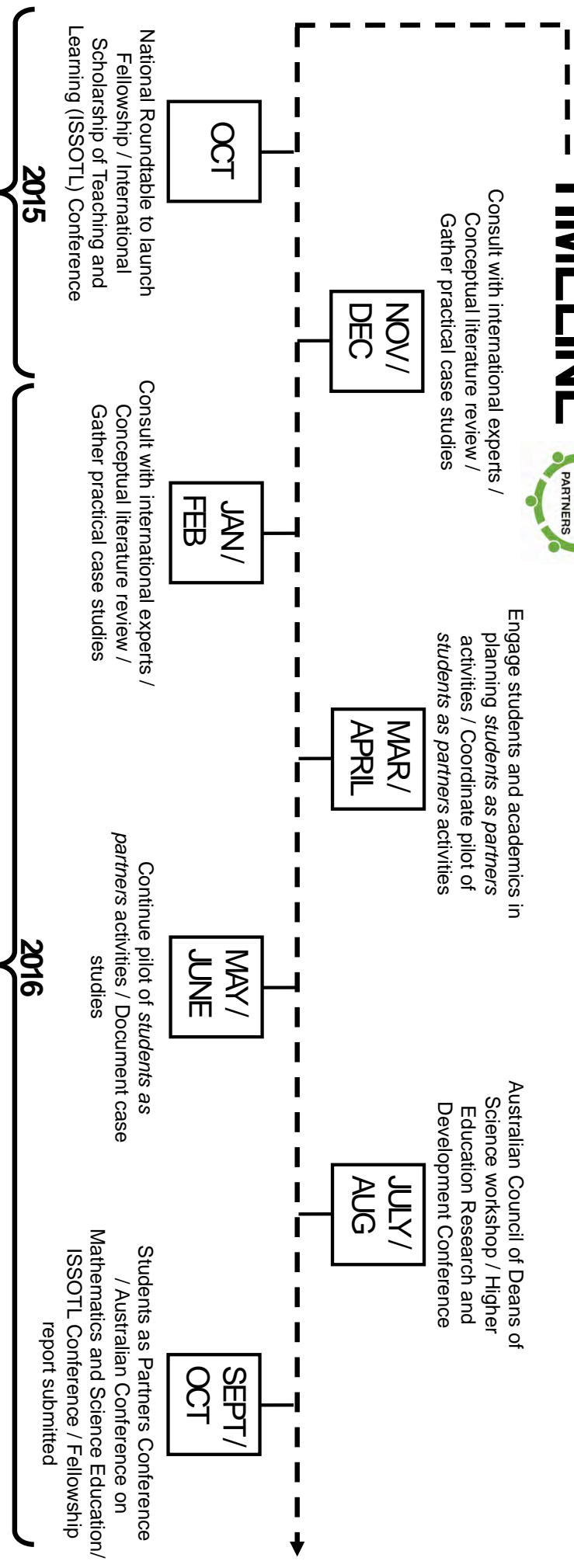
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TIMELINE





Case Study: Student Experience

Richard Wiles

Murdoch Hackathon 2015: Student Concerns; Student Solutions

The Murdoch Hackathon is an innovative approach which aims to enhance the student experience by giving students a forum in which to articulate issues from a student perspective, and also design or create a solution to their problem. One of its distinctive features is the focus on an issue of concern to students, rather than simply a solution or product. Inclusion is another key feature; a recent winner produced a prototype app to assist students with disabilities with access to campus services. The Murdoch Hackathon was also student-initiated and developed in close partnership with industry.

The event takes the form of an extended competition over a two-day (30 hour) period. Students enter the event in teams; each team is allocated a mentor. A team entry can incorporate technology from products developed by industry sponsors; an example is the 2015 winning entry, which made use of the iBeacon protocol provided by sponsors, Bluecats.

During the event, students learn the art of idea generation, team work and “pitching”. At the end, industry participants and University executive leaders judge the team’s idea against criteria for real cash rewards or prizes.

The primary benefits to the University of this type of event include raising awareness at the highest level on issues affecting student engagement and experience; and obtaining a working solution to assist collaboratively resolving such issues.

The benefits to the students include being a part of and having ownership in their own experience at university, demonstrating great social and technical capabilities; expanding academic, peer and industry networks; and experiencing a real life competitive business experience.

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Updated: 17 October 2015





Case Study: Institutional

Elon University, USA

Student-Faculty Course Design Groups

At Elon University in North Carolina, faculty, students, and educational development staff partner in course design teams (CDT) to co-create a course syllabus. Typically a CDT is comprised of 1-2 faculty, 2-6 undergraduate students, and 1 educational developer. Faculty members initiate the redesign process.

Once assembled, the CDT uses a backward-design approach (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005), first developing course goals and then building pedagogical strategies and learning assessments on the foundation of those goals. Often the teams take as a starting point a significant teaching problem that the instructors identify and choose to treat as an object of scholarly inquiry (Bass, 1999). Teams usually meet weekly for two or three months, providing ample opportunities to both accomplish the CDT's practical purpose of redesigning the course and, perhaps more important, to develop a true partnership that not only welcomes student voices but balances faculty and student contributions to the design process.

A common challenge for the course design teams is rethinking and redistributing power. In interviews after the completion of a CDT's work, both faculty and students typically bring up the struggle of adjusting to new power dynamics. The educational developer on the CDT helps all team members navigate these potentially stormy waters by facilitating the initial group meetings and intentionally modeling behaviors that challenge assumptions about power and roles (like playing devil's advocate to any idea that easily finds consensus around the table).

While not all of the redesigned courses are transformed, nor are they all immediately successful, faculty consistently report that the new courses are substantially better than the prior versions. Probably the most significant outcomes, however, are the enhanced engagement and meta-cognition that both students and faculty develop in the process. (For other discussions of this program, see Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Delpish et al., 2010; Mihans et al., 2008.)

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Case Study: Institutional

Lucie Sam Dvorakova

Students as Partners: UQ Winter Research Scholarship 2015

The Institute of Teaching and Learning Innovation recently hosted 5 students for a Winter Research Scholarship. The goal of the project as a whole was to explore the topic of *students as partners* by involving students themselves in teaching and learning projects. This approach was specifically designed to uncover points about student interaction that might not be immediately obvious to academic staff and other non-students.

Each of the students set out to explore a particular niche subject, such as employability of international students, which included drafting a survey to find out more about the students' perceptions on employment in Australia. Similarly, the problem of low response rates to course evaluations was explored, with special interest in uncovering personal motivations behind why students participate in these surveys as a way to increase overall response rates. Personal motivation was also taken into account when looking at how to involve students in improving teaching and learning at UQ, especially when it came to representing the student voice and improving staff-student communication. Likewise, the student-supervisor relationship was considered in a study on how students look for potential supervisors and how this process can be improved. Finally, the issues surrounding dual degree students such as lack of general support, issues with skill transfer and lower perceptions on their graduate learning outcomes were explored in detail.

In practice, the idea behind the project is simple. Involving students personally leads to new insights as well as personal motivation for the students involved. This can manifest itself in many ways; as part of this project, suggestions were placed before the Bachelor of Science Review board and a manuscript is being prepared detailing this particular work.

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Case Study: Engaged Scholarship

Lee Partridge

University to Community: Partnering Service and Research

This case study describes an initiative of several partnerships. In addition to being an example of staff and student partners, it also partners university with community, and service learning with undergraduate research.

The aim of the initiative is to:

- provide students with a transformative and authentic learning experience by combining two high impact practices, undergraduate research and service learning ([Kuh, 2008](#)),
- provide means by which students can acquire and demonstrate graduate attributes,
- provide opportunities to foster an awareness of social justice in future business and community leaders,
- provide an avenue for staff to engage in service to the community,
- work collaboratively with community partners to achieve an outcome which will benefit and promote social change.

This initiative may be provided as a co-curricular activity or as a “for credit” unit of study. Undergraduate students from any discipline are trained in social research skills. Together with staff members, they work collaboratively with community partners such as charities and NFP organisations, to identify problems and formulate appropriate research questions. They design and carry out a small scale research project culminating in the production of an evidence-based report for the organisation. Examples of research projects that might be carried out are social impact and evaluation studies of programs already in place, or a needs analysis to inform the development of a social program.

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Case Study: Institutional

Amani Bell, Tai Pesata, Amanda Clifford, Annette English,
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Students as ambassadors and researchers of assessment renewal

Our students-as-partners initiative at The University of Sydney involved six undergraduates engaged as student ambassadors to participate in and research the institution's learning and teaching conference - the Sydney Teaching Colloquium (STC). While students have regularly been sought out as contributors to, and representatives of, the student voice, the initiative marked a significant departure from the University's tendency to rely on student feedback surveys and committee representation as its main institutionalised forms of student voice.

Over four months, these student ambassadors worked with the central academic development unit to execute a program of activity designed to enhance authentic student participation in curriculum renewal.

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Read more: In press, IJAD special issue (21.1) on students as partners in early 2016

Updated: 15 October 2015



Case Study: Institutional

Arshad Ahmad

Case Study: MIIETL Student Scholars Program

In 2013-2014, the McMaster Institute for Innovation & Excellence in Teaching and Learning (MIIETL) and the Arts & Science Program at McMaster University collaborated to create "Student Scholar" positions for students who are interested in pedagogical research and innovation. Building on current scholarship (e.g., Cook-Sather, Bovill & Felten 2014; Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014; Werder & Otis 2010), the goal of this program is to establish meaningful partnerships between students and staff/faculty working on teaching and learning projects through MIIETL, in order to enhance the quality of the work conducted, provide further opportunities for student engagement, and generate significant learning opportunities for everyone involved.

MIIETL Student Scholar positions involve approximately five to ten hours of paid work per week, across one or more academic terms. Students typically apply to join particular project teams, and fulfill a variety of roles depending on the project and its goals. In each case, however, the aim is to create meaningful collaborations in which students and faculty/staff share responsibility for shaping the project's outcomes. Since the Program's inception, members of the Student Scholar team have contributed to the design and development of new courses, helped to create resources for staff/faculty and students, and collaborated with MIIETL partners on research projects related to teaching and learning. Several have also co-authored research articles and conference presentations with MIIETL staff/faculty. More than 100 undergraduate and graduate students from across McMaster's campus have participated in the program since it began, and we currently hire 50-60 students per year. An account of the program's pilot year, along with the results of preliminary research exploring participants' experiences, was co-authored by a group of faculty, staff, and students and will appear in a forthcoming issue of *The International Journal of Academic Development* (Marquis, Puri, Wan, Ahmad, Goff, Knorr, Vassileva, & Woo, 2014).

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Case Study: UG Research (UGR)

Peter Keegan

The Macquarie Undergraduate Research Internship: A student-led approach to UGR training

The Macquarie Undergraduate Research Internship (MURI) program engages undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds as partners and co-creators of their own learning, facilitating the development of critical skills, and providing opportunities to contribute meaningful and novel research in their chosen field. MURI aims to: (i) facilitate personal, professional and intellectual transformation in undergraduate students and to some extent, their academic sponsors, who act as guides and mentors; (ii) support undergraduate students towards achieving their career aspirations, through self-reflection and community discussion; and (iii) creating a nurturing and challenging environment for the next generation of leaders, within and outside academia, through peer-led explorations of research. Reflecting the values of the L&T Strategic Framework, the program develops teaching models that promote inquiry-driven learning and prepares students for productive professional and civic lives.

The 2015 MURI program aims to offer internships to a total of 15-20 undergraduate students. This will include 10 paid research internships to students experiencing financial hardship (equity criteria: low SES). All interns will complete their individual research projects with regular meetings with their Academic Sponsor, attend fortnightly intern group sessions facilitated by student peers, and participate in MURI events, such as the One-Minute Thesis (multimedia presentation) and MURI mini-conference (poster presentation). Alumni of the previous year's MURI program will return as Student Facilitators to lead fortnightly intern group session workshops addressing topics such as research skills, workplace readiness and digital literacy. Interns will teach and learn from each other through face-to-face peer interactions, thus creating an inclusive, student-led community of practice. In this way, this project follows a student-centred approach aiming to enable students to generate resources that assist themselves and their peers in applying for and completing research experiences.

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Case Study: Student Consultants

Eimear Enright, Emma Beckman, Amy Bergman, Jessica Ellis, Lisa Fisk, Michael Gard, Tara Henzell, Anna Hogan, Eloise Meyer, Sue Monsen, Michalis Stylianou

The ISE (Improving Student Evaluations) Project

The ISE project augments the 'student evaluation of course and teacher' (SECaT) architecture at UQ by creating a complementary and democratic process through which students and teachers can engage in ongoing and meaningful dialogue around teaching and learning. Specifically, it positions students as pedagogical consultants on six courses. These student consultants work with teachers to design feedback strategies, gather feedback from students and co-construct curricula with teachers and students. The ISE Project is an innovative and meaningful expression of UQ's commitment to "providing an enriching teaching and learning environment where students remain at the heart of what we do" (UQ's Strategic Plan 2014-2017). Expected outcomes include the development of more dialogic and democratic partnerships between teachers and students, an evidence-based framework for an improved student evaluation of teaching system, and the construction of resources (case studies, guides, journal articles) and strategic networks that will facilitate scaling-up the project.

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Updated: 19 October 2015



Case Study: Business

The University of Sydney

Deliberate Democracy: Students engaged in evaluating the curriculum

In 2012, in a postgraduate unit of study called *Critical Thinking in Business* with 560 students enrolled, about 70% of the students were from non-English speaking backgrounds and were grappling with the language and with the concept of critical thinking. Professor Carson drew on her background in deliberative democracy to create an opportunity for the students to give feedback on the unit, and to model a different way to collectively decide in large groups. Building on a summary of mid-semester student feedback, a World Café was conducted in each of the 20 tutorial groups. Students engaged in an iterative conversation about what they wanted to change about the unit of study, both in the current semester and the next one. At the end of the tutorial, students were asked to reach agreement about the two most effective suggestions: one for this semester, one for next semester. A representative from each tutorial group then attended a meeting where the students created a final list of suggested changes. After an hour, the unit coordinator came into the meeting, with the guarantee that she would implement whatever changes the group proposed (with the proviso that the changes needed to be consistent with the university's policies). The unit coordinator heard what the students wanted, asked a few questions and the students offered additional comments. The agreed changes were reported back to all students in tutorials and in the lecture. Students commented about how the World Café helped them to appreciate multiple perspectives, and how the technique could be used as a decision making tool in the workplace. Tutors also commented that the World Café was one of the highlights of the semester.

Further information: Bell, A., Carson, L. and Piggott, L. (2013) Deliberative democracy for curriculum renewal, in Dunne, E and Owen, D (2013) *The student engagement handbook: Practice in higher education*. Bingley: Emerald (pp.499-508).

University: University of Sydney

Updated: Also in Mick Healey's Case Studies





Case Study: Dentistry

Sandra March

Students “set the assessment”

The Virtual Patient: Engagement connects Science and Clinical Practice

The goal is to develop a new curriculum for the Bachelor of Dental Science (Honours) undergraduate dentistry program designed to promote student engagement as an emerging professional, and to enhance the student experience in order to improve learning outcomes and to actively reduce stress generated over the five years of the program.

The progressively rolled out new curriculum is centered on a series of scaffolded virtual patients which provide the triggers for all of the enquiry-based teaching and learning in an engaging technology rich context. Volunteer student members are involved with the curriculum planning team.

For each virtual patient, students are required to produce appropriate Single Best Answer questions (SBAQs). The resulting SBAQs are used to assess student engagement with the topics and to provide informative feedback to the teachers as they clearly indicate areas which may require more teaching input or areas where the content has been well integrated. Suitable SBAQs are ‘banked’ and used as part of the summative assessment for the course. Effectively, the students set part of their own assessment.

Collaboration with two partner universities, (one Australian, one international), will produce an extensive bank of questions for assessment use by all three schools and will allow benchmarking of T&L outcomes between the universities.

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Case Study: Creative Industries

Sarah Winter

Network of Partnership across the degree program

The Creative Industries Network (CIN) exists to provide a seamless transition for creative industries students at QUT from first year to graduation, whilst equipping them with the skills and connections that are essential for success in the real world. The key aims of the CIN are:

- To create a sense of community amongst Creative Industries students across all cohorts, disciplines and degrees in order to encourage rich interdisciplinary collaborations and to provide a family and home for Bachelor of Creative Industries (BCI) students.
- To encourage engagement with real world industry professionals and organisation
- To offer opportunities to gain and develop real world skills and capabilities.

CIN also engages directly in curriculum design and course transformation, working closely with the course coordinator and university partners to develop a more coherent and engaging experience through the BCI degree. CIN developed out of an academic initiated, student peer program called the BCI Champions, and has become bigger, better and more of a partnership than we could have dreamed of. This process informed the title of this case study because the best ideas can come when you take a step back from your original expectations and let things evolve.

The student body are made up of a group of 10 switched on 3rd and 4th year students studying the Bachelor of Creative Industries and associated double degrees at QUT. They work closely with the academic staff from the BCI team. The students meet on either Tuesday and Wednesday every week with the academic facilitator to keep the short term goals of the project ticking over, whilst talking longer term strategy. During the week the team utilises a private facebook group to continue developing ideas and rolling out projects. The CIN connect directly with the student body through outward facing Facebook page, tutorial visits, and shortly through their website. On a more pragmatic level, the initiative works so well because the team have spent the time developing trust, openness and a willingness to experiment together.

CIN have also been supported by the QUT Learning and Teaching Unit Students as Partners (SAP) pilot project initiative. The additional facilitation and opportunities to connect with a wider network of inter-faculty peers and academics working on SAP programs has helped to empower the CIN students.

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Case Study: Nursing

Amanda Henderson

Student-Staff Partnerships in Industry Placements

Effective communication and partnership of students, the academic institution and the industry partners is an excellent opportunity for students to mutually collaborate with industry, other relevant stakeholders and the higher education provider to determine their activities and assessment during their work based experience.

The elements that potentially strengthen student learning and outcomes are clarity regarding the learning opportunities that are available in particular situations/circumstances in industry. Further to this is the exploration of the nature or mode of supervision that assists students to successfully learn, i.e., take up opportunities afforded to them, and complete assessment tasks, that are commensurate with the desired learning outcomes of the course.

In my National Senior Teaching Fellowship starting 2016, I will identifying interested course coordinators, industry and students to trial this in practice. A case study approach will help advance blocks in progressing this approach such as, different understandings and communication strategies.

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Case Study: Engineering (Civil)

Dr Kevin Sevilla & Mr Kevin Plasencia

The Icarus Program

The Icarus Program is a new initiative developed by the School of Civil Engineering that blends traditional civil engineering learning with research-focused project activities, providing an alternative pathway for students whose learning needs and interests extend beyond a traditional classroom environment.

The Icarus Program has three primary goals:

- to boost opportunities for development of undergraduate engineering interest and experience in research-based projects;
- to foster close collaboration between academic staff and small groups of students; and
- to leverage this engagement to diversify and elevate student learning pathways, student career outcomes, and UQ's national and international reputation for producing the leaders of tomorrow.

Icarus is currently being piloted as co-curricular, available by application to 2nd year civil engineering students. Once accepted, student learning is developed through small, interactive research-based project activities on diverse fields within civil engineering. Students collaboratively work, develop and build their selected project throughout the semester together with the academic staff.

In addition, the Icarus Program provides extra-project opportunities including student engagement and participation in conferences, seminars, and lab visits. In particular, our seminar series involves informal talks from invited academics and industry professionals.

In its pilot year we are delighted to see applications from several student groups who have classically been shown to be less likely to enrol in engineering study and co-curricular activities. Participating students have greatly benefited from a deep learning of the core courses material while further developing their personal, academic and professional skills.

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Case Study: Science

Robyn Evans and Kelly Matthews

Science Teaching-Learning Think Tank

The Think Tank aims to harness students' and staff creativity to improve teaching and learning in science at UQ; build stronger relationships between students and staff; and generate ideas and identify solutions to enhance teaching and learning.

A few times a semester, students and staff (including the Dean of Science) come together to discuss an identified topic of relevance (e.g. assessment, employability, work-based learning, first year transition). Students and staff receive a short outline of the issue prior to the session. Students and staff work in small groups during the Think Tank sessions to offer advice and ideas for consideration by the Faculty Teaching and Learning Committee.

Benefits for students include demonstrating leadership activity useful for CVs; growing academic and peer networks; and influencing teaching and learning in ways that can affect positive change; and developing interpersonal skills. Primary benefit to staff is a greater understanding of the student experience along with new ideas to enhance the curriculum.

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Updated	25 September 2015



Case Study: Science

Peter Adams, Robyn Evans, Kelly Matthews

Students as Partners on Teaching & Learning Grants

The UQ Faculty of Science Teaching and Learning Committee offers an annual grants scheme of approximately \$400,000 to advance innovative teaching practices in the sciences. The application guidelines have always required a section on evaluation with the expectation that students will be a source of data in determining the effectiveness of funded innovations.

Recently, the Faculty of Science Teaching and Learning Grants scheme policy has been revised to encourage greater student involvement, moving students from being a source of evaluation data to being more active participants in the development, design, and implementation in teaching and learning projects. The new policy begins from 2016, and reads:

Student Involvement: *The faculty wishes to encourage increased student involvement with teaching and learning projects, so projects which incorporate student participation in project activities may be given priority. Potential examples could include students partnered as consultants on the design of new innovations, student advisory groups or students as named collaborators. Funding could include student scholarships and catering to encourage student participation. For help with student involvement ideas, contact Science-Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation liaison, Kelly Matthews, k.matthews1@uq.edu.au*

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Updated: 17 October 2015



Case Study: Chemistry

Effie Kartsonaki, Chantal Bailey, Gwen Lawrie

iPASS: online collaborative peer-assisted study groups

Peer-assisted learning is a powerful strategy to assist students to both develop effective study skills and to apply formative feedback in self-regulated learning. Undergraduate students who are experienced peer leaders are assisting us to translate face-to-face PASS learning activities into a virtual mode of delivery.

Virtual iPASS sessions are hosted through the Adobe Connect tool which represents a platform that can enable a single PASS leader to synchronously guide up to 10 first-year chemistry students through collaborative study exercises. The students are assisting in formulating these sessions and evaluating how students engage. They are also helping to create a guide for orienting students into iPASS and troubleshooting tips.

Benefits for the students include a greater understanding of activity design for student learning, improved technology skills and affecting change. They will be credited for their contributions to this project which they can include in their CV.

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Case Study: Student Consultants

Tim McIntyre, Margaret Wegener, Tony Roberts, Kelly Matthews

Student consultants on technology-enabled learning grant

We have just started a funded project to transform 5 subjects in maths and physics by introducing dynamic, visual simulations. A key aspect of the project is engaging small groups of students within each subject to act as consultants on the design and implementation of the new learning activities. While we will evaluate using standards approaches to understand the impact on all students, involving students in the design and implementation is a new approach that we believe will offer insights to enhance learning for all students in the subjects more quickly. This is because the student consultants will be able to highlight issues we might have missed and would not otherwise have known until we collected student feedback after the innovations were introduced. Furthermore, by liaising with students actively on the design and implementation, we hope to better understand potential misconceptions that students hold about complex mathematical topics.

In practice, students in the units will be invited to engage as consultants early on in the semester. Students will “test” the innovations and discuss them with academic staff in informal lunch meetings. Revisions based on student input will be made and students asked to comment again in another lunch meeting. Ideas about implementing the new activities will be discussed with students. A final meeting will focus on evaluation results with students assisting us in making sense of the broader feedback and proposing changes for future delivery. We anticipate 4-5 student consultative meetings per subject over the duration of the semester.

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Updated: 14 October 2015



Case Study: Student Consultants

Patrick Ward, Kelly Matthews

Student consultants on technology-enabled learning grant

We have just started a funded project to develop an interactive laboratory manual to train undergraduate and postgraduate students in biostatistics. The manual consists of pages with interactive material that activates via mouse clicks. In each page, concepts and activities are layered according to the importance and difficulty, by use of pull-down menus, animations, video, audio, and slide shows. The manual is also computationally interactive where embedded computer scripts activate simulations of data, statistical analyses, and plotting of article-level illustrations. The manual is also inclusive as it facilitates learning for visual, non-visual learners as well as those for whom English is not the first language. It will help make statistics an engaging subject for biology students, will serve as a prototype for other interactive manuals UQ-wide, and help illuminate how biology students assimilate mathematical concepts.

We feel it is essential in our approach to have real-time student input. The aim is to deepen our understanding about how biology students assimilate mathematical concepts, and to better understand how students would enhance the development of the manual. Therefore, we will engage student as *Consultative Partners* during the development and implementation of the interactive laboratory manuals. We expect that four to five students will act as consultants of the project team, and will help us fine-tune key decisions as well as play an integral role in developing the materials. A budget line in the grant proposal outlined catering and incentives to engage students actively and compensate them for their time.

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Updated: 19 October 2015



Case Study: SoTL

Mick Healey, Kelly Matthews

Students in scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) collaborative writing groups

International collaborative writing groups (ICWG) aim to build the capacity of participants to work and write in international collaborative groups. Eight or nine groups work at a distance to prepare a 2000 word outline for online discussion running up to a International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSoTL) pre-Conference workshop, where groups meet for two and half days. They spend time preparing their draft paper within their groups and in discussion with participants of other groups along with some social activities as part of the workshop. Following the workshop the groups have five to six months to complete and send in their papers for submission to the Society's international SOTL journal, [Teaching and Learning Inquiry](#).

The first ICWG was in 2012-13 linked to the ISSOTL 2012 Conference hosted by McMaster University, Canada. Seventy people from 13 countries took part, spread across nine groups with each comprising at least one student member. Nine scholarships were provided to subsidize the costs of student members. The 2012 initiative resulted in eight publications in a special edition of [Teaching and Learning Inquiry](#) along with a [SoTL publication](#) evidencing the initiative's positive impact on participants.

The second ICWG is associated with the 2015 ISSOTL Conference in Melbourne Australia involving 61 people from 11 countries with 9 full-time students. Fees for students were waived and all were offered free accommodation and a travel subsidy (for those outside of Melbourne).

More: Marquis, E., Healey, M. and Vine, M. (in press) Fostering collaborative teaching and learning scholarship through an international writing group initiative, *Higher Education Research and Development*

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Updated: 17 October 2015





Case Study: Institutional Student Success Team, QUT

Curriculum Design Scheme (Pilot)

The QUT Students as Partners Curriculum Design Scheme (pilot) is engaging students, staff and the Learning and Teaching Unit (LTU) in collaborative partnerships that are re-imagining aspects of both curriculum design and assessment. Participating in the pilot are five Faculty/Schools, involving 42 students and 18 staff. Supported by the Student Success Team (LTU) to navigate the Students as Partners process, teams are using Participatory Action Research (PAR) and design thinking concepts, to embark on a collaborative process of inquiry through a curriculum issue identified within each of their disciplines.

The **Nursing** research team are partnering to consider the critical thinking framework¹ that enables the development of clinical judgement where students learn to '*think like a nurse*' within the challenging complexity of health environments. The **Creative Industries Network (CIN)** has partnered with Faculty to engage in curriculum transformation that encourages rich, interdisciplinary collaborations among Bachelor of Creative Industries students. Its pilot project is engaging with professionals within the CI Industry. The **Law** team is engaging in conversation to better understand student-learning approaches that promote optimal learning outcomes. Focusing specifically on Administrative Law, the project will inform teaching and assessment that builds discipline knowledge and legal thinking and analysis skills. A representative team from the EEB units in **Science and Engineering (SEF)** are exploring how students engage with different forms of assessment and the impact of assessment design on students' motivation for learning. The **Pharmacy** partnership is engaging conversations in order to develop curricular strategies for stronger professional identity, culture and community amongst the Pharmacy student cohort. Specific focus is placed within 'ipharma' – a unit that examines professional identity.

An interdisciplinary student-led network has been established for staff and students to share their experiences, practices and challenges. It operates in both face-to-face and virtual environments, enabling internal and external students to participate. A program of workshops requested by the network has been facilitated to assist and support the 'students as partners' process.

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Updated: 22 October 2015





Resources: Student Leadership

Elizabeth Deane

Student Leadership in Curriculum Development and Reform

This Office for Learning and Teaching funded project sought to deliver:

- A critical appraisal of the role of students in university governance, management and operational frameworks of Australian universities, with a particular emphasis on roles related to curriculum development delivery, review and improvement;
- A series of validated frameworks to develop and empower student leaders and institutions; and
- A suite of national and international exemplars of effective ways in which university students have and can contribute to the process of improving learning and teaching.

The Student Leadership project:

- Engaged the two Australian peak student representative associations as partners;
- Engaged over 500 student leaders through participation in focus groups and a national survey, identifying key aspects of their roles and motivations; enablers and inhibitors; and
- Engaged university staff and students in a series of national workshops considering the HE sector position of student leadership; student leaders' views of leadership and progression of a validated student voice in all aspects of University governance, particularly teaching and learning.

The Student Leadership project has delivered:

- A critical analysis of the positioning of HE student leadership, national and internationally and student leaders' views of how these roles are best supported and sustained;
- A typology of HE student leadership roles;
- Two frameworks with examples to guide institutions, student associations and student leaders in achieving the best of student leaders
- A suite of examples and case studies of different aspects of supported student leadership

For the full report, data and resources see

http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/learning_teaching/learning_and_teaching/strategic_projects/student_leadership_in_curriculum

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Updated: 20 October 2015



Resources: Employability

Shelley Kinash & Linda Crane

Students at the Centre of Employability

Graduate Employability means that higher education alumni have developed the capacity to obtain and/or create work (Kinash, Crane, Judd et al., 2015). Employability also means that institutions and employers have supported the student knowledge, skills, attributes, reflective disposition and identity that graduates need to succeed in the workforce (Hinchliffe & Jolly, 2011; Holmes, 2013; Knight & Yorke, 2004; Yorke, 2006; Yorke & Knight, 2006).

A national *Office for Learning and Teaching* Strategic Grant on Graduate Employability provides a framework and resources that position students at the centre of employability approaches. Extensive consultation with students, staff, and employers revealed the vital role of student identity and student decision-making in successful transition from university life to workforce. To truly support students' transition, university staff must partner with students to develop curricula and extra-curricular opportunities that imbue relevance and reflection, allowing students to articulate the skills, ways of thinking, and dispositions that make them able to gain work or create their own employment.

A wealth of resources for students, staff, employers, and curriculum designers are available to enable student-staff-industry partnerships.

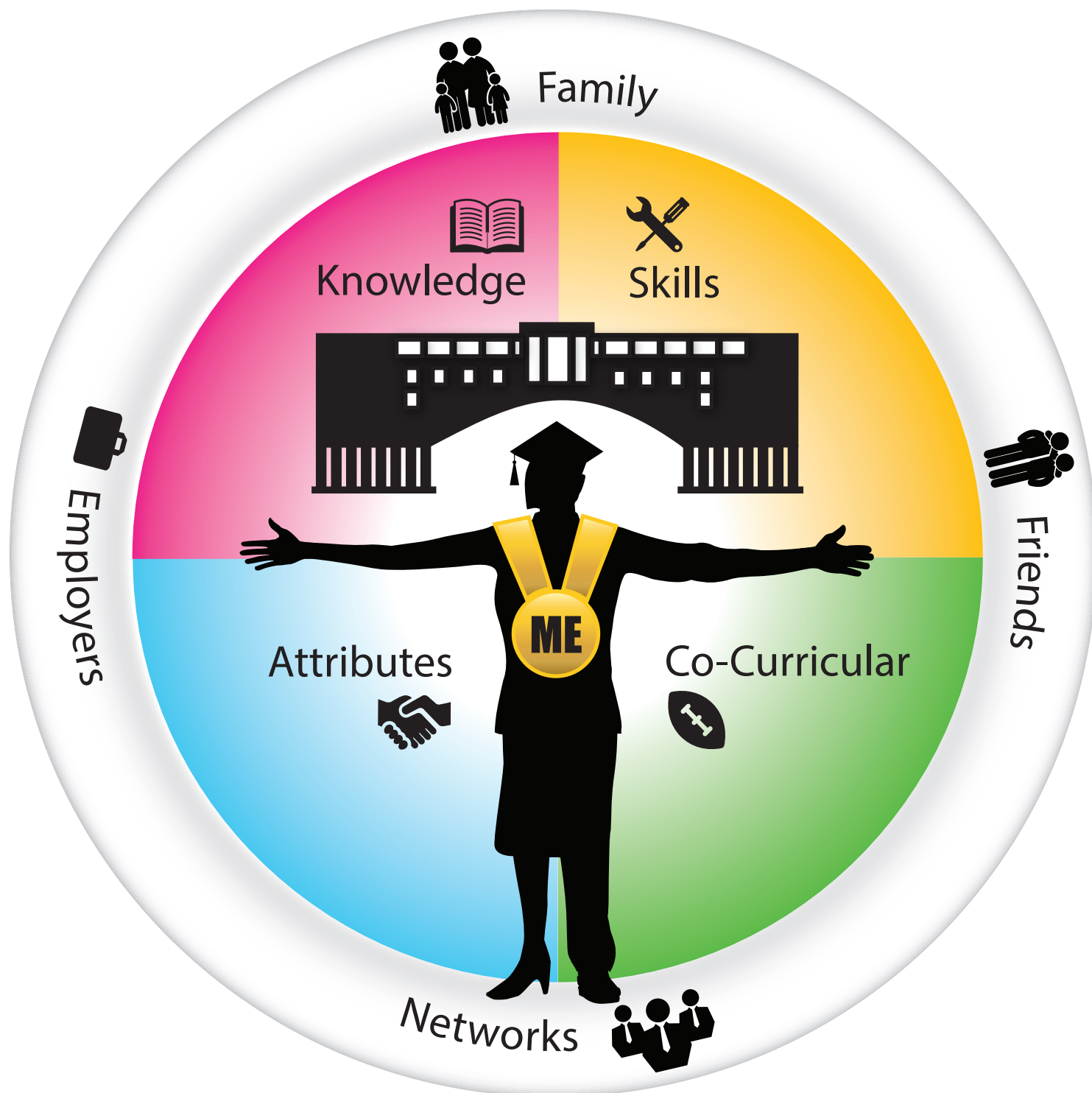
The following 10 pages are excerpts from some of the available resources.

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Updated: 17 October 2015



Graduate Employability Framework

This framework is designed for students, graduates, employers, higher education academics and career development professionals based on the data from over 700 surveys and 85 interviews/focus groups. Support for the production of this framework has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views expressed in this framework do not necessarily reflect their views.



Graduate Employability means that higher education alumni have the developed capacity to obtain and/or create work.

Graduate Employability Framework



Graduate employability means that higher education alumni have the developed capacity to obtain and/or create work. Graduate employability has ten elements.



1) **A higher education degree** – the figure in the image is standing in the shape of a T. The body represents the specialisation of the degree. In order to be employable, the student/graduate extends oneself, reaching out for a broad-based and full experience.



2) **Respectable grades or levels of achievement in the degree** – grades are a factor in employability but study should not be pursued to the exclusion of other student experience.

3) **Knowledge** – employable graduates have a broad knowledge spectrum and the ability to apply that knowledge, including emotional intelligence.



4) **Career focus and goals** – whereas students are encouraged to be open-minded and widely pursue their options, focus and an intentional career pathway often advance employability.

5) **Identity** – the figure in the image is wearing a 'Me' medallion. This represents the central importance of identity. Successful graduates have confidence, defined career goals, explicit self-awareness and are able to communicate their employability profile to future employers.



6) **Match between industry employment vacancies and type of degree** – long-term hiring patterns should be considered when selecting a discipline.



7) **Internships/Work Experience** – students have pursued opportunities to experience the desired industry and network with employers and professional associates.

8) **Skills** – employable graduates are able to apply their knowledge and skills to work within their chosen industry and identify strategies to facilitate transferability to other workplaces.



9) **Attributes** – employability behaviours such as teamwork, resilience and flexibility are nurtured in the broader context of family, friends and community and reinforced in higher education.



10) **Co-curricular** – students have actively engaged in a broad-based variety of experiences (relative to the needs and resources of diverse students) such as sport, volunteer work and student leadership positions. Higher education has supported, embedded and acknowledged these relevant activities in the program of studies. This also gives students contact with a wide range of contacts, such as Career Development Professionals and Professional Bodies (represented by “Other Networks” on the diagram.)



Kinash, S., Crane, L., Judd, M.-M., Mitchell, K., McLean, M., Knight, C., & Dowling, D. (2015). Graduate Employability Framework. Supporting graduate employability from generalist disciplines through employer and private institution collaboration. www.graduateemployability.com

Funded and supported by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

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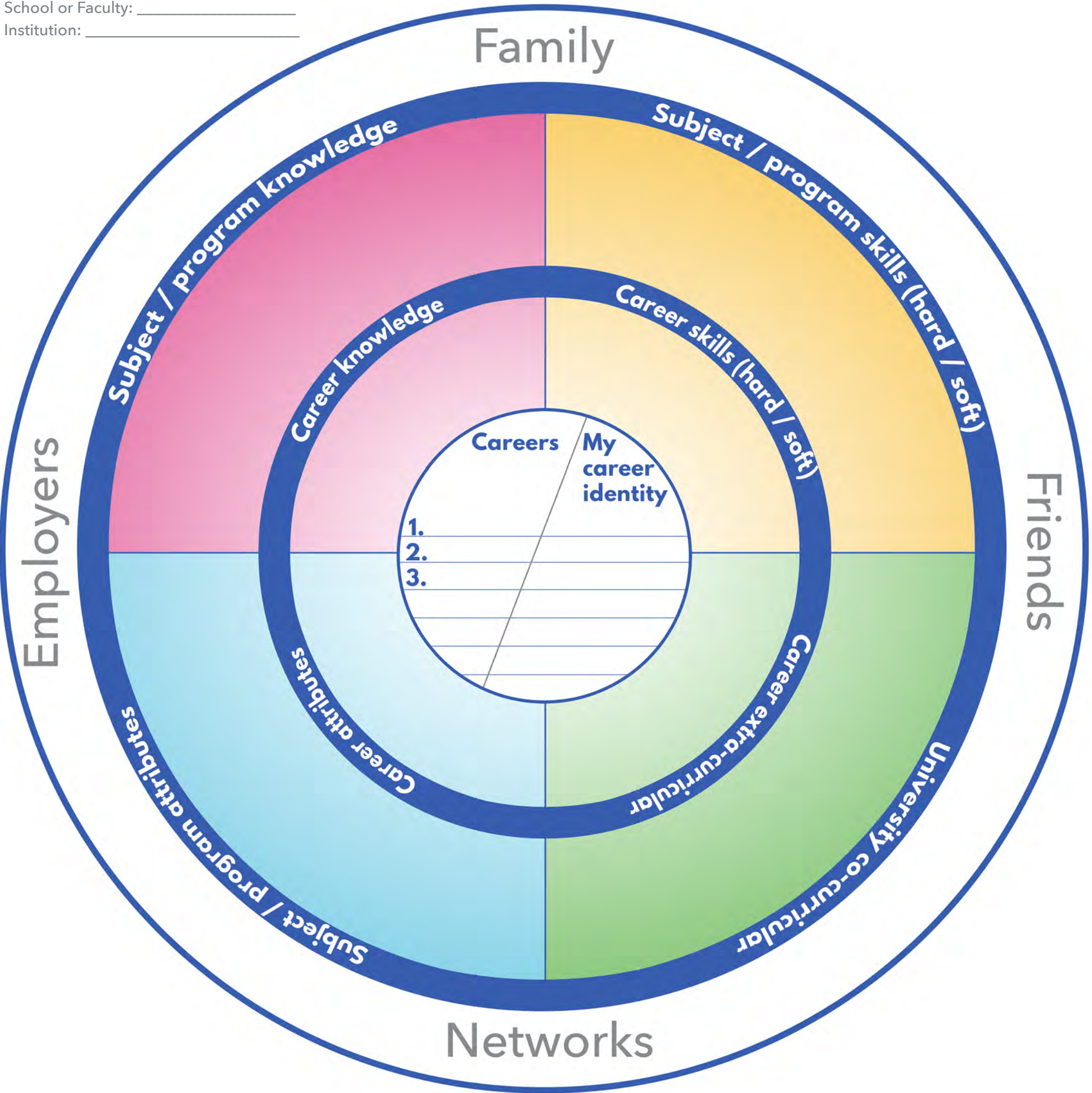
Design by Christian King

GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY IN THE EVERYDAY UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM

This worksheet has been designed to support students and educators to improve graduate employability in the everyday university curriculum. Graduate employability means that higher education alumni have developed the capacity to obtain and/or create work. It also means that institutions and employers have supported the student knowledge, skills, attributes, reflective disposition and identity that graduates need to succeed in the workforce. This worksheet has been designed based on the data from 700+ surveys and interviews/focus groups, with 147 people. Support for the production of this worksheet has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching. The views expressed in this framework do not necessarily reflect their views.

Student Instructions: graduateemployability.com/worksheets/student Staff Instructions: graduateemployability.com/worksheets/staff

Date: _____
Name: _____
Role/Title: _____
Discipline: _____
School or Faculty: _____
Institution: _____





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Office for
Learning & Teaching



CASE STUDIES TO ENHANCE GRADUATE EMPLOYABILITY

2015 Generalist Disciplines



GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT RATES

Figure 1

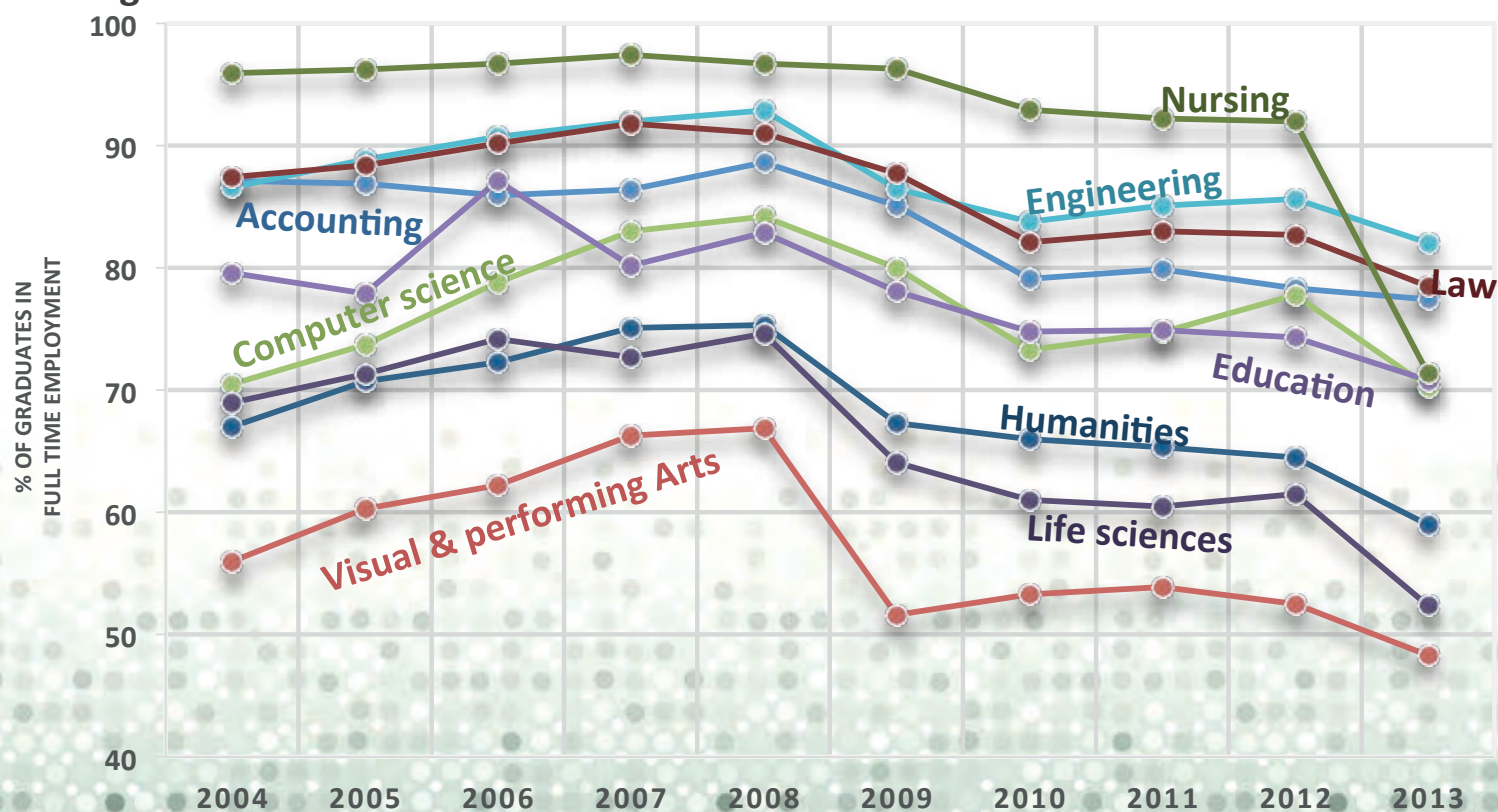


Figure 1 was designed by Professor David Dowling and is based on data that was extracted from the results of graduate surveys undertaken each year by GCA from 2004. It represents information from those graduates who responded to the survey.

GCA lists results for more than forty disciplines. However, for ease of interpretation, data for only ten disciplines is reproduced in the graph. It should be noted that data for some disciplines (e.g. engineering) is aggregated data for the sub-disciplines.

Figure 1 shows consistent trends for all ten disciplines, although the employment rates for each discipline vary. There has been a drop in employment rates since the global financial

crisis and again between 2012 and 2013. Two of the disciplines (architecture and education) exhibit some variation from year to year compared to the other eight disciplines, and nursing dipped further than the other disciplines in 2013.

Figure 1 highlights the employment rates for graduates in the four generalist disciplines as consistently lower than those of the other disciplines.

Research grounding this case study includes engagement with educators, students and graduates in order to determine the successful strategies that can be deployed both within curriculum and beyond to enhance the employability of generalist graduates.

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERALIST DISCIPLINES?

Two major themes emerged with respect to the unique nature of employability for students and graduates within the generalist disciplines. The first theme that emerged concerned students choosing their disciplines based upon personal interests, rather than enhancing their employability outcomes. As stated by a student, “my studies reflect my personal interests more than anything, because there is really nothing available in that industry.” Another interviewed student, undertaking a major in business and a major in languages stated, “my study in languages is more of a personal interest. It would be good to get a job in something related to that, but I am aiming to get a job related to my business degree.”

The second theme emerging from interviews was the diversity of graduates undertaking generalist degrees. The Australian government’s widening participation agenda has seen a more diverse group of students enter higher education, and this was reflected among the interviewees as evidenced in this comment from a student: “Getting career advice was daunting because I have been a mother all my life and have not worked, other than part-time jobs here and there. So I wonder, ‘how do I adapt what I have just learned, and how do I apply for these jobs as I have not really had any relevant experience?’”

Employers appeared to understand that students sometimes have to maintain work while studying. As stated by an employer: “Personally I look at whether the student is trying to support themselves and study because often the cost of living, the cost of university, it dictates that people have to work. It is not working ten hours a week, it is working 30 hours a week, and completing a

full-time course. So, a student’s ability to hold down a position that has a reasonable strain on their time, and complete their degree should be taken into consideration when looking at a grade point average. And then you couple that with the effort they put into their application.”

The transferability of the skillset obtained within the generalist disciplines is an important factor when graduates are seeking employment.

Approach to achieve aims and objectives

- **Students – To increase awareness of the importance of engaging in employability initiatives and build-in formalised support for these initiatives.**

It is important for students to engage with the university employability supports that are made available to them. This may include a host of programs and services such as mentorships from academic staff or industry, internships and work placements, and the careers services available on campus. All of these supports and programs aim to develop the reflective capacity of students in order to highlight the transferable skills that are developed throughout their degree.

- **Higher Education – To develop well-rounded graduates with employability attributes.**

Research participants emphasised the importance of engaging with careers services and industry to expand the range of opportunities available to students. Communicate the available opportunities to students, and contextualise the skills

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERALIST DISCIPLINES?

that are developed through engaging in co-curricular activities, career engagement, capstones and e-portfolios. Embed reflective practice throughout capstone subjects, to ensure there is a clear link between theory and practice in the real-world.

- **Employers – To provide continued learning opportunities for graduate employees from generalist disciplines.**

Engage with universities through careers fairs, industry panels, mentorships and class presentations. Engage with students within the generalist disciplines and communicate the opportunities/positions that are available to them.

Challenges and their impact

There are three main challenges that persist within the generalist disciplines: the polarity of views regarding the purpose of universities; the disenchantment of students; and initial student resentment of capstone subjects.

One of the contentious issues for generalist disciplines is the disagreement regarding what constitutes *useful knowledge*. Simply put, what is the role and purpose of universities? Some argue that universities are not about producing graduates who can *do a job*, but about promoting life-long learning that transcends the heritage of time as much as it shapes the future. The overall hope is that students conclude their studies as skilled and knowledgeable individuals who can contribute to innovation, be agents of social change and contribute to social vitality. However, some research participants stated their views that education has become a commodity in which students develop a set of skills to prepare them for the workforce. To date, clear links to employability are sometimes

not made within the generalist disciplines. Generalist disciplines seek “not just to equip students with the skills that they need but with the character that will help them succeed too.” (from an interviewed educator)

The second challenge is the overall disempowerment of generalist degree students. According to an educator, “I had to inspire the students, because there was a real sense of disenchantment by the time they were in their third year. There was a sense of real disempowerment as they did not think that they were going to get anywhere.” As articulated by an interviewed graduate, “you are sending out an application and you do not even get a phone call or an interview.” In order to develop and enhance the confidence of students, a graduate expressed that an onus should be placed on educators to assist students in identifying the value of the skills they develop, and their inherent transferability. “I think the university needs to embed skills and confidence into the student. The university needs to be able to provide enough support for a graduate to successfully enter the workforce. These include basic skills, how to write selection criteria, how to interview, how to identify what skills are transferable. The rest is then up to the employer to build and professionally develop that graduate for their organisation.” (from an interviewed graduate)

The final stated challenge within the generalist disciplines is the initial resentment by students of capstone subjects. Some interviewed students expressed resentment over completing capstone subjects as they did not find them relevant to their specific discipline. An educator stated, “when we first introduced the capstone subjects there was a culture whereby students

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERALIST DISCIPLINES?

were quite resistant to them. And then once it is established I find that the attitude completely changes, and partly that is because the subjects are refined and developed.”

Successes and their impact

Across the interviews, six strategies were implemented as a means to enhance graduate employability within the generalist disciplines. These strategies are: core and capstone subjects; internships and work placements; class simulations; networking; mentoring; and the use of e-portfolios to develop reflective capacity and to provide tangible evidence of graduate achievement.

Core and capstone subjects

Core and capstone subjects are an effective means to contextualise theory and provide a ‘transition’ for students. An example of a successful first-year compulsory subject established the aim “to transition students into university”, with final-year capstone subjects seeking to transition students out of the university (from an interviewed educator).

In regards to the capstone subject, the educator stated that “students create a portfolio of what they have done across their degree and reflect on their experiences as a liberal arts student.” These capstone subjects further enhance the students’ abilities “in terms of how to think, personal relationships, team work, critical thinking, reasoning, all of those elements that hold you in good stead in any job” (from an interviewed educator).

Some questions for reflective journals may include; “What has this course given you in terms of transferable skills? Where do you see yourself going next? What further training do you need?” (from an educator).

Internships/work placements

With graduate positions becoming increasingly competitive, internships/work placements were said to provide a valuable opportunity to obtain industry-relevant experience and help establish networks and contacts within the industry. In recounting a graduate’s experience, an educator stated that through participating in the work placement, the graduate “developed the contacts and the networks” which led to successful employment.

Embedding work-experience modules within curriculum can provide students with greater opportunities and give relevance to the theory taught in classes. Coupled with a reflective portfolio, students may enhance their communication skills and gain a greater understanding of what is required within industry.

Class simulations

One of the most successful strategies discussed in interviews was a class-simulation that was designed by educators in association with one of the professional bodies in their chosen industry. The aim was to simulate “a typical business environment” in which students were divided “into different groups, given roles such as marketing or finance and are informed of the rules and regulations. Students then bought *raw materials* from each other, took orders from their customers, and produced goods

WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT EMPLOYABILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF GENERALIST DISCIPLINES?

based on the specifications of the customer. The goal of the simulation was to increase awareness among students of how these different departments of business function together to make the whole business a success. Not only are students developing a business awareness, “but they are learning how to work with each other.” (from an educator)

These simulations also mimic what graduates encounter at assessment centres whereby graduates “have no clue what you are going to be asked to do, no idea what it is going to be like. You work with people that you have never met before and you have got to make a good impression.” (from an educator)

Networking

Engagement with professional bodies and industry members is an effective way to provide networking opportunities for students. Such strategies may include inviting professional society members to “deliver a talk to first or second-year students to make them realise the importance of understanding the existence of these societies, and then to take part in their events.” (from an educator)

Mentoring

Engagement with professionals from industry and the community as mentors was recommended. An educator stated, “There are lots of professionals out there who have given time off work to have a cup of coffee once a fortnight with a student.” Mentors may include councillors, members from professional bodies and industries.

E-Portfolio

An e-portfolio allows students to reflect upon their achievements and provides a tangible resource to highlight these accomplishments. An e-portfolio may enable students “to reflect across the different domains of their lives” and progressively add to their abilities (from an educator).