

RESEARCH ARTICLE

We are the Process: Reflections on the Underestimation of Power in Students as Partners in Practice

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ABSTRACT

The concept of Students as Partners (SaP) has much merit; however, further reflection on the power embedded in daily SaP processes and relationships is needed. In this article, we use the SaP model articulated by Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) to examine three reflections of SaP in practice from two different Canadian post-secondary contexts. Informed by critical pedagogical theory and feminist theory, we highlight sites of harmony and dissonance between the Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) model (theory) and our reflections (practice) and highlight embedded power relations in SaP processes and practices. We argue that there is often an underestimation of power in SaP.

KEYWORDS

students as partners, power, critical pedagogical theory, feminist theory, reflective practice.

By way of beginning, we would like to introduce ourselves.

Angela: I graduated from the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC) in 2016 with a BA in Environmental Studies and Political Science. I also served as the president of the undergraduate student union at UNBC and on University Senate.

Roselynn: I am a Curriculum Consultant at the Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Technology at the University of British Columbia (UBC), where I have worked in a variety of educational development roles since 2008. I am also a doctoral student in UBC's Department of Educational Studies.

Heather: I am currently the Director of the Centre for Teaching, Learning, and Technology at the University of Northern British Columbia. Trained as a political scientist, I'm also a Professor of International Studies.

We have been conversing together for two years. Fittingly, conversations are at the heart of our work and this article. Heather and Roselynn began having conversations at the 2014 conference of the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL), and, quickly thereafter, Angela joined us. Our conversations were about student voice, Students as Partners (SaP), and our respective experiences with and in partnerships. Our conversations also focused on the insights critical theory, feminist theory (drawn from different disciplines), and critical pedagogical theory could bring to our understanding of SaP. Through conversations, we have "lived" the concept of SaP. Working, reflecting, and presenting together has profoundly impacted our understanding of situational and positional power, privilege (understood as social location), and how voices are heard and whose voices are heard in what and how we write. This article is the output of SaP in practice.

Our central analytical position is that there is much merit in the concept of SaP. We also believe, similar to Seale, Gibson, Haynes, and Potter (2015), and consistent with the work of Allin (2014) and Mihans, Long, and Felten (2008), that deeper personal reflection on the power embedded in SaP processes and relationships is of considerable value. In this article, we focus on the SaP model articulated by Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) before moving to three personal reflections of SaP in practice. Through examination of the reflections, we highlight harmony and dissonance between the theory and practice of SaP and discuss embedded power relations in SaP processes and practices. We acknowledge that there is existing scholarship that raises important questions related to power (see Cook-Sather, 2007; Cook-Sather & Alter, 2011; Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, & Moore-Cherry, 2016; Felten et al., 2013; Mihans et al., 2008). At the same time, some scholarly processes can distance voice, personal struggle, and experiences from readers. Consequently, we believe that power relations in partnership are sometimes underestimated.

OUR METHODOLOGICAL AND THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS: CRITICAL AND FEMINIST THEORY

The tone and style of this article is conversational. For example, there are sections where we adopt first-person narrative. The use of narrative and conversational writing styles challenges the dominance of authoritative voice that is often adopted in scholarly writing and underscores how traditional positivist approaches regularly "deny all traces of self in scholarly writing" (Dauphinee, 2010, p. 804). The authoritative voice is one of distance and detachment and is often coupled with homogenization of voices in the ways in which scholarship is disseminated. In the context of SaP, this runs the risk of losing all voices, particularly the student voice.

Our analysis began with conversations about the concept of SaP and the intersection or lack thereof with the theoretical orientations of our disciplines. We were drawn to Healey et

al.'s (2014) conceptual model but were curious to see how it could be applied to our lived experience. Therefore, and as will be seen below, after identifying our shared theoretical viewpoint, we engaged in a literature review, analyzed the model articulated by Healey et al., and applied it to our own SaP reflections. Using our own theoretical viewpoints, we problematized our reflections and identified sites of harmony and dissonance between the Healey et al. model and our reflections.

Through our partnership, we created a shared interdisciplinary theoretical foundation informed by critical pedagogical theory and feminist theory from the field of International Relations (IR). The work of critical educational theorists such as Henry Giroux, Ira Shor, and Paulo Freire shapes our understanding of, and approach to, the classroom. Giroux, for example, identifies the existence of “the culture of positivism” (1997, p. 20). In the culture of positivism, rationality, facts, and data are privileged. Knowledge is treated as objective, impersonal, bounded, measurable, universal, and ahistorical (Giroux, 1997). Teaching practices are about domination, not emancipation, and are informed by “principles of order, control, and certainty” (Giroux, 1997, p. 25). Through this paper, these are concepts that we challenge and work against.

Freire (2002) calls our attention to “banking education,” which discourages critical inquiry, grants authority to teachers as mediators and speakers of knowledge, separates teacher and students, and treats students as mere empty receptors to be filled. In a banking classroom, authentic learning—learning which is connected to the world in which we live—is denied. Shor (1992), working from a perspective informed by Giroux and Freire, tells us that curriculum, content, and teaching are not neutral. Shor, in a compelling argument in favor of critical education, tells us that students are not deficits: “they are complex, substantial human beings who arrive in class with diverse cultures, languages, interests, feelings, experiences, and perceptions” (Shor, 1992, p. 32).

Feminist IR scholars encourage us to adopt a “feminist curiosity” (Enloe, 2004, p. 3), investigate “sites of everyday life” (Enloe, 2004, p. 5), challenge disciplinary practices that seek to shape who and how we study (Doty, 2001; Sylvester, 2009; Zalewski, 2006), and regard “theorising as a way of life, a form of life, something we all do, every day, all the time” (Zalewski, 1996, p. 346). The feminist IR literature reminds us to ask: For whom is this theory (Zalewski, 1996)? Where are the silences and margins (Enloe, 1996)? Whose voices do we hear (Doty, 2004; 2001)?

Feminist IR theory prompts us to interrogate disciplines and scholarship for silences, such as the absence of gender in our field; upset assumptions of neutrality; highlight the power in social relationships; and consider the everyday. Critical education theorists provide the bridge from our disciplines to our classrooms, which are political spaces and potential sites of silences.

Given its orientation towards disruption of traditional structures and ways of being in post-secondary contexts, critical pedagogical undertones, and focus on student voice, the concept of SaP initially fit easily into our theoretical perspective. While we still believe there is significant potential in the concept of SaP, we believe there can be gaps between theory and practice. Similar to Seale et al. (2015), we recognize that there is a need to reflect on “the rhetorical and reality” (p. 550) and to share our own struggles and lived experiences. With this in mind, we now turn to the literature on SaP.

STUDENTS AS PARTNERS

There is a growing movement within higher education to involve students as contributors in all aspects of teaching and learning. From our perspective, the inclusion of students is essential, since the study of teaching and learning would be noticeably one-sided without the participation of students. As educators working in post-secondary institutions, we exist in our roles primarily because of the learners that we serve through our teaching. Scholars have positioned themselves within sub-fields often referred to as student engagement, SaP, and students as co-inquirers. Although there is overlap among these sub-fields, we believe it is important to identify some of the nuances and differences between them in order to position ourselves within the literature. Scholars who are interested in student engagement (see Christenson, Reschly, & Wylie, 2012; Dunne & Owen, 2013; Nygaard, Brand, Bartholomew, & Millard, 2013), are often focused on the range of ways that students can be engaged in teaching and learning activities both within and beyond the classroom. SaP scholars (see Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011; Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Healey et al., 2014; Healey & Jenkins, 2009) often explore ways to involve students as equal partners in efforts to improve teaching and learning. For example, this can involve having students provide feedback to faculty on their teaching through peer review programs, involving students in creating assignments for courses, or involving students as researchers. Scholars who are interested in students as co-inquirers (see Weller, Domarkaite, Joseph, & Metta, 2013; Werder & Otis, 2010; Werder, Thibou, & Kaufer, 2012), are often focused on engaging students as co-inquirers or co-researchers in all aspects of research processes pertaining to improving teaching and learning. Regardless of positioning, many of the above scholars have examined common issues pertaining to involving students as contributors to teaching and learning, including, but not limited to accessible strategies, best practices, innovations, and theoretical considerations, all of which help to advance this growing field.

The concept of SaP has considerable value. Generally, there is an intention to challenge traditional authoritative structures in post-secondary institutions (Cook-Sather & Alter, 2011; Mihans et al., 2008), even if the impetus for these practices is related to government regulation, as is the case in the UK (Seale et al., 2015). There is often a sensitivity to power dynamics in relationships between the student and instructor or institution (Cook-Sather, 2009; Cohen, Cook-Sather, & Lesnick, 2013; Healey et al., 2014). While the degrees of engagement, inclusion, or partnership may vary (Brooman, Darwent, & Pimor, 2015; Seale et al., 2015), the work is generally motivated by a desire to enhance the student voice in higher education, to challenge traditional institutional structures, and to disrupt traditional student-faculty power relations.

Despite the focus on challenging traditional authoritative structures and the sensitivity to power dynamics, we believe that some of the literature is overly laudatory, and we call for more work that includes personal reflections on power relations in the research and partnership process (for example, see Allin, 2014; Burke, 2013; Mihans et al., 2008; Seale et al., 2015) and in the articulation of what constitutes scholarship and who counts as scholars. There are cases where students, who are the object of study, also have voices in the study or are acknowledged as co-authors (Seale et al., 2015; Werder, Pope-Raurk, & Verwoord, 2016;

Werder et al., 2016). In other cases, the voice of the student is homogenized, lost, silenced, unclear, or treated as data.

It is essential that we consider the contradiction of writing in an authoritative scholarly voice about the need for SaP and then omitting student voices and our own voices from the written expression of these experiences. Seale et al. (2015) includes the voice of a student, Alice, in an article that adopts the first-person narrative style. Between 50% and 100% of the essays published in most of the issues of [*Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education*](#) are authored or co-authored by students. And the recent special issue of *Teaching and Learning Inquiry* on students as co-inquirers provides us with examples of the inclusion of the student voice in a variety of ways, not the least of which is having students respond to a particular article. It is clear that students have insight into how power can take shape in SaP relationships and practices without necessarily being participants in these practices, as they raise concerns about the “intimidating” (Silvers, 2016, p. 13) nature of a partnership or query as to whether or not the SaP model isn’t “a bit top-down reasoned” (van Dam, 2016, p. 12). We need to be mindful of the multiple sites of power in our practices.

OVERVIEW OF THE HEALEY ET AL. MODEL FOR INVOLVING STUDENTS AS PARTNERS

According to Healey et al. (2014), “partnership is understood as a relationship in which all involved are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together to foster engaged student learning and teaching enhancement. Partnership is essentially “a way of doing things, rather than an outcome in itself” (Healey, 2014, p. 2). This definition of partnership highlights the importance of seeing partnership as a process rather than a product. In addition, partnership works to “counter a deficit model where staff take on the role of enablers of disempowered students . . . aiming instead to acknowledge differentials of power while valuing individual contributions from students and staff in a shared process of reciprocal learning and working” (Healey et al., 2014, p. 15).

To illustrate the range of ways that students can engage in partnership activities to improve teaching and learning, Healey et al. (2014) developed a conceptual model that sees students working in four areas of teaching and learning including: (a) learning, teaching, and assessment; (b) curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy; (c) subject-based research and inquiry; and (d) SoTL (pp. 8-9). Their model acknowledges the overlap between these four areas and positions partnership learning communities at the heart of successful partnership activities in these areas. In addition to thinking about ways that students can engage in partnership activities, Healey et al. (2014) identified several values for working with SaP including authenticity, inclusivity, reciprocity, empowerment, trust, challenge, community, and responsibility (Healey et al., 2014).

For our paper, the Healey et al. (2014) model serves as a useful framework to analyze our reflections. We also use our reflections to analyze the model. Through this reciprocal process, we add more depth to our analysis and highlight some of the tensions that arise, thus challenging the concern expressed by Seale et al. (2015) about a lack of criticality in the literature. Bearing in mind our theoretical positions articulated above and our critique of the SaP literature, we turn to our reflections.

OUR REFLECTIONS ON HARMONY AND DISSONANCE

Roselynn Verwoord

In the summer of 2009, after having taught for one year in the Family and Community Counselling Program at Native Education College (NEC), a private Aboriginal post-secondary institution in Vancouver, BC, two former students and I worked collaboratively to develop a course student-assessment model based on the medicine wheel. This assessment model was integrated into my 2010 offering of Family and Community Counselling (FCC) 240: Child Welfare, a course in the NEC Family and Community Counselling Program, and in 2010, I conducted a Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) inquiry project to explore the question: What is the impact of using an assessment model based on the medicine wheel on students' understanding of course goals and learning objectives in FCC 240: Child Welfare? In 2012, I worked with one of the students who had helped to develop the course student-assessment model in 2009 to reflect on our experiences of working as co-inquirers in developing the model. Specifically, we were interested in the following questions: (a) What was the experience of collaboratively engaging as co-inquirers in a SoTL research project across cultural backgrounds, social locations, and status within NEC?; and (b) What opportunities and challenges arose in working across these locations to engage as co-inquirers?

In reflecting on sites of harmony and sites of dissonance within the SoTL project and in relation to Healey et al.'s (2014) partnership values, the values of trust, community, empowerment, and challenge, warrant discussion. From my perspective, the value of trust, which Healey et al. (2014) define as "all parties tak[ing] time to get to know each other, engag[ing] in open and honest dialogue and [being] confident they will be treated with respect and fairness" (pp. 14-15), is foundational to partnership work but is often difficult to create. Although my former student and I had known each other since we met in the FCC 240 course in 2008 and had worked collaboratively to develop the course student-assessment model and to reflect on our work together, it is difficult to know how much trust was present in our relationship. How well did we really know each other? How honest and open could we be with each other? Did she feel respected by me? Similarly, the value of community, which entails creating a space where all contributors feel valued and belong, prompted important reflections for me. As much as I aimed to create a space to value my former student as a person and her contributions to our work together, did she feel valued? How would I know?

The value of empowerment, which is at the heart of working with students and which aims to see power distributed appropriately with all contributors encouraged to "constructively challenge ways of working and learning that may reinforce existing inequalities" (Healey et al., 2014, p. 15), raised significant questions for me. How was power held within our partnership? Did we talk about issues of power within our partnership?

Lastly, the value of challenge, which aims to see contributors take risks in order to critique unproductive practices and structures within the partnership, raised important questions for me, including: Did we take the time to talk about our process of working together? Did we make changes to how we worked together based on conversations about how things were going?

In reflecting on sites of harmony and sites of dissonance, I am reminded of the work of Freire. As a critical social theorist who was influenced by Plato, modern Marxism, and anti-

colonial theorists and who explored the teacher-student dichotomy within the context of an unjust society, Freire identified two positions including the oppressor (the teacher) and the oppressed (the student). He stated that “oppressors need to rethink their way of life; examine their role in oppression if true liberation is to occur” and further stated that “those who authentically commit themselves to the people must re-examine themselves constantly” (Freire, 1970, p. 60). Perhaps (and despite my best intentions) I was taking on the role of the oppressor as a result of the positional power that I held in the partnership.

Freire believes that education should allow the oppressed to regain their humanity and overcome their condition, which requires that the oppressed play a role in their own liberation. For example, he states:

No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation, models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption. (Freire, 1970, p. 54)

This raises an important question in relation to SaP in SoTL: Whose models for co-inquiry are we using?

I don't have answers to the philosophical questions that I pose. This is partly because the value of questions is that they require us to live in discomfort and uncertainty. If as educators we hope to help teaching and learning become more responsive to the tensions inherent in SaP, part of the solution must begin with resolving the “teacher-student contradiction by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously students and teachers” (Freire, 1970, p. 72). This would require a fundamental paradigm shift for both students and faculty or staff collaborators within SaP, so that both teacher and student are simultaneously teacher-student and student-teacher or a teacher who learns and a learner who teaches.

Angela Kehler

As the student in this SaP model, applying Healey et al.'s (2014) model to my experience enabled me to articulate why some instructors were more effective for me than others. Upon reflection, the classes that I found useful scored higher in terms of the instructors' apparent dedication to the values in the Healey et al. model. It should be noted that I did not ask my instructors whether they were intending to apply these values in their interactions with students, which sets my experience apart from Roselynn and Heather who are in the instructor's position in their reflections. SaP in practice often requires the initiation of an instructor, which is why the attention to power dynamic is critical.

As I progressed in political science, the concept of power was pervasive in everything I was learning. This fit perfectly with our research in SaP because working with students always provokes questions about the power dynamic between us (the students) and them. Whose voice is being heard and who is in control of the conversation?

Involving SaP in teaching and learning should be done thoughtfully and with a specific intention. In order for the SaP model to be effective, it is essential for faculty to determine what their goals are for involving students and how these goals are connected to learning outcomes,

whether inside the classroom or in a different context. If these goals are shared with students, they can provide feedback to ensure their interest in participation. However, the SaP model does not work in every situation and may not align with the goals of every faculty member. As much as I would like to advocate for student involvement in every aspect of higher education, there are times when this is impractical or undesirable (e.g., in the case of content-driven introductory level courses).

Authenticity is the key principle for involving SaP in higher education. As a student, I tend to be more engaged in the classroom if it is evident that the professor cares about my learning and is committed to involving students in the development of the curriculum. Encouraging student participation at this level requires patience and improvisation, which is not something that all professors want to do. Traditional methods of teaching are more easily planned for and yield more predictable results. A transfer of knowledge from expert (faculty) to fertile minds is appealing in its simplicity, but it assumes that students represent a deficit with nothing to contribute to the learning process. We have much to contribute. Just ask.

Involving SaP in higher education means being willing to make mistakes, which is essential to innovation in teaching and learning. The professor who acknowledges their fallibility helps to break down the established power dynamic between student and faculty and allows the teacher to become a learner as well. Using this model takes a lot of time and energy and openness to new ideas from all parties involved.

Transparency is another key principle to follow when working with SaP. Students are often told that their opinion matters without seeing evidence to support this assertion, as my first case study (below), concerning the environmental planning course demonstrates. Faculty must be honest with themselves and the students in their motivation and goals for using the SaP model. In order for the model to work, mutual respect is essential.

In my third-year Environmental Planning course, we (the students) were given the opportunity to create the syllabus for the class, which was titled "Environment and Society." The professor supplied us with the topic of food and explained that we would be performing research and teaching the class ourselves. We brainstormed sub-topics of food, formed groups, and were given class time to research and plan our lectures. The professor explicitly gave us freedom to explore our own interests but ultimately had more specific expectations that were not made clear. The student lectures were not well-presented because most of the groups were attempting to re-create a traditional lecture rather than finding a way for us to meaningfully engage with the material.

This example shows a lack of authenticity on the part of the professor who did not make his expectations clear to the students. He encouraged us to be creative and explore our interests but was unsatisfied with the finished product because he had his own agenda that was not fulfilled. Students are vulnerable. Most of them want to do well in school, which means they will say what they think professors want to hear to get good grades. Many of the students did not feel comfortable challenging traditional forms of teaching and learning in the class, which resulted in dry, uninspiring student lectures.

In my second-year Research and Writing for Political Science course we were given the topic of multiculturalism in Canada and provided with a set of core articles to read, to introduce us to the conversation between scholars. We were taught how to search the library database

using keywords and drew maps of the intersecting arguments in new articles that we found. Each student chose one article from our additional research to explain the argument and how it fit into the academic conversation as a presentation to the class. Ultimately, each student wrote one paper by the end of the semester. We had lots of class time to work together and discuss the articles, which deepened our knowledge of the subject.

By providing us with a core set of articles and allowing us to build our repertoire, our instructor allowed us to take responsibility for our own learning, giving us a sense of empowerment. She gave us feedback along the way to guide us, but we were free to explore the topic and develop our own research questions. We spent most of our class time working in our groups, discussing the arguments of each scholar that contributed to the conversation of multiculturalism in Canada. We developed trust in each other and felt comfortable contributing to the class discussion. Our instructor was always available to answer our questions or to prompt us to consider alternative perspectives.

Both of these examples demonstrate the importance of the application of the Healey et al. (2014) model and its effect on the student experience. In the first example, the lack of authenticity on the part of faculty was detrimental to the learning outcomes of the class. In the second example, the instructor's ability to facilitate a conversation among students and the literature allowed us to find and use our own voices. Traditional structures of power were reinforced in the first example and shifted in the second based on how the instructors chose to engage the class.

Heather Smith

In 2012, six student partners and I published an article, "Doing It Differently: Creation of an Art gallery," in *International Studies Perspectives* on the creation of an art gallery in a class on gender and international studies. As is the case with many research collaborations (e.g., Bovill et al., 2016), I invited students to join me in the article production. Upon reflection, my initiation of the article did "influence the nature and focus of co-creation activity" (Bovill et al., 2016, p. 198). The premise for the article was mine, and the premise to include students not just as research subjects but as co-authors is a reflection of my long-standing commitment to feminist practices and feminist and critical theory (see Sjolander, Smith, & Steinstra, 2003; Smith, 2009; Smith, Smith, & Smith, 2011). I wanted to challenge assumptions of whose voices counted in scholarship and the idea of expertise because international studies is a field dominated by positivist assumptions and methods that seek truths and answers (which deny us our own humanity [Doty, 2004]). I also wanted to undermine the teacher-centric orientation of SoTL in my field, where too often articles are written solely from the perspective of faculty. I also invited students to be co-authors because of the ethics of writing a piece about students that would make them my subjects. I wanted to provide a space for the students to speak for themselves. Ethics considerations also informed the decision to include only students who were former students and not current students. All student co-authors had graduated.

I wrote the introduction, identified myself as lead author, and listed the former students as authors. I crafted a set of questions that students responded to independently. We used first-person narration, so each section reflected their voices rather than a homogenized voice. In the article, Charelle, Courtney, Leslie, Emily-Anne, Kaleigh, and Heather shared powerful insights about their experiences and raised questions about gender, intersectionality, the

connection between the personal and political, and what constitutes scholarship. As Kaleigh noted, “for most, data, theory, and peer-reviewed literature form the boundaries of what is deemed acceptable within an academic space. This art gallery assignment invariably challenged all participants to redraw the boundaries of what we conceptualized as academic” (Smith et al., 2012, p. 314). For Heather, “the assignment helped [her] to think in a more intersectional and holistic way,” and Charelle noted that “everything is linked to gender. We live in an increasingly complex world and if I gleaned nothing else from the art gallery project, it was that” (Smith et al., 2012 p. 313). The reflections of these amazing women provide more insight into this assignment than I could have ever have provided from the perspective of the faculty member.

When I reflect on the process relative to the Healey et al. (2014) model, I see harmony in some parts of the process. There is a link between Healey et al.’s (2014) principle of inclusivity and the practice of co-authoring the article because the students wrote their own sections without input from me. They were given common questions, which I crafted, but I did not edit their work prior to sending the article to the journal. I also give credit to the journal reviewers because they did not seek revisions to the students’ voices, and I believe this showed their respect for the inclusion of student voice in ways that were authentic.

For me, the benefits were significant. Because the students seemed to actively engage in the process and seemed to trust the process and me, they shared insights into their experiences that I wasn’t aware of. I like to think that there was reciprocity in the process. I exposed students to the publishing and review process. For them it was an extracurricular/post-graduate experience, but I think they gained insights about the research process that they otherwise might not have had.

I also like to think that empowerment was a principle that was supported through the process. Together we disrupted disciplinary assumptions of power by having students as co-authors. Through the use of a first-person narrative approach we challenged the norms of scholarship that too often require us to write in an authoritative, distant voice, one that is aloof and objective.

There was and still is dissonance between theory and practice. I did not evaluate the process and I did not ask the students about their impressions and their experiences. I may think that something is empowering and reciprocal, but was that really the case? And if that was not the case, would the students really tell me? While we can argue that silences are the loudest voices, we must also understand that sometimes silence is purposeful. Seale et al. (2015) observe a variation of purposeful silences in their analysis of non-participation by students in their programming. Silence and non-participation can and are strategies of resistance that are often overlooked.

In terms of reciprocity and empowerment, I wonder if there really is reciprocity and empowerment when a faculty member is the lead author. Or, is it the faculty member who still gains more from the process? Publishing and scholarship is part of our work, it is part of what we are supposed to do, and it counts towards our career progression. We will be lauded for doing our research differently (or perhaps disciplined in some form) but what do the students really gain? All of this is to suggest that we need to reflect further on reciprocity. Can it be equal or is it okay to be different? Is that sufficient?

How do we avoid not having our students as subjects in SoTL? Are their stories, even in a narrative, not a commodity? Was it not my social location and my position that facilitated the process? Was I taking advantage of their trust in me to bring them into the process? Given that the students had graduated, there was less risk for them than might be the case in projects that include students in class or in progress. Nonetheless, there is still power in the invitation and in the creation of the project and without the student voice, the article would have been fundamentally different. For me, much rests on the ethics of partnership and the navigation of power in the process. I don't have specific answers to the questions I pose of myself. My aim was partnership and collaboration, but, on reflection, there are still gaps between my aspirations and my practice—gaps which need to be addressed but which at this time remain unresolved.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

What began as a desire to further investigate and assess the SaP literature became SaP in practice. Together we moved from theory to practice and relationship building. Given this experience, we will highlight reflections related to the assessment of the Healey et al. (2014) model and our experiences working together and writing this paper.

With regard to the SaP literature, our work supports the argument articulated by Seale et al. (2015) that there is a need for deeper personal reflection on the power embedded in our daily SaP processes and relationships. It is not enough to delineate programming structures. We must reflect on the practices used to create and foster SaP. Through our reflections, questions arise about how authenticity is perceived by students, about whether or not we commodify our students through our scholarly processes, and for whom our models of inquiry are intended. We begin to see the many layers of power ranging from the well-meaning invitation to participate, to the sense of vulnerability students may feel in the classroom, to the ways in which silence can be both empowering and disempowering. Through our reflections, we show that we must not underestimate the sites of power in our practice.

For us, the Healey et al. (2014) model, particularly the partnership values, was a useful framework for analyzing our reflections. The model prompted us to reflect on institutional practices and how students are positioned in our institutional cultures, and to assess pedagogies in practice in the classroom and through our research. There is a radical impetus in the model (and in much of the SaP literature) that is a vital counterpoint to models and practices that frame students as deficits. However, we did not assume the model was fixed. Nor did we assume that we were just testing a model through our past experiences. Rather, we used interdisciplinary starting points and different social and theoretical locations to inform our analysis.

This article contributes Canadian SaP cases from contexts that are not mainstream and not funded by large foundation grants. In addition, our work shows that we can choose to adopt the values that underpin the concept of SaP and that we can engage in these practices without external pressures or incentives. We just did it. It's like a do-it-yourself SaP, and this is a place where some of the most significant change can occur because it is not mandated. It is a reflection of our values and our pedagogical philosophies.

We have many reflections related to the process of working together. We know from our own experiences and from working together that the SaP process is not always easy. In the

process of working together we navigated issues of power and privilege including access to funding, paid or unpaid work on the project, varying roles and responsibilities, and availability of time. There are many sites and locations of power that can undermine efforts at partnership. However, we learned that these processes take time—time for relationships to grow. We each engaged from a starting point of respect for each other, and this provided an essential foundation. We did have to learn how to work with each other, but we were committed to learning together—co-learning, if you will.

Coupled with our commitment to each other was a willingness to be mindful about the layers of power in our respective positions, ongoing efforts to navigate multiple roles and responsibilities, and an enhanced awareness of the ways that power plays out (sometimes inadvertently) in our interactions. We had to be mindful of our own behaviours and, at times, to put our individual behaviours in check. Ultimately, we firmly believe that SaP practices must be more than models. There must be a personal commitment to mindfulness, vulnerability, and a willingness to change. Most importantly, SaP is a lived process that must engage the heart.

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS

Angela Kehler recently graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies and Political Science at the University of Northern British Columbia. She now works for a non-profit organization helping federal offenders find housing and support services to ensure successful transition into the community.

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