

# **Instructional Technology Students' Reflections on a Virtual Internship Program**

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## **Abstract**

The opportunity to gain industry experience offers instructional technology graduate students with an advantage in a competitive career field and the chance to experience real-world work in their chosen profession. Experiential programs, such as internships, allow students to apply academic knowledge in a practical industry setting and reflect on their personal learning process. This research study explores students' reflection-based assessments during a virtual internship program through an authentic learning framework. Through a preliminary investigation, it has been identified that after undertaking this internship program, instructional technology students from an American university have advanced their hands-on learning to include complex problem-solving, collaboration, articulation of subject knowledge, researching information from multiple sources, and completion of real-world activities and tasks as assigned by an internship mentor. This research suggests that an internship program, such as the one examined, contributes to key knowledge and skills needed by today's instructional technology graduates. It also provides evidence of the need for a well-rounded and scaffolded internship approach, which enhances the learning process and the students' real-world industry experience.

This research focuses on the students from an instructional technology graduate program who are participating in the internship program in the fall 2022 and spring 2023 sessions. Data will be collected from students' reflective journals to gather rich self-reported insights into the students' learning experiences and into the underlying dimensions of their internship practices. The data will be evaluated using content and thematic analysis.

**Keywords:** Higher Education, E-learning, Teaching and Learning, Internship, Graduate Students, Virtual