

**Title:** Using student internship schemes to support Ed Tech innovation and build foundations for a Community of Practice.

**Presenter:** Ms Kiran Gawali/ Senior Learning Technologist  
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**Summary:** We will present our experience of involving student interns over the summer period as part of Ed Tech innovations to support delivery of multimode teaching, particularly during the COVID period.

**Theme** We found it immensely valuable to involve student interns in defining and supporting multimode teaching/remote learning. The scheme worked as a great example of staff and student partnership as well as moving towards establishing a community of practice.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this session, delegates will be able to:

- Set up student partnerships with more confidence
- Be aware of the constraints and opportunities a scheme provides
- Find useful practical solutions to manage workload that can be adjusted to their context
- Demonstrate how staff student partnerships can support the institutions' agendas to develop graduate skills and attributes

### Outline

Context of initiative/topic:

There is great value to include students as partners (Holens; et al,2020) to co-create and capitalise on their user experience when developing Ed Tech innovations and solutions. This can be informed by the learning theory of communities of practice (Wenger, 2002). If we model behaviour and collaborate with students to reach greater understanding of what works in our context, the benefits of learning can have wider impact. Student internships can also help develop graduate attributes sought by employers: wider technical skills, soft skills, teamwork and experience of working in a professional capacity.

We have run this scheme since 2019 over summer months, and like most things it was impacted by COVID in 2020, hence we ran the scheme remotely. The scheme involved all 7 team members but was led by the senior team. We had 4-5 interns joining us from across all departments in the faculty. The scheme includes the full job lifecycle with interviews, onboarding, team and project work and reflective practice.

The students were involved in a range of transformational projects, such as programming interactive visualisations and assessing video captioning systems. We have evidence of the impact of their involvement in the form of feedback received from academics. The students also gave us insights into how participation in the scheme developed their skills and attributes that are sought by

employers. Some of our and their experiences have been shared with a wider audience via the university [website](#) and [blogpost](#).

## **References**

- Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, Mass, Harvard Business School Press.
- Rasa Holen, Paul Ashwin, Peter Maassen & Bjørn Stensaker. (2020) *Student partnership: exploring the dynamics in and between different conceptualizations*, Studies in Higher Education, DOI: [10.1080/03075079.2020.1770717](https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1770717)

## **Activities and Approximate Timings**

- Presentation- 20min
- Group discussion + Mentimeter polling software - 15 minutes
  - What experience do you have of working with students as partners?
  - Would you agree students can be true partners? Follow-up discussion on this point
  - How might you implement some of the practical tips from this session in your institution?
- Summary and conclusions- 5 minutes

## **References and sources** (word count not applicable)

Wenger, E., McDermott, R. A., & Snyder, W. (2002). *Cultivating communities of practice: a guide to managing knowledge*. Boston, Mass, Harvard Business School Press.

Rasa Holen, Paul Ashwin, Peter Maassen & Bjørn Stensaker. (2020) *Student partnership: exploring the dynamics in and between different conceptualizations*, Studies in Higher Education, DOI: [10.1080/03075079.2020.1770717](https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1770717)