



Case Study: Engineering Product Design (4th Year)

Students in charge of course delivery and assessment

What are the aims/goals of your 'Students as Partners' initiative?

I want students in my final year 'Product Design' course to own their learning and to do this, it is necessary for them to 'buy-in' as valued stakeholders.

How does your 'Students as Partners' initiative practically work?

Students (N = 20 - 40) are given written course details in Week 1: learning objectives, delivery methods, assessment etc. In addition, I spend 10 minutes outlining what I am proposing and why during the first class. The students consider the 'draft' course design and are given a week to respond in writing - either agreeing or proposing something new. I assign a small amount of marks (3%) to this activity to ensure that they give it serious consideration. In Week 2, the students systematically discuss their responses and debate proposals for change until a consensus is reached. I then revise the course profile (syballus) as necessary and we carry out our collective plan. Over the years, changes to the course have included the trivial (e.g. change of submission dates), the social (e.g. the use end of year prize money for a cohort celebration), the content (e.g. the inclusion of an experiential field trip to a trade show), and the delivery (e.g. increase the number of industry guest speakers). I believe this instils shared ownership for the course (and thus engagement), and acknowledges my respect for the students as trusted adults capable of making sensible decisions about their own learning. Students often rate the course as one of the best of their entire program, and indicate that they feel that it is a fitting capstone course that aids their transition to industry by treating them as equals in the learning process.

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