

23 Things – Students as Partners case study



Summary of the initiative

[23 Things](#) is a self-paced online digital skills program designed to help students develop the digital capabilities required for successful study, work and life. The program consists of a combination of synchronous and asynchronous activities through self-paced online modules, workshops and creative digital challenges on topics as diverse as video editing, digital security and virtual reality. Participants are guided through the program through a weekly email with information and updates about topics and activities, and regular blogs which share demonstrations and illustrate everyday examples. The program also strives to keep students engaged using transmedia storytelling to weave the topics together and create an engaging learning experience. The program is open to anyone, and Curtin students can earn a Curtin Extra Certificate by participating.

How are students engaged as partners?

From August to December 2019 a team of 12 students were employed through Earn While You Learn to create the content for the online modules (including interactive learning activities using H5P), assist with designing and creating the website and other learning materials, and design and facilitate workshops. In 2020 -21 we have continued to employ 5 students to assist us with content development, workshops and communication/engagement with participants.

The students have been involved at all levels of the partnership continuum, from inform to empower. We briefed them with the background and rationale for the program, including parameters and constraints, and continue to communicate that information as required. From the outset, we wanted the “student voice” to be front and centre in the program, with a tagline of “created by students, for students”. Initially our student partners surveyed other students and consulted with their peers and Library staff to select the topics to be included in the program. They were then involved at all levels of the program development, including planning, development of content, website development, story ideas and graphic design work. Throughout this collaborative process the student partners have proposed new ideas in relation to content, presentation and ways the program can be developed and improved

based on feedback and experience. They have also assisted by developing solutions to issues that have arisen, which we have implemented.



What cohorts of students are engaged as partners?

Undergraduate students. Our initial team of 12 students was representative of a range of Faculty/discipline areas, as well as diverse backgrounds including students with accessibility issues, low SES, and Indigenous students.

What was the impact of engaging students as partners?

By engaging students as partners and trusting them with content creatorship, the project was able to deliver inclusive learning. The diversity of student creators lent itself to a multiplicity of voices, representation, and examples as they drew on models from their everyday, sharing their experience and perspectives. Enabling the students to take ownership of different topics resulted in a unique sense of style and flavour for each of those learning experiences, and concepts that can often alienate through jargon became familiar and accessible.

The 23 Things program has been popular, with over 600 Curtin students currently participating in 2021. We believe that the appeal of the program is largely because it has been created by students. The 'look and feel' of the program is fresh and contemporary, a result which can be credited to the input of our student partners. Moreover the content is presented in such a way to be relatable, and participants have enjoyed attending workshops run by their peers, including the social interactions that result.

The student-partners have also developed skills to make them valuable employees - not only the digital skills they have acquired as a result of creating the learning content, but also agility, collaboration, teamwork, problem-solving and critical and creative thinking.



What United Nations Sustainable Development Goals have been addressed through this initiative?

23 Things addresses the goals of Quality Education (no. 4) and Good Health and Wellbeing (no. 3).

What are the next steps for this initiative?

As 23 Things is now a Curtin Extra program we are currently working on establishing and testing the methods by which participants can demonstrate their learning and the level of their participation. We are also continuing to develop more learning resources and materials to supplement the program, developing the transmedia storytelling aspects of the program as a means of communicating and engaging with participants, and continuing to experiment with ways to create meaningful learning experiences for our participants.

Our (now small) team of student partners continue to be involved in all aspects of the program (except administration), particularly in the areas of participant engagement, workshop facilitation, and online content and learning resource creation.

Conclusion

Partnering with students on the 23 Things has been very enjoyable and a highlight for the Library staff involved. Relinquishing control of many aspects of the project to the students and putting our confidence and trust in their ability to deliver the outcomes we wanted has been amply rewarded.

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