

BOOK REVIEW

Building courage, confidence, and capacity in learning and teaching through student-faculty partnership: Stories from across contexts and arenas of practice, edited by Alison Cook-Sather and Chanelle Wilson

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What does it mean for university faculty and students to be in genuine partnership with one another? What does it look like, sound like, feel like, and how do authentic, committed partnerships impact participants? Questions such as these clearly motivated the contributors to *Building Courage, Confidence, and Capacity in Learning and Teaching through Student-Faculty Partnership: Stories from Across Contexts and Arenas of Practice*, who share stories of student-faculty collaboration from around the world. Editors Alison Cook-Sather and Chanelle Wilson bookend these stories with an introduction and a concluding chapter that situate the authors' contributions in the broader context of partnership, which Cook-Sather has been instrumental in promoting through her pedagogical practice and prolific scholarly output for nearly 2 decades. Together, Cook-Sather, Wilson, and the 23 chapter authors are resoundingly successful in fulfilling the hope that this volume "inspires, encourages, and supports the value of pedagogical partnership" (Cook-Sather & Wilson, 2020, p. xix) because they explicitly address the questions with which I open this paragraph.

A motivating idea of pedagogical partnership work is that students are often absent from faculty development contexts and processes in higher education (Cook-Sather, 2011). Although university faculty collaborate with students in a number of contexts and roles (through, e.g., teaching assistantship, learning assistantship, research mentorship), these relationships typically have existing norms and an established power dynamic that is inherently unequal, with students generally directed by faculty in the service of accomplishing tasks determined by the faculty member. However, as Cook-Sather and others have reiterated in publications over many years (see, for example, Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Cook-Sather et al., 2019), pedagogical partnership work is guided by principles of respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility, implying a fundamental mutuality that is absent from many of the contexts in which students and faculty commonly engage with one another. It is these characteristics of partnership, along with others—such as courage, bravery, agency, trust, accountability, and empowerment—that are so deftly and convincingly illustrated by the stories in the present volume.

As a facilitator of a robust partnership program in the United States, I was pleased to discover new insights applicable to my own work in the stories of partnerships taking place outside of the U.S. For example, writing from the University of Wellington in New Zealand, Leota and Sutherland (2020) describe how Māori values were infused throughout and informed all aspects of the design and implementation of “Ako in Action,” a partnership program premised on the notion that all members of the university community have a “collective responsibility for learning” (p. 93). This is a seemingly simple idea, but one that, in my experience, is rarely operationalized in U.S. universities and was not explicitly enacted in the design of the partnership program I facilitate, although it will certainly motivate and inform my practice moving forward.

While power dynamics are a frequent topic in my weekly meetings with student partners, the chapter by Kaur and Bing (2020) describing their partnership at a Malaysian university highlights the challenges for partnership in “education contexts where respect for hierarchy and power distances are huge” (p. 69). Other chapters offer different food for thought, such as the ways in which a student-faculty pair in Hong Kong (Chen & Ho, 2020) and a student-faculty pair in Canada (Chukwu & Jones, 2020) draw on lived experiences and identities as well as content knowledge to co-create curriculum, how faculty-student pairs from different cultures in Israel (Narkiss & Naaman, 2020) and in Pakistan (Waqar & Asad, 2020) reflect on and re-imagine student engagement, and how a team of faculty and students in the UK realize the potential of student partners in program development (Quy et al., 2020). The US-based stories also push me to consider how I might be more intentional about valuing student-faculty differences (Wildhagen & Jenkins, 2020), explore the roles librarians play in learning (Peach & Ferrell, 2020), and extend co-creation (Gennocro & Straussberger, 2020).

As the facilitator of a partnership program, it is gratifying to read stories that validate my experience of and suggest new directions for the transformational power of relationships formed in pedagogical partnership. As a teacher and faculty developer, I’m also interested in the potential for a broader impact of student-faculty partnerships; that is, I’d like to know more about how the educational experience of students being taught in classes in which partnerships are operating is affected. My own experience suggests that faculty and their student partners do perceive that student learning is enhanced through partnership, but a direct relationship between partnership and student learning can be difficult to establish. My hope is that the authors, editors, and readers of this book will build on the fine work displayed here and offer future evidence affirming my belief that partnerships can have a profound and transformational impact on student learning.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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