

ExLENT Beginnings Track National Convening

Facilitating Experiential Learning for Emerging and Novel Technologies

Discussion: Day One Thoughts and Impressions

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Translation

ExLENT is not only about creating experiences. It is also about translating across the languages of education, skills, and hiring.

- Connect degrees, skills, coursework, and workforce value
- Help students name and demonstrate what they can do
- Help employers see what is embedded in academic programs
- Build shared language around competencies and outcomes

Communication thread

Communication makes learning visible: to students, employers, faculty, and policymakers.

Partnership

Industry partnerships are emerging as a strength, but still one of the most persistent challenges.

- Look beyond one-off relationships to structures and incentives
- Offer multiple entry points: projects, mentors, modules, equipment
- Recognize internships are not the only partnership model
- Use intermediaries, startups, and regional ecosystems where helpful

Communication thread

More intentional, continuous communication can turn relationships into durable partnerships.

Community & Mentorship

“Constellation mentorships” stood out: learners are supported by many people across the ecosystem.

- Mentorship can come from faculty, staff, peers, employers, and alumni
- Support can happen in the flow of work, not only formal meetings
- Coach technical work, project management, leadership, and workplace norms
- Turn students with positive experiences into ambassadors

Communication thread

Community-building depends on making the ecosystem visible and navigable to learners.

Sustainability

Sustainability is about more than replacing grant dollars. It is about value, evidence, incentives, and visibility.

- Demonstrate ROI to leaders, employers, funders, and policymakers
- Explore braided funding, work-study, and policy alignment
- Make workforce success stories visible to elected officials and institutions
- Treat employment outcomes and longitudinal evidence as high-value signals

Communication thread

Sustaining the work requires telling the story of value in language each stakeholder recognizes.

Bridge to today's work

These themes are connected parts of a larger system.

Translation, partnership, mentorship, communication, and sustainability all depend on how students, educators, employers, intermediaries, funders, and policymakers interact.

Question for the breakouts

Where are the leverage points that can make this work easier to scale, sustain, and replicate?

1. Translation

- **Translating between:** degrees and skills, classroom learning and employer language, student experience and hiring processes, academic outcomes and workforce value
- This is not just a student issue or employer issue; it is a **systems issue**.
- **Communication:**
 - Students need help communicating what they know and can do.
 - Employers need clearer ways to understand what is embedded in academic programs.
 - Programs need shared language around skills, competencies, and outcomes.

2. Partnerships

- Industry partnerships are showing up as both a strength and a challenge
- We may need to look beyond individual relationships.
- What structures, incentives, and intermediaries make partnership sustainable?
- Partnerships can take many forms:
 - internships, mentorship, equipment, learning modules, classroom engagement, project ideas
- Startup/small-company placements can have outsized impact/value to our students and our institutions
- **Communication:**
 - Academia and industry need more intentional, continuous communication.
 - We need clearer entry points for employers.
 - We need to communicate that partnership can mean more than internships or funding.

3. Community and Mentorship

- **“Constellation mentorships”** stood out.
- Learners are supported by many people across the ecosystem
- Mentorship can happen in the flow of work:
 - technical coaching, project management, leadership, workplace norms, interview preparation
- Students with positive experiences can become ambassadors for future students.
- **Communication:**
 - Learners need to understand who is in their network and how to use it.
 - Mentors and partners need enough communication to reinforce one another without over-structuring the experience.
 - Community-building depends on making the ecosystem visible to students

4. Sustainability

- Sustainability is about more than replacing grant dollars.
- Levers discussed included:
 - ROI, braided funding, work-study, policy alignment, employer engagement, visibility to institutional leaders, visibility to elected officials
- Workforce success stories matter to governors, local officials, senior leaders, and funders.
- Metrics of success are sometimes difficult to capture. Student employment outcomes, longitudinal studies offer great value.
- Communication:
 - Sustainability depends on telling the story of value in ways different stakeholders can recognize.
 - We need to communicate outcomes in the language of institutions, employers, policymakers, funders, and learners.
 - Making success visible is part of sustaining the work.

Table Discussion

At your table (3–5 minutes):

What stood out to you most from Day One?

Discuss with your colleagues and be prepared to share **one insight, question, or opportunity** with the larger group.

Looking Ahead

- **Translation, partnership, mentorship, communication, and sustainability** all depend on how students, educators, employers, intermediaries, funders, and policymakers interact.
- These themes are connected parts of a larger system.
- As we move into today's sessions, something to consider is: where are the leverage points that can make this work easier to **scale, sustain, and replicate?**