



# Curriculum Design Pattern

Global Learning by Design

Name of Pattern

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**Using Facebook to Build a Community of Learners**

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Authors

Cindy O'Malley, Pauline Porcaro and Denise Jackson.

Purpose/intent

To improve communication with students and workplace supervisors and to facilitate a community of learners for students engaged in WIL.

Feedback from both students and clients has been very positive, and a number of students have also been employed by companies involved in the course as a client.

Problem/opportunity

Students on long-term placements may feel disconnected from RMIT University—this project aims to enhance their connectedness with RMIT University, even when on long placements (40 weeks) in geographically distant situations.

## Known solutions

Facebook Secret Groups are only visible to those who are invited to join—it is a private way of communicating with students, their workplace supervisors and academics at RMIT University. Importantly, it is accessible from many mobile devices and is a social networking tool that they already use... we are just adding another group to their current practice.

## Context

This is applicable to any course, but is particularly helpful where students are not on-site at the university.

## Instructions/process

1. Apply to RMIT University for approval to set up Facebook Secret Group.
2. Attend Social Media Training—via DevelopMe.
3. Modify the Generic User Guide to specific requirements for the course—eg to create a Student User Guide and Workplace Supervisor User Guide.
4. Setup the Facebook Secret Group
  - a. Invite students by email, attach Student User Guide and Quick Reference Guide (QRG).
  - b. Invite academics by email, attach Academic Supervisor User Guide and QRG.
  - c. Facilitate student engagement with the Facebook site (several weeks)
  - d. Invite Workplace Supervisors by email, attach Workplace Supervisor User Guide and QRG; send link to video.

## Resources

Resources provided include the Generic User Guide which can be modified to suit use as a Workplace Supervisor User Guide, a Student User Guide or an Academic Supervisor User Guide. The Administrators Guide provides details on selection, creation and administration of the group and techniques to engage the students. The Quick Reference Guide provides simple instruction on Facebook use.

## Impact

The impact on Professional Practice in Laboratory Medicine has been significant. The students feel less isolated; they feel that RMIT University is still engaged in supervising their welfare and learning. Some quotes from the CES...

1. It is an informal way to ask questions and receive quality feedback. It also helped to see the problems other people were having and taking note of the solution for future use.
2. ...the Facebook page has made communication very easy and accessible whilst on placement.
3. The Facebook page has been a great tool for connecting with other students and academic staff throughout the semester. I feel like it really gives a sense of community, and that there is plenty of support. I feel like it has been a great forum where you can be comfortable in asking any question.

## Discussion/consequences

One of the greatest potential issues with social media is that extreme or inappropriate opinions may be posted. This was not found to be an issue with this cohort of students in this forum.

## Category

WIL, Communication for strategies to persuade students to engage in learning prior to attending flipped classroom activities.

## Acknowledgements

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(Adapted from [www2.tisip.no/E-LEN/tutorial/02.html](http://www2.tisip.no/E-LEN/tutorial/02.html))

# Process of Communicating with our Professional Practice Students and Workplace Supervisors

