RESEARCH ARTICLE

Promoting students as partners in a pilot study involving undergraduate students and instructors in Spanish as a foreign language courses

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ABSTRACT

Through the student-as-partners (SaP) framework, this paper explores how this can enhance undergraduate Spanish as a foreign language flipped classroom courses and promote student engagement and satisfaction. Traditionally, higher education courses are designed and developed by faculty members; however, our pilot project proposed collaboration between students and instructors in the design and implementation of course activities. This paper explores the model's effects and outcomes through four surveys administered at the end of the academic year. Each survey included key factors related to the learning experience: student enjoyment, emotional support, relatedness to peers, feedback from/for students, and content-related support. Collectively, these perspectives were used to reflect on the feedback provided, which helped us achieve our objective: the creation of teaching and learning resources to engage future cohorts and increase student retention. Although this model is presented in the foreign language context, it is transferable to any discipline.

KEYWORDS

Spanish as a foreign language, flipped classroom approach, students as partners, learning activities, student engagement

In the context of higher education, a recent emphasis has been placed on fostering relationships between collaborators of differing levels of expertise. This approach, commonly referred to as the students-as-partners (SaP) model, allows both students and instructors to share ideas and foment academic partnerships in which common pedagogical interests are attained. Cook-Sather et al. (2014) describe a partnership as a process guided by reciprocity that grants all participants "the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis" (pp. 6–7).

Student partnerships tend to function best when students learn in an actively engaging environment (Healey et al., 2016). For this reason, the format of the classrooms included in this

article follow the flipped classroom approach (FCA). This framework is known as a pedagogical approach "in which first contact with new concepts moves from the group learning space to the individual learning space in the form of structured activity" (Talbert, 2017, p. 20). The instructor serves as a guide and other students of varying educational levels help lead interactive classes that focus on learning activities and higher-order thinking tasks.

Overall, the FCA allows for space, time, and activity to be used more effectively, and the SaP model promotes student engagement and satisfaction. The notion of student engagement is described by Svalberg (2009) as a process of student learning and development "in which the learner is the agent and language is the object" (p. 247). Such a process can be reflected through a positive attitude towards the learning experience or by fostering an environment that encourages collaboration and interaction with others (Svalberg, 2009). In terms of student satisfaction, although it may be linked to multiple factors, its most important predictors are teaching and course organization (Bell & Brooks, 2018). In this study, an emphasis is placed on student satisfaction regarding students' educational needs and aspirations.

The present study aims to analyze student engagement, satisfaction, and the FCA in light of the SaP framework. Specifically, the following organization has been employed to communicate the core ideas of the article. We begin by mentioning the contribution of our study, followed by the research questions. Then, a presentation of the literature review is included, which focuses on the key aspects of the SaP model. Finally, the methodological approach is explained, as well as findings and discussion of important trends.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research regarding pedagogical relationships between students and faculty has been gaining significant attention lately; in this study, we address the implementation of the SaP model in the higher education context of Spanish as a foreign language (SFL). Instruction that aims to teach individuals a foreign language has often been reliant on the presentation of theory under a single professor (Liang & Matthews, 2021). However, the introduction of the SaP model in the SFL classroom can create an environment that encourages autonomy and leadership (Liang & Matthews, 2021). Our main contribution could be found most useful to individuals that are constantly searching for techniques that allow students to be more interactive and to apply theoretical concepts rather than learn them through traditional instruction. The main overarching questions that guide our study procedures and literature review are as follows:

1. How has the students-as-partners model challenged traditional ways of teaching and learning Spanish as a foreign language?
2. How does the incorporation of the students-as-partners model help with achieving the learning outcomes of a Spanish as a foreign language course?

This study presents a 1-year pilot project where instructors collaboratively worked with undergraduate students to challenge traditional ways of teaching and learning Spanish as a foreign language. Therefore, the intention is to expand on the existing literature in the SaP field

to include the perspective of a SFL course and contribute a research study useful for future, similar student-staff partnership practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of the framework

The SaP model in higher education institutions focuses on guidance for establishing, sustaining, and extending student-staff partnerships to support those who are motivated to work in partnership (Bovill et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). To ensure that a partnership is successful in attaining its goals, Healey et al. (2014) propose a series of core values that should be present in all manifestations of the model: authenticity, inclusivity, reciprocity, empowerment, trust, challenge, community, and responsibility. For these values to be attained, a set of principles should be outlined and adhered to by all individuals involved in the academic relationship. Much of the literature in this field provides strategies for supporting academic staff at different stages of partnership and identifies the responsibilities that students may have, such as co-researchers, change agents, producers, consultants, and co-creators of curricula (Bovill, 2014; Bovill et al., 2014; Cook-Sather, 2010; Dunne & Zandstra, 2011; Healey & Jenkins, 2009; Neary, 2010). On the other hand, Cook-Sather et al. (2014) mention some implications applicable to the present study, such as creating an environment in which student-faculty collaboration is possible by "working together to pursue the common goal of learning and development" (p. 13), in addition to ensuring that academic development opportunities are offered to both staff and students to sustain their partnerships. While the existing literature provides a theoretical framework, little mention is made of the relationship between SaP and the FCA.

The flipped classroom approach (FCA)

Previous literature concerning the flipped classroom suggests that, similar to the SaP model, it is a recent approach with pedagogical implications. Bergmann & Sams (2012) propose that the FCA instills the idea that students are granted autonomy and expected to prepare for course content by engaging with interactive materials prior to class. All theoretical concepts are presented while the student studies on their own, and the classroom is used as a space for consolidating their knowledge and clarifying doubts (Bergmann & Sams, 2012; Talbert, 2017). In the SFL classroom, synchronous time is used to facilitate interactive activities that allow students to engage with the grammar material learned at home from video tutorials, grammar lessons, or any other available form. Strayer (2012) notes that the motivation for creating and implementing such a model is to transfer what is traditionally taught in lectures to an asynchronous format that allows there to be time in class for an application-based approach. Regarding SaP, the FCA is flexible enough to enable those involved in the relationship to promote collaboration and leadership through learning activities. While our focus is not the FCA, we have expanded upon the basic notions of the SaP framework because our participants either taught or attended a classroom that incorporated the model.

Challenges in the framework

As with any pedagogical process, there are challenges in the SaP framework that may impede attaining the desired outcome. Some resistance challenges are related to how students are not perceived as valuable enough to contribute to new teaching approaches, since they may not have as much experience in pedagogy (Andrews et al., 2018; Bovill et al., 2014). Obstacles may also arise when staff are asked to move beyond their traditional roles. To avoid these difficulties hindering the success of SaP implementation, the following traits should be considered: overcoming resistance to change and innovation when co-creating learning and teaching; navigating institutional structures, practices, and norms; and establishing an inclusive co-creation approach (Bovill et al., 2016). Additionally, instructors should view students as individuals that can provide an insightful perspective on teaching. When the reverse occurs, instructors develop negative views toward the student perspective, and the SaP model may be ineffective (Felten & Bauman, 2013). Bovill et al. (2014) outlines some strategies to combat major challenges faced when leading academic partnerships: promoting diversity of perspectives, offering development opportunities for staff and students, negotiating power, learning to work in partnership, and knowing how to formally end partnerships. These strategies can help overcome many issues that are a product of the SaP model.

The role of the undergraduate internship student

For many undergraduate students, being placed in a position that grants them some control over learning activities is a new experience. Williamson (2013) outlines that when the term student partnership is employed, it regards active participation that influences the way in which students receive their education, rather than a passive approach. Bovill et al. (2016) identify four types of student roles in co-creation: students as consultants, co-researchers, pedagogical co-designers, and representatives. Each role performs a different task that contributes to the execution of classroom activities. While the SaP model often views partners as co-researchers, which entails a meaningful collaboration produced as a result of academic research with the instructor, the present study is mainly concerned about the role of pedagogical co-designers and consultants, who work alongside faculty to create learning and teaching materials (Bovill et al., 2016). Since undergraduate students tend to not be very involved in teaching, it is imperative that they obtain opportunities conducive of active learning through first-hand exposure. Andrews et al. (2018) maintain that integrating students as active participants in assessment processes can be beneficial in terms of engagement and achievement since some attributes, such as "trust, risk, interdependence and agency [are] at the heart of the learner-teacher relationship" (p. 34). Similarly, Sambell et al. (2013) consider that collaborative work between academics and students as partners can enhance assessment-for-learning tools. Student partnerships in SFL, as in various other disciplines, focus on reconstructing the class environment and the perspectives of all individuals involved to become more receptive to collaboration and model a partnership driven by core values (Holen et al., 2021).

The role of the instructor

The role of the instructor is integral to the success of the partnership. Healey et al. (2016) lay the foundation for the beginning stages of a SaP relationship: establishing a clear criterion for

selecting students as partners, being explicit with the desired goals, and having patience when the expectations of the partnership do not match the intended outcome. In the foreign language classroom, the instructor has the responsibility of acting as a facilitator that considers the needs of students. This means that both the students taking the class and the undergraduate student teaching alongside the instructor should receive clear expectations from the instructor. Bovill et al. (2014) proposes a format in which the SaP model becomes incorporated gradually in the classroom setting: while getting started, it is important to ensure voluntary participation and devise an explicit set of criteria that determines and explains how initial contact is made with students. During the process, staff may also find it effective to extend the partnership with students by developing strategies to negotiate responsibilities with students and stating any power imbalances (Bovill et al., 2014). Overall, the literature suggests that the instructor is seen as a mentor that fosters an environment in which students' perspectives are considered and learning activities are the result of a collaborative process.

After presenting the previous scholarship on the SaP framework, it is crucial to further elaborate on the design of the present study and, specifically, the roles of the instructor and undergraduate internship student. One of our participant groups (internship students) was recruited from an unpaid internship course that provides students with opportunities to become pedagogical co-designers and create their own teaching materials to facilitate a one-hour class. Their role was to regularly attend class, lead activities, help the instructor, and answer students' questions. On the other hand, instructors exhibited and instilled pedagogical awareness in the internship students by crafting a set of intended expectations for the partnership and ensuring they received a didactic lesson plan of the respective class so they can prepare. Therefore, a partnership in the present study consists of two individuals: one instructor, who is usually a graduate student with a teaching assistantship, and one undergraduate internship student that has taken an advanced level Spanish course. In higher education, teaching assistants are course instructors who work under the supervision of a faculty member, which is common in foreign language courses offered in North America. Due to this reason, we refer to graduate teaching assistants as instructors.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants are categorized into four groups: undergraduate students enrolled in a beginner Spanish course; undergraduate students enrolled in an intermediate Spanish course; graduate teaching assistants/instructors; and undergraduate students enrolled in the Spanish internship course. While three groups are comprised of undergraduates, two of them (beginner and intermediate) include students that are taking a language course to learn Spanish whereas one of them (internship students) comes from an internship course where they assist and teach alongside the language instructor. There was no previous relationship between the participants and the authors of the present study.

A total of 65 participants were recruited (Table 1). Eligible participants met the following inclusion criteria: they were (a) students or graduate teaching assistants who attended Western University, (b) had no visual impairment issues, and (c) were enrolled or teaching in a Spanish

course that implemented the SaP model. Additionally, as part of the thematic content analysis employed for presenting qualitative data, participants are referred to by categories based on the role they played in class and given a unique letter to denote their responses (e.g., Internship Student A, B, and C; Instructor A, B, and C).

Table 1. Overview of participants

PARTICIPANTS	TOTAL
Beginner Spanish students	43
Intermediate Spanish students	16
Instructors/graduate teaching assistants	3
Undergraduate (internship) students	3

Tasks

Once eligibility was confirmed, participants were asked to fill out an online survey administered through Qualtrics. Four different surveys were created for each group (i.e., beginner Spanish students, intermediate Spanish students, instructors/graduate teaching assistants, and undergraduate [internship] students), and each survey asked a series of questions that allowed us to obtain both qualitative and quantitative data. To account for quantitative data, the following instruments were employed: a 5-point Likert scale, in which participants had to indicate how much they agreed with certain statements; multiple choice questions; and multiple selection of adjectives to describe the experience. As part of the qualitative approach, participants were provided with open-ended questions to reflect on the positive and negative aspects of the partnership. Although each survey differed slightly, all of them aimed to examine the effectiveness of the SaP model.

Data analysis

Prior to data collection, consent was given by participants and all survey responses were anonymized. Consent was implied, meaning that successful submission of the online survey indicated participants' voluntary decision to engage in study procedures. Two members of this study analyzed all the data obtained from the surveys. All responses were exported to Excel and represented in tables and charts, both through raw numbers and percentages. Regarding the qualitative data, thematic content analysis was employed: responses were extracted from Qualtrics, transferred to Excel, and categorized according to themes of SaP.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section we begin by expanding upon the data collected regarding the perceptions of undergraduate students enrolled in a course that features the instructor-internship student partnership. Then, we focus on the feedback provided by the internship students and instructors that formed the SaP relationship. Responses obtained from undergraduate students enrolled in a beginner or intermediate section of Spanish are both quantitative, whereas those recorded by instructors and internship students are qualitative. Findings are discussed under two main

headings: undergraduate students' perceptions and the instructor-internship student partnership.

Undergraduate students' perceptions of the SaP framework
When creating the beginner and intermediate undergraduate student survey, it was important to consider the parameters suggested by previous literature and how they align with the present study. Specifically, the questions were influenced by theoretical frameworks related to the learning climate or class environment (Curran, 2017; Healey et al., 2016; Sambell et al., 2013), student motivation (Dörnyei, 1998; Bovill et al., 2011), engagement and achievement (Bovill et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Svalberg, 2009), and principles or values of the SaP model (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014; Matthews et al., 2018). Focusing on these specific concepts in the study design allowed us to address one of our research questions, which deals with the influence of the SaP model on the learning outcomes of a SFL course. In this sub-section, we consider the perceptions of students enrolled in the sections that incorporated an instructor-internship student partnership and how it contributed to the overall learning experience.

Beginner and intermediate Spanish students in a full-year course were asked to identify which semester was more enjoyable: first or second (Table 2). The SaP framework was implemented during the second semester of the course, thus accounting for a shift in the delivery of course content.

Table 2. Beginner and intermediate Spanish students' semester preference

OPTION	BEGINNER STUDENTS	INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS
First semester was easier and more enjoyable	23 (53%)	9 (56%)
Second semester was easier and more enjoyable	2 (5%)	2 (13%)
It has been enjoyable both semesters	18 (42%)	5 (31%)

Table 2 shows that 53% (n=23) of beginner Spanish students and 56% (n=9) of intermediate Spanish students considered the first semester easier and more enjoyable than the second semester. While this may suggest that they preferred the course prior to the integration of the SaP model, it is important to mention some of the factors that hindered the learning experience during the second semester, such as the shift to online classes due to COVID-19, the workload of all their other courses, and the complexity of the grammar topics. Due to a lockdown in January 2022, students were required to learn from home for the entire month, meaning that the partnership started while classes were held online. On the other hand, Table 2 denotes that 42% (n=18) of beginner Spanish students and 31% (n=5) of intermediate Spanish students perceived the learning experience to be equally enjoyable in both semesters.

Additionally, participants were asked to select the adjectives that best described the SaP relationship demonstrated in their classroom (Table 3). The goal of this question was for beginner and intermediate students to reflect on the class environment and how it changed, either positively or negatively, after the dynamics of the course changed and the instruction was given by two individuals in different stages of their academic careers.

Table 3. Beginner and intermediate Spanish students' perception of classroom organization

OPTION	BEGINNER STUDENTS	INTERMEDIATE STUDENTS
Organized	35 (81%)	10 (63%)
Helpful	30 (70%)	9 (56%)
Engaging	26 (61%)	8 (50%)
Innovative	11 (26%)	8 (50%)
Fast paced	5 (12%)	5 (31%)
Challenging	4 (9%)	3 (19%)
Boring	2 (5%)	3 (19%)
Messy	1 (2%)	2 (13%)

Table 3 communicates that 81% (n=35) of beginner Spanish students and 63% (n=10) of intermediate Spanish students found the classroom setting to be organized. In addition, 70% (n=30) and 56% (n=9) of beginner and intermediate students, respectively, described the classroom as helpful. The findings from students from both levels of instruction indicate that the instructor-internship student partnership was conducted in an effective and organized manner that facilitated the attainment of course outcomes. However, Table 3 also shows that 5% (n=2) and 2% (n=1) of beginner students perceived the classroom as boring and messy, while 19% (n=3), 19% (n=3), and 13% (n=2) of intermediate students selected the adjectives challenging, boring, and messy, respectively. These participants may have also been deeply influenced by the unexpected learning circumstances presented in the second semester, because of the change from an in-person to an online modality.

As previously broached in the beginning of this section, the study design is reflective of various theoretical concerns addressed in previous literature. Particularly, a Likert scale was employed to gauge how students interacted with each of the following traits: enjoyable class setting, motivation, engagement and achievement, and SaP model principles (Table 4).

Table 4. The instructor-internship student dynamic as perceived by beginner and intermediate undergraduate Spanish students

STATEMENTS	STUDENT STATUS	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
4.1 Enjoyable class (Curran, 2017; Healey et al., 2016; Sambell et al., 2013): Having two instructors/teaching assistants at once makes learning a new language in class more enjoyable.	Beginner	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	19 (44%)	21 (49%)	2 (5%)
4.1 Enjoyable class	Intermediate	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (56%)	5 (31%)	2 (13%)
4.2 Motivation (Dörnyei, 1998):	Beginner	2 (5%)	5 (12%)	20 (47%)	14 (33%)	2 (5%)

STATEMENTS	STUDENT STATUS	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NEUTRAL	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
I feel more motivated to learn Spanish when there is more than one instructor.						
4.2 Motivation	Intermediate	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (50%)	6 (38%)	2 (13%)
4.3 Engagement and achievement (Healey et al., 2014): Interacting with instructors creates a sense of safety to take learning risks in the classroom environment. It influences my engagement and achievement in class.	Beginner	1 (2%)	1 (2%)	13 (30%)	25 (58%)	3 (7%)
4.3 Engagement and achievement	Intermediate	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (50%)	7 (44%)	1 (6%)
4.4 SaP model principles (Cook-Sather et al., 2014): The following principles are always applied in the classroom: respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility.	Beginner	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	4 (9%)	12 (28%)	26 (61%)
4.4 SaP model principles	Intermediate	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	8 (50%)

In regards to statement 4.1, 49% (n=21) of beginner Spanish students agreed with the idea that two individuals teaching at once contributes to a more enjoyable classroom environment. Regarding the intermediate students, 56% (n=9) neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, whereas 31% (n=5) agreed and 13% (n=2) strongly agreed. The findings suggest that students often find learning a language enjoyable when more individuals are involved in the teaching process, which could be due to exposure to a richer sense of linguistic diversity (Geeslin et al., 2021). Similarly, statement 4.2, which focuses on motivation, noted that 33% (n=14) of beginner Spanish students felt more motivated when more than one instructor was present in class. On the other hand, 38% (n=6) of intermediate students agreed and 13% (n=2) strongly agreed. Regarding motivation, the findings demonstrate that both groups of undergraduate students partially benefit from receiving guided instruction performed as a collaborative effort.

In the case of statement 4.3, engagement and achievement, 58% (n=25) of beginner students claimed that they agreed, while 7% (n=3) strongly agreed. On the other hand, 50% (n=8) of the intermediate students neither disagreed nor agreed with the statement, but 44% (n=7)

agreed. These findings suggest that students' engagement tends to be positively influenced by the SaP relationship, which could potentially have implications about accepting mistakes as part of the learning process and participating with greater frequency. Since the internship student leads by example and adopts an active role in other students' learning, they may not only be perceived as a learner, but also a teacher among peers (Healey et al., 2014).

Finally, in 4.4, regarding SaP model principles, 61% (n=26) of beginner students strongly agreed, while 28% (n=12) agreed. However, with respect to the intermediate students, 50% (n=8) strongly agreed, whereas 6% (n=1) neither agreed nor disagreed and 6% (n=1) agreed. What this communicates is that the SaP model, as perceived by the undergraduate students taking the course, has been effectively adapted into the classroom setting. Participants view the relationship between the instructor and internship student as respectful, reciprocal, and responsible.

The instructor-internship student partnership

The qualitative approach employed in this study has resulted in important findings related to the dynamics between the instructor and internship student. While analyzing data, we identified specific reoccurring themes in participants' responses and how they relate to aspects of the SaP model. In this sub-section, we consider the internship students' perspective toward their role in each partnership and how the instructor aided them in the process. Then, the reverse is applied; instructors' comments are placed at the forefront to determine how they perceived the relationship.

Considerations of the internship student

As mentioned in the literature review, there are some central objectives or similarities in each manifestation of a SaP relationship: relatedness to peers (Healey et al., 2014), feedback for/from students (Fluckiger et al., 2010), content-related support (Healey et al., 2014), and student engagement (Bovill et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Svalberg, 2009). Each of these aspects can be identified in the findings of the present study. For instance, Internship Student A expressed how

> the class was very welcoming. . . . [The model] is effective in the sense that, being a student, I am more approachable to the other students in the class which allowed for me to have a different dynamic with the students. I think this is beneficial in the classroom environment for some students who are more reserved and would feel more comfortable asking me for help.

In this response, Internship student A stated that other undergraduate students saw them as an insightful, approachable peer that they could relate with, to a more profound extent, due to their proximity in age. Similarly, relatedness to peers is also evident through the following response: "the SaP approach is truly effective because I noticed that having a younger individual such as myself in the classroom helped make the environment of teaching even smoother. The students felt more comfortable participating and asking questions" (Internship Student B). Both responses convey a similar message: when experienced instructors invite new, incoming

internship students to facilitate class discussions and activities, the students taking the course are less reluctant when asking questions or clarifying doubts.

Regarding feedback for/from students, the findings demonstrate that internship students are provided with opportunities for reflection regarding the intricacies of the teaching process. Internship Student C mentioned how the experience has granted them with a new, profound understanding and admiration of instructors:

> this model has given me perspective into how difficult it is to teach a class, and all the effort that goes into preparing activities and showing up ready for questions. I have a much deeper appreciation for the work that instructors do now.

Such a response depicts a change in the internship student's prior beliefs about teaching as they shifted from the mindset of the learner to the instructor. However, it is worth mentioning the instances in which the efficacy of the SaP relationship is hindered. For the partnership to be effective, proper organization and reciprocal, timely communication is imperative; when the reverse occurs, the dynamic between all parties involved may be unclear. Internship Student B noted that while the approach is effective, "it is difficult to get actively engaged with the material when [they] receive the slides for the class the day before. . . . It would be nice to have time to create activities and practice leading them." We must remember that the internship students are most likely faced with their first exposure to teaching and, as such, they need more time to prepare accordingly prior to delivering course content. In other words, the experienced instructor must be committed to crafting and following a timely schedule with the internship student to ensure they are being provided with the necessary tools to thrive.

In terms of content-related support, only one answered alluded to the notion. Specifically, Internship Student A recalled that "since [the instructor's] level of fluency is much higher, it can be intimidating to feel like I am qualified to teach activities alongside them as I still often need help." In such instances, the internship student perceives their own teaching abilities as inferior to the instructor's due to disproportions in the level of competency in the target language. As discussed in the previous paragraph, these issues can be approached by a strong sense of commitment on behalf of the instructor to ensure that the internship student is receiving adequate support. In addition, prior to the initiation of the experience, it would be beneficial to have internship students complete a pre-screening test, or linguistic background profile, to understand what stage of acquisition they are in and their level of comfort and confidence in the target language.

While many of the findings discussed indicated a relationship between the SaP framework with higher levels of student engagement, one internship student noted how their confidence levels rose throughout the partnership:

> I am normally very shy and have trouble public speaking, however, I think the students-as-partners model really pushed me out of my comfort zone to help me gain more confidence in that aspect. I think it also challenges you to embrace a leadership position within the classroom, which is not something I have had the opportunity to experience before. (Internship Student B).

This internship student expressed how the SaP model provided them with a unique experience that is often not offered at the undergraduate level; they were able to acquire certain skills in teaching and face their fear of speaking in larger groups with the assistance of an experienced instructor. As a result, Internship Student B also explained how "the model [changed their perspective] towards teaching/learning as [they learned] about all of the methodologies and techniques involved in teaching Spanish that [they] did not consider before!"

An example of the types of learning materials internship students designed as a product of the knowledge gained from the experience can be seen in Figure 1. Overall, by fostering academic opportunities for undergraduate students to immerse themselves in the field of teaching, internship students can develop the skills, motivation, and self-efficacy needed to facilitate lectures.

Figure 1. Learning activity sample

Figure 1 includes an example of one of the learning activities designed by an undergraduate internship student for an intermediate section of Spanish. The topic was *si* (if) clauses. The undergraduate teaching assistant did research on the uses of *si* clauses, elaborated the learning activity, and adapted the information to the intermediate level. This learning activity encouraged students to find the mistakes and correct the uses of *si* (if) clauses in the letter, based on the theory learned from the video tutorial at home, as part of the flipped classroom approach.

Considerations of the instructor

Regarding the instructor's perspective, many of their responses align with the themes identified in those of the internship students. The notions of relatedness to peers, student engagement, and emotional support were communicated. For instance, Instructor A mentioned how the SaP framework opened their eyes to how their students' needs influence the achievement of course outcomes when they commented that the most positive aspect of working collaboratively with an undergraduate student was "understanding my students better (their schedules, interests,

worries, etc.) and making them feel more understood by someone who has the same experience as being an undergrad student at [Western University]." In this response, it is apparent that the learning process is reciprocal in the sense that both parties that comprise the partnership expressed a mutually beneficial sentiment. While the internship student received firsthand exposure to the preparation and execution of classes, the instructor learned how to better address students' needs and cater to a plethora of learning styles.

Another theme observed by instructors that was also identified in the internship student responses is student engagement. Both participant groups expressed how the framework is an excellent opportunity for students to further strengthen their knowledge of Spanish, or the target language, by immersing in the classroom environment. Specifically, it was noted that "students [enrolled in the beginner or intermediate Spanish course] felt more confident asking questions and they felt more engaged" (Instructor B). This instructor mentioned how, upon implementing the SaP dynamic of instructor-internship student partnership in the classroom, students demonstrated a stronger willingness to participate and engage in class and were less hesitant when posing questions. Parallel to this idea, instructors correlated the SaP model as a strategy for addressing concerns of emotional support: "[through the model] I noticed that I was asking too much of my students and that I could relax more" (Instructor C). This response highlights the importance of instructor receptiveness, which means that they become open to and aware of diverse teaching strategies. In other terms, the SaP model acted as a catalyst to expand Instructor C's approaches to dealing with their student roster and, as a result, they were able to adapt their expectations accordingly. Overall, the instructor responses revealed that the partnership, from the didactic perspective, is extremely beneficial to tackling and addressing the needs of the beginner and intermediate students enrolled in the course.

CONCLUSION

Returning to the first research question of this study, how the SaP model challenges traditional (i.e., without a student partner) ways of teaching and learning Spanish as a foreign language, it is important to note that it provides all individuals involved with autonomy and the opportunity to become an active member of the classroom environment. Student responses suggest that the collaborative work between undergraduate and graduate students creates the foundation for pedagogical relationships that push them out of their comfort zones and grant them skills and attributes relevant to various disciplines.

Although this pilot study presents a basis for the shift toward a collaborative, SaP-oriented style of learning, future opportunities of investigation regarding student-staff partnerships can be identified. Firstly, expanding the sample size to ensure more proportionate groups would lead to a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of the SaP model in the SFL context. Similarly, expanding the data collection methods to further gather qualitative and quantitative data regarding tensions that might arise in partnerships, such as issues of power dynamics, inclusivity, reward and recognition, and transition and sustainability of the framework, could be beneficial to achieving the desired learning outcomes (Healey et al., 2016). Incorporating these changes in future studies could result in the creation of new collaborative spaces between instructors and students, increasing student retention in foreign language courses.

Furthermore, an aspect to consider when incorporating the SaP model in higher education, as Bovill et al. (2016) identify, is the challenge of institutional commitment since there is the need to increase the number of students and instructors who engage in the partnership process. Without institutional or financial support, it can be difficult to include academic mentoring programs and events hosted by the university that employ students in activities that engage them in the teaching and learning process. To combat this issue, Bovill et al. (2016) encourage the creation of a detailed plan that outlines an overview of the framework as well as the role of students in co-creating learning resources and contributing to changes in curriculum. This strategy is perceived to contribute to gaining external recognition and persuading the academic community to consider the benefits of partnership.

Returning to the second research question, this pilot study has placed an importance on a framework that creates an engaging classroom space in which learning outcomes are achieved as the language learning process is facilitated. Students considered that learning from someone close in age could have a positive impact since there was a relatedness to peers that increased their engagement. On the other hand, instructors considered this partnership beneficial since they could focus on other classroom aspects, such as students' educational needs (e.g., course workload, balancing personal and academic life, etc.) and adopting a stance of openness, positivity, and reciprocal communication.

Overall, the findings presented contribute to the limited body of literature concerning the SaP model in the context of foreign language learning. More specifically, this study expands the scholarship focused on SFL by presenting the positive impact that a SaP-oriented approach can have in the classroom. The largest takeaway lies in a reoccurring theme: the incorporation of the model challenges traditional teaching methodologies in higher education and fosters a learning environment representative of respect and collaboration. Students enrolled in the Spanish course learned material in a more engaging, multifaceted way, which helped them achieve course learning outcomes more efficiently, while internship students reached a point in their undergraduate careers that views them as autonomous, equitable beings that not only maneuver as language learners, but as teachers. The course instructors, therefore, reconceived their pedagogy as an interaction, rather than a process of transmission of theory under the instruction of a single professor (Curran, 2017; Liang & Matthews, 2021). Through partnership and collaboration in the design, development, and implementation of course activities, both students and instructors can positively influence student engagement and satisfaction in foreign language courses.

This study was reviewed and approved by the Western University Research Ethics Board.

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