

## **Employers as Partners for Learning in Built Environment Education.**

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### **Short abstract**

This session will showcase an on-going partnership between practitioners and Architectural Technology academics at the University of Ulster. It will highlight how a collaborative approach has led to an innovative teaching and learning environment for students, bringing elements of real life practice into the classroom.

### **Outline**

This session will provide a brief overview of an on-going Higher Education Academy funded project, which involves a number of practitioners working with Architectural Technology academics at the University of Ulster. The aim of the partnership is to create a series of Architectural Technology eBooks, which can be used as a teaching resource within the classroom and as an additional learning resource for the students outside the classroom. This collaboration works as the practitioners (some of whom are past graduates of the course) provide real life content for the eBooks in the form of architectural images, details, drawings, case studies and video interviews. All of these resources help to bring the real world into the classroom, providing a more valuable learning experience for the students. This, along with additional content prepared by the academics (three dimensional models, interactive images, keynote presentations and formative assessment activities) provides for an innovative and interactive learning experience. The partnership extends further than simply providing content for the eBooks. Practitioners are also involved as members of a working group to advise on the content of the books and the topics that are most relevant in helping to prepare the students for the world of work. This type of partnership is surely considered a good example of providing professional education to prepare students for professional life.

This presentation links to the 'employers as partners' strand and demonstrates how employers can contribute to curriculum delivery and provide students with an understanding of the expectations and challenges they will encounter in the world of work following graduation. The

purpose of this project is to align the course with the real world, making students more employable as they are exposed to everyday real world scenarios.

The session will begin with a brief introduction to the project and one of the completed iBooks will be presented. Participants will then be asked to engage in discussion to determine if a similar approach would be useful in their discipline area.

## Keywords

Partnership, Employers, eLearning, Learning, iBooks, Education

## Audience

This session is aimed at those academics that are currently using, or are planning to use, employers as partners in the delivery of learning material and as a means of enhancing the student learning experience. It is also aimed at educators who aim to provide students with 'real world' learning, preparing them for professional life and creating a rich and productive learning environment.

## Impact

This session should appeal to those with a genuine interest in aligning the learning experience with professional life. It will look at employers as partners from a Built Environment perspective, but will also discuss how those within other discipline areas can integrate similar approaches into their teaching. The presentation will provide an overview of some of the innovative technologies that have been used to facilitate the creation of the learning and teaching resources and how others can implement similar approaches within their specific discipline area.

## Key messages

Facilitate the discussion and debate of the benefits of employers as partners for learning  
Disseminate and showcase evidence informed practice from the Built Environment sector  
Highlight how employers can become involved in student learning.

## Links to HEA work

Please tick the box if the work to be presented has been funded by the HEA.

This presentation links to work which was funded by a HEA Teaching Development Grant. The funding was awarded in August 2012.

Please tick the box if you are a HEA National Teaching Fellow.

## Special equipment

No special equipment required. I intend to use my own laptop and iPad to demonstrate the use and creation of the iBooks.

## Live filming

Please tick the box if you agree to your session being filmed and made available via the web.

## Chairing

Please tick the box if you would be willing to chair another session.