



# Academic Skills Students as Partners Program: from *‘listening to’* to *‘partnering with’*

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**Academic Skills**



# Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that the University of Melbourne Parkville Campus is on the lands of the Wurundjeri people who have been custodians of this land for over 40,000 years. The University has other campuses and sites around Victoria too, so today we acknowledge and pay our respects to Wurundjeri Elders past and present, and those Traditional Owners of our other campuses, and to those whose land it is wherever you are joining us from today.

# Overview

30 minutes

Learnings

30 minutes

Discussion

30 minutes

Q & A

# Academic Skills Student Partner Program

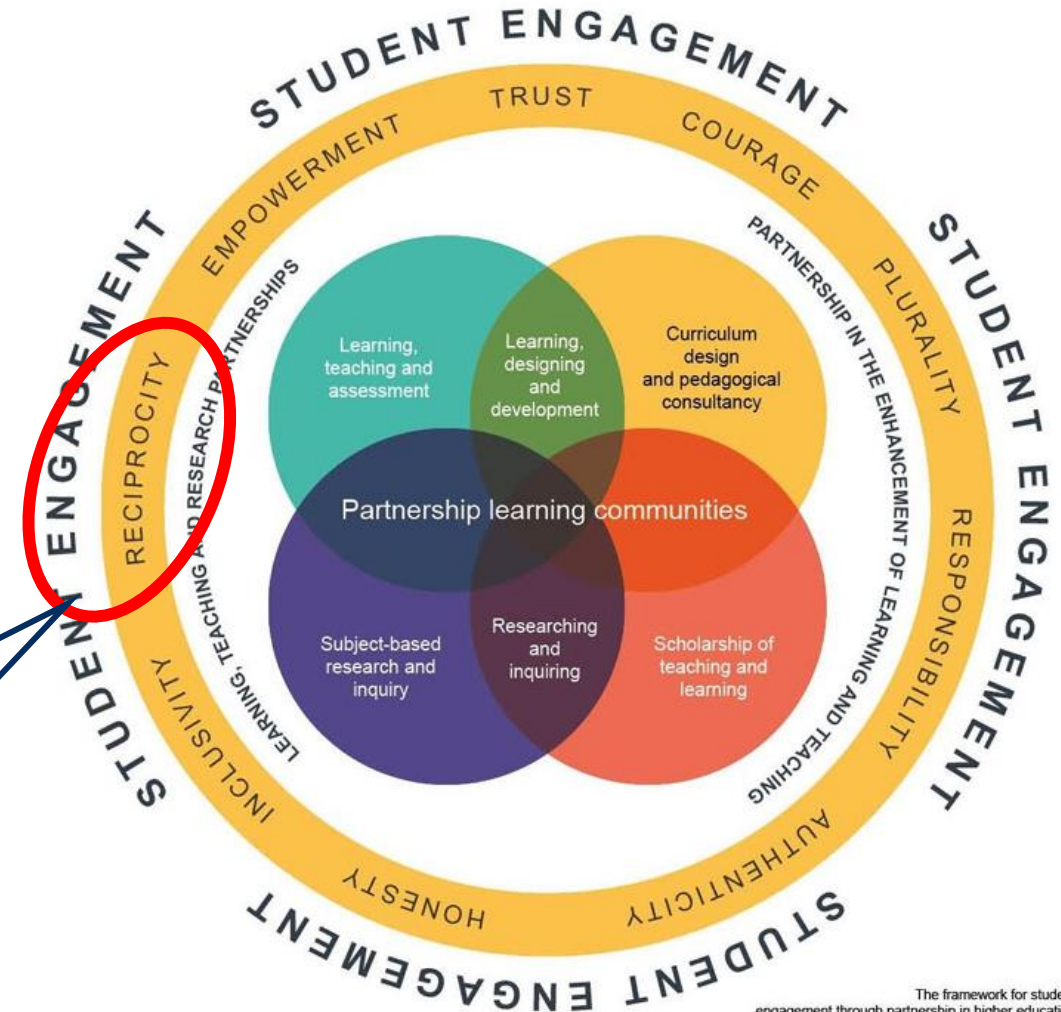
Voluntary (minimum of 20h per semester)

Academic, English language, intercultural and professional skills

- 75 students (undergraduate & graduate coursework, international & domestic, remote & on campus)
- Most staff
- 25 projects
- Workshop program

Partner with students **systematically** and **consistently**, to develop the trust required to move away from traditional hierarchical models of expertise and achieve **reciprocal benefits**.

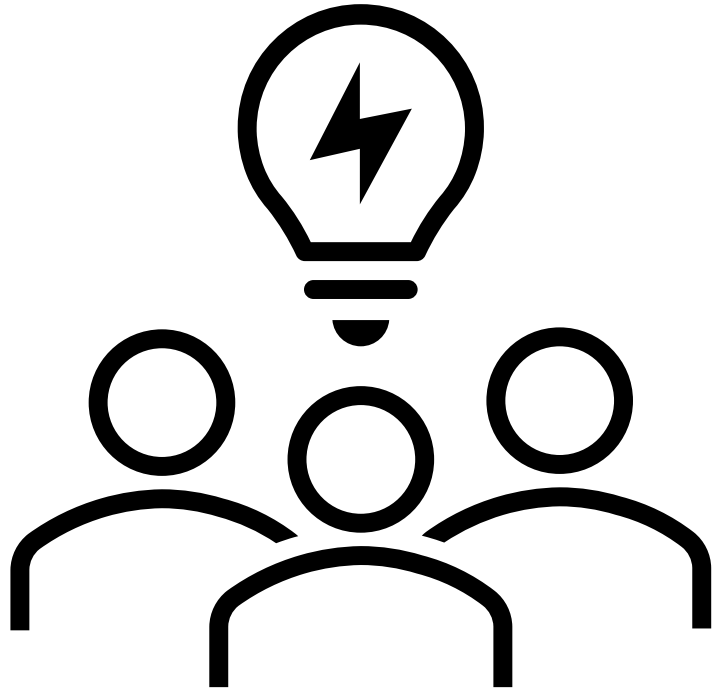
*“All parties have an interest in, and stand to benefit from working and/or learning in partnership.”*



# Provide ongoing

## 1. Support a shift in perspective

✓  
for



From *listening* to students to *partnering* with them in a more systematic and reciprocal way.

Discussed program goals

Provided guidelines

Sought expressions of interest

Asked team to contribute

Regular catch ups

Overtly focused on reciprocal benefits

Formalised program

Shared successes and learnings



## 2. Create space for growth: workshops

***‘Start from scratch’: avoid sharing past slides/work***



### Connect

Meet up

Discuss  
goals &  
workshop  
principles

Plan  
approach



### Design

Develop  
materials  
and agree  
on delivery  
approach



### Practice

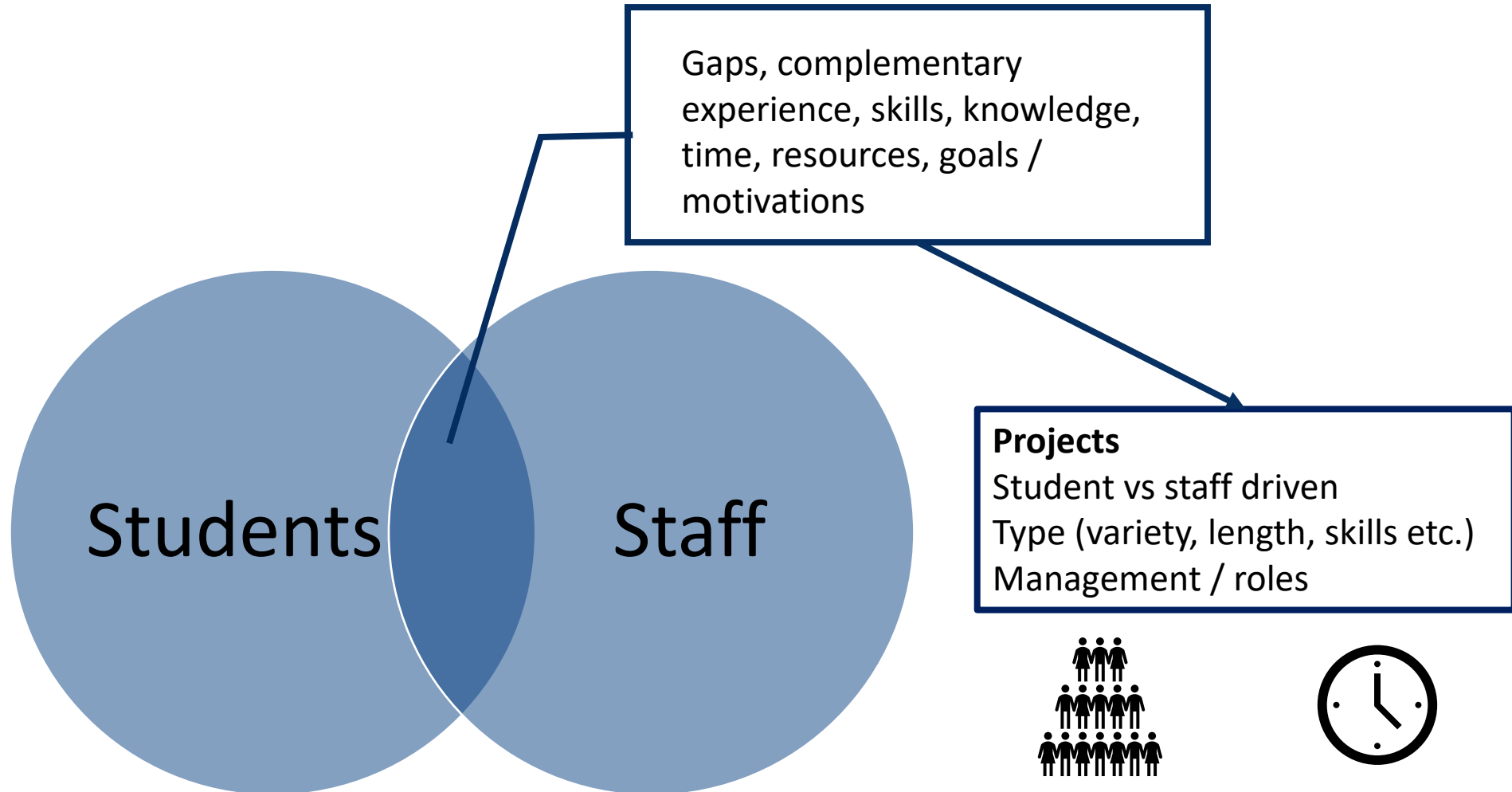
Organise a  
run through



### Feedback

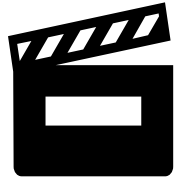
Reflect on  
and discuss  
session;  
make notes  
for next  
time

## 2. Create 'space' for growth: projects





# Projects



Videos



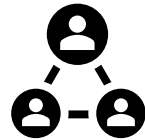
Digital  
resources



Student blog



Teacher  
toolkit



Community  
engagement



Research  
project



UX

For more projects, see our website: <https://students.unimelb.edu.au/academic-skills/students-as-partners-program>



### 3. Focus on the process

Student partnership should be viewed as **a mutually beneficial process, rather than an outcome** (Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011; Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014; HEA, 2015; Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2017).

It takes time, space and experience to build trust and confidence

Need for support or ‘approval’ lessens over time

#### *Staff:*

*“I observed a shift in my approach from leading to guiding across the semester. It’s important to help students to understand that their contributions help to shape the direction of the project – it’s not fixed.”*

#### *Student:*

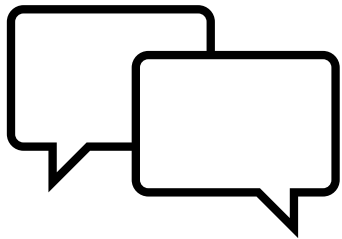
*“I can personally feel the growth I have experienced as a person over the past couple of months. I feel more confident, more inclusive, and more impactful. I feel that my voice, my opinions are being heard, and I am making a difference in my university community.”*

*“My position as a student has reversed, instead of being a listener, I had a fresh chance to become an active speaker of my own experiences and advocator of new ideas.”*

## 4. Communicate, evaluate and reflect



Encourage ongoing group and personal reflection  
Ongoing meetings with staff, project based meetings  
Focus groups and surveys



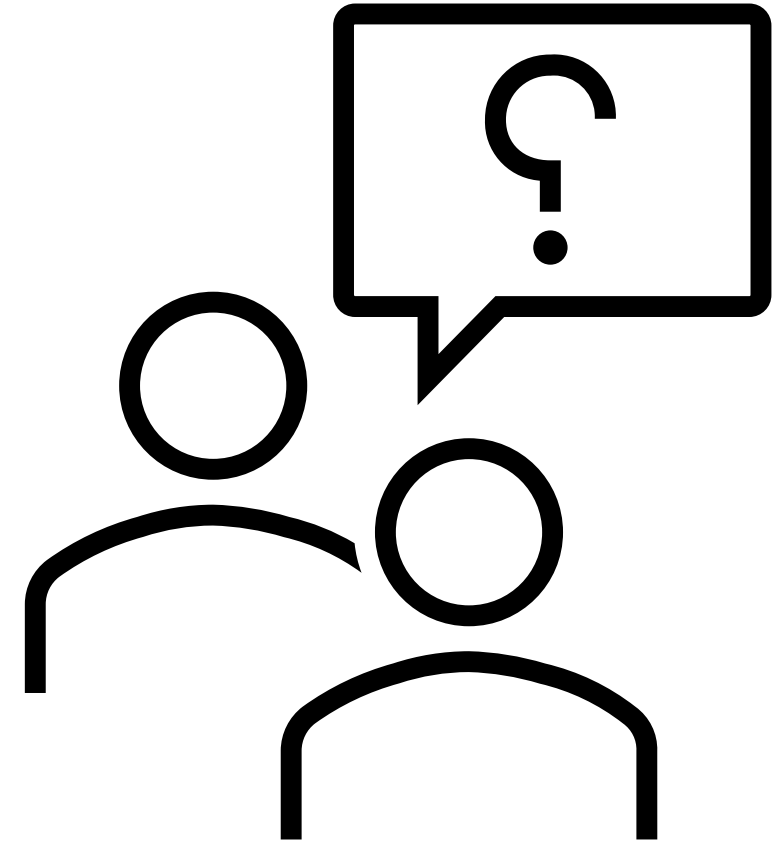
Agree on communication methods early  
Be explicit about expectations

# Future goals

How can we continue to encourage a partnership approach within resourcing constraints?

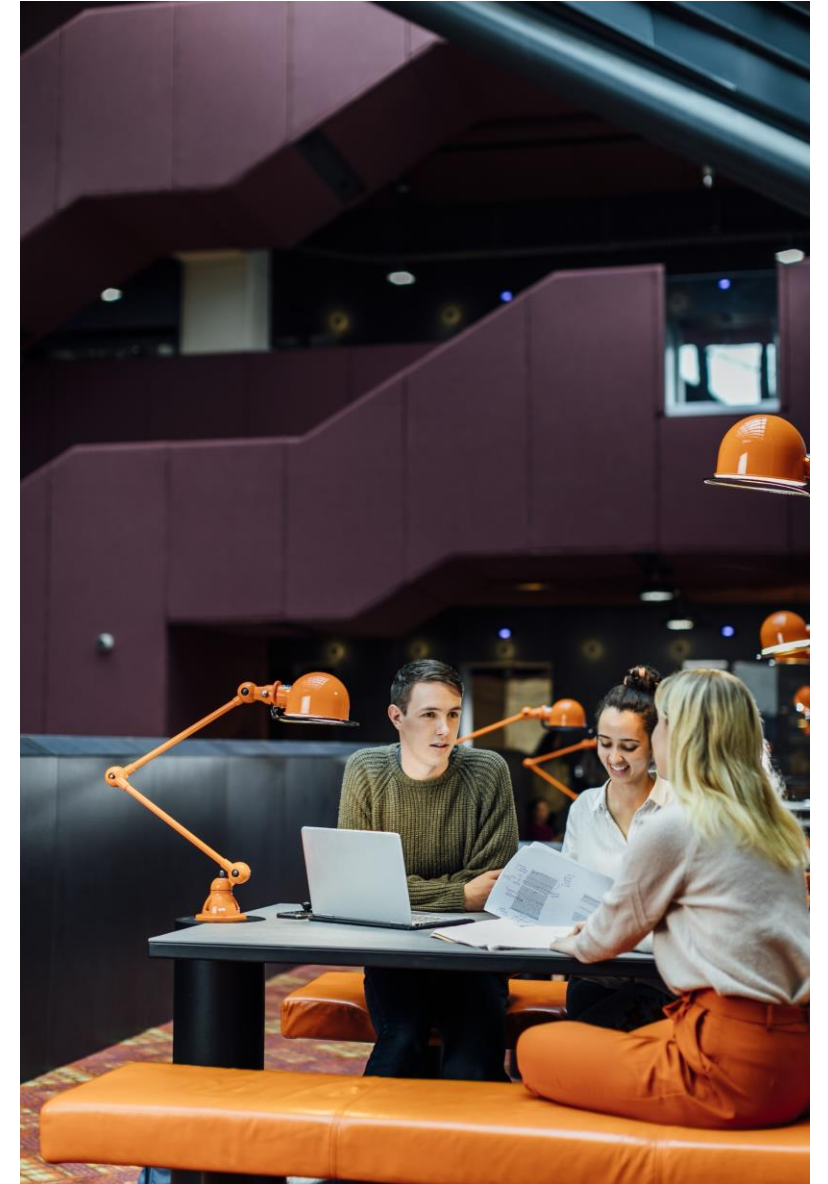
How can we expand the program sustainably?

What can we do to achieve greater diversity and inclusivity?



# Discussion

- What does/would true student-staff partnership look like in your team/area?
- How did/would you set up the program to enable this shift in practice?





# Questions?





# References

- Bovill, C., Cook-Sather, A., & Felten, P. (2011). Students as co-creators of teaching approaches, course design, and curricula: implications for academic developers. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 16(2), 133-145. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2011.568690>
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- Mercer-Mapstone, L., Dvorakova, S.L., Matthews, K.E., Abbot, S., Cheng, B., Felten, P., Knorr, K., Marquis, E., Shammas, R., & Swaim, K. (2017). A systematic literature review of students as partners in Higher Education. *International Journal of Students as Partners*, 1(1), pp. 1-23.



# Get in touch

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