



PTAS Project Report (for SMALL PROJECT GRANTS)

Project Title: Student - Staff partnership in Biomedical Sciences: Development of digital educational resources for year 2 undergraduate students.

School / Department: Deanery of Biomedical Sciences, Edinburgh Medical School

Team members: Dimitra Anglou, Sabrina Shafiq, VP (name protected), Celine Caquineau

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Grant recipients are expected to submit a brief report at the conclusion of their project which outlines briefly

Brief Report (maximum 500 words)

What was the project about?

Three undergraduate students and one academic worked as partners to design and produce digital resources aimed at year 2 undergraduate students. The core of the project was for all team members to experience working in equal partnership, whereby all team members, academic and students, would contribute equally to the decision making, direction of the project and to the production of the resources.

What did you do?

This pilot project aimed to initiate the development of educational resources to enhance the student learning experience in year 2 and to help students in gaining further insights on the Honours programmes before selecting their specialisation for Junior Honours. Two team members explored ways to facilitate students learning of complex course materials using animation and attended an animation workshop to learn how to use Videoscribe, a whiteboard animation software. Three team members designed and produced videos interviews with Honours students during which students described their experiences in their courses and programmes as well as discussed what they wished they had known before entering year 3. These team members designed the interview questionnaire, considered and organised the filming logistics, recruited student participants and produced the videos.

Team members' perspectives of the project:

VP: As a student, it is not common to have opportunities to work hand-in-hand with staff members, and so when I heard Dr. Celine Caquineau was recruiting students for the Open Education Project in my second year, I was excited to get involved. I really appreciate the experience gained from working with both my peers and Celine in terms of developing the actual products (i.e. the video clips) and the student-staff collaboration aspect itself. Not only was it an enjoyable learning experience, but it had also helped me further develop specialized skills such as filming, in addition to more generalized transferable skills.



DA: I joined the project at the start of my second year which I believe was the best time to start the project. I had a solid understanding of academic life but I was also not registered in my Honours program yet. I believe this was a good time to start the project as it not only helped me on an individual level but also allowed me to have a real input into the project as I could structure it according to what I wished the university was providing students with at the time. I felt that the degree course was lacking a proper breakdown of the contents of each Honours programme and what subjects would be most helpful for the fourth academic year. Therefore, I found it helpful working with other students and staff to create the videos as they offer an insight into each Honours programme. Creating the videos not only helped me personally to make a decision, but I also believe that they will help future students who find themselves in the same position as me. Working with members of staff was easier than I expected as everyone was friendly and approachable. Overall, it was a very enjoyable and educational project which allowed me to develop existing skills and acquire new ones that apply to both my degree and prospective career.

CC: Working in equal partnership with students was a very positive experience. It was a privilege to see the students' never-ending enthusiasm and commitment to the project. From the start they had a clear understanding of what was missing in their programmes and strong ideas of the type of resources needed. The main challenge was to find a suitable time for us all to meet. We managed to move away from the more accustomed student- lecturer relationship where the staff leads to a balanced way of working together where each of us provided suggestions and ideas, made decisions and contributed to the project equally. It was a very enjoyable experience which is encouraging me to consider how student -staff partnerships could be integrated in other aspects of my work such as course design.

What's next? How could these benefits be extended to other parts of the university?

The resources produced were to be released to students during the "Choosing the honours programmes" event in March, which had to be cancelled due to the current pandemic. We are in the process of developing webpages for the resources to be available on Learn. We hope to complement these resources by adding interviews of students involved in different honours courses. Importantly these resources will give students an opportunity to hear authentic experiences from students in later stage of their degree and thus to better understand the expectations of Honours years.

This pilot project also illustrates the benefits, for all involved, of having students and staff working along as partners. Even small-scale projects like this one can help in blurring the "Student -Staff divide" and in reinforcing a sense of inclusive academic community.

Special thanks:

The team would like to thank Ari Cass-Maran for help and enthusiasm with this project.



Who can be contacted for further details?

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Financial statement:

This project has remaining funds unused and we require details of how to return the balance. The Principal Investigator or School Administrator appropriate can provide financial statements showing the funding usage as and when required by the UoE Development Trusts who may require it for auditing purposes.