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The International Journal for Students as Partners (IJSaP) is published twice a year by McMaster University Library Press and supported by McMaster's Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching.

IJSaP is a journal about learning and teaching together in higher education. IJSaP explores new perspectives, practices, and policies regarding how students and staff (used here and subsequently to refer to academic staff/faculty, professional staff, and other stakeholders) are working in partnership to enhance learning and teaching in higher education. Shared responsibility for teaching and learning is the underlying premise of students as partners, and IJSaP is produced using a student-staff partnership approach.

IJSaP is designed to appeal to a wide audience of readers and potential authors in the higher education community. It aims to publish high quality research articles, case studies, reflective essays, opinion pieces, reviews, and other pieces from around the world. Contributions written collaboratively by students and staff are particularly encouraged, although single and other co-authored pieces are also acceptable. All submissions go through a rigorous review process involving both staff and students.

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Welcome to the first issue of the *International Journal for Students as Partners* (*IJSaP*). We are delighted to publish four research articles, three reflective essays, four case studies and an opinion piece, alongside this editorial and two book reviews. Together these contributions have been written by 21 students and 28 staff from four different countries. In the spirit of partnership that underpins *IJSaP*, this inaugural editorial was co-written by the 10 students and staff who comprise the Editorial Board.

VISION

Our vision is that *IJSaP* will provide a space that captures the energies, debates, controversies, benefits, challenges, uncertainties, emotions, evidence, and bold ideas that arise when we shift the traditional dynamics of learners and educators in higher education toward partnership. In creating and maintaining this space, we hope to support forms of inquiry into partnership that we cannot predict or imagine and to contribute to the transformation of how learning happens.

While we recognise that there are other journals that address issues around Students as Partners, we feel that *IJSaP* is distinctive in a combination of ways. Not only did we want to develop a high-quality, open-access, international, research-based journal, we also aspired to challenge traditional views about what a journal is*,* in terms of both content and operational processes. We aim to affirm a wide variety of genres for writing about partnership—research articles, case studies, opinion pieces, reflective essays, and reviews—that are each valued independently but also generate further insight through their juxtaposition. Beyond embracing such diverse genres, *IJSaP* seeks to consider new ways of "doing"—that is, "walking the talk" of partnership. Therefore, leadership is provided by an international editorial team of staff and students working both in country-based, student-staff pairs and as an international collaborative. We are committed to having submissions reviewed by students as well as staff.

Making space for a community of scholars—academics, staff, and students—to understand and unpack what "students as partners" might mean is central to *IJSaP*. While our beliefs and views as members of the *IJSaP* Editorial Board are important and will influence the direction of the journal, our key role is to create opportunities for scholars to make sense of partnership and to contribute new and expanded conceptions, models, frameworks, and definitions that will grow the field of partnership practice and research. We recognise that Students as Partners is a tentative and emergent area of scholarship. Ensuring that we, as an Editorial Board, advised by our International Advisory Group, are open to changing our views and making space for new perspectives will affect the impact of the journal.

ORIGINS OF THE JOURNAL

In the last few years, a plethora of articles, reports, books, and conferences have focused on the topic of students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education (see Mercer-Mapstone et al., this issue, for a review of recent literature). The idea for launching a journal dedicated to this topic emerged from discussions in the run-up to, and during, the first International Summer Institute on Students as Partners held at McMaster University in May 2016. Over the two and a half months following this first Summer Institute, three of the facilitators—Mick Healey, Beth Marquis and Kelly Matthews—began to discuss the key features of *IJSaP.*

Arshad Ahmad, Director of The MacPherson Institute at McMaster University, agreed to provide a home for the journal and support for an editorial manager (a post later filled by Cherie Woolmer). The journal fits well within the vision of the MacPherson Institute, which has Students as Partners as a core feature of its strategic plan. The McMaster University Library Press agreed to publish two issues per year in an open-access format.

We (Mick, Beth, and Kelly) sent out our initial ideas for the journal to over 20 students and staff for comment. The responses we received helped us clarify how we could best achieve our vision. One of the welcome replies came from Alison Cook-Sather, who proposed folding *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education* into *IJSaP.* Alison and Anita Ntem subsequently joined the Editorial Board as the US-based team to add to the teams we had in Australia (Kelly Matthews and Lucy Mercer-Mapstone), Canada (Beth Marquis and Varun Puri), and the UK (Anthony Cliffe and Ruth Healey). Mick agreed to take on the role of Senior Editor. It is this group of staff and students working in partnership that has put the "flesh on the bones" and has developed the policies and practices of the journal.

THE VALUES UNDERPINNING THE WAY WE RUN *IJSAP*

The values that underpin the way we run the journal are those that frame many publications on partnership: respect for, genuine collaboration between, and shared responsibility among those involved in processes of curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014); a commitment to relationships in which all involved stand to gain from those processes (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014); and a mindset that supports such processes and relationships (Matthews, 2016) through embracing an ethic of reciprocity (Cook-Sather & Felten, 2017).

We have cycled through the excitement and the uncertainty that come with collaboration through partnership as we strive to translate those words into authentic practices. We aim to approach the process of editing *IJSaP* with a genuine willingness to collaborate in ways that allow for unimagined and unplanned outcomes and with an openness to the new ideas that emerge from the mix of experiences and expertise on the Editorial Board.

In the process of co-imagining and co-creating what the journal might look like, we have grappled with embracing the iterative and reflective process of partnership by being supportive of one another and of submitting authors while also striving to achieve high scholarly standards. Learning and reflection have been at the heart of this process as we seek to listen to, articulate, and embrace "new ways of thinking, learning, and working" (Healey et al., 2014, p. 7) in order to produce an international and multidisciplinary journal that enacts the principles of partnership.

THE IMPORTANCE OF STUDENTS AS PARTNERS

As an editorial team, we believe that Students as Partners is a contentious and important topic. Anita, for instance, offers the following reflection on this simultaneous significance and difficulty:

> Too many times, assumptions are made and protected, such as about who has knowledge about teaching and learning. Not enough teachers think about the ways in which they might challenge their teaching to be as effective as it should be for their students. Noticing the power dynamics that are evident in faculty and student relationships . . . is [an] almost forbidden and unheard of to challenge them. Students as Partners, however, challenges those dynamics and provides insight into what faculty may not always realize. Students become liaisons through which partners can challenge traditional norms and create a platform for affirmation, continuity of what works, and exploration of areas for growth. (Ntem, 2017)

Teaching is most fruitful when students co-create their educational experiences. A growing body of research extends this embrace of student voice (Frison & Melacarne, 2017; Seale, Gibson, Haynes, & Potter, 2015) into the notion of Students as Partners (Bovill & Felten, 2016).

Bringing multiple voices into dialogue and working in partnership is a complicated business (Mercer-Mapstone, Dvorakova, Groenendijk, & Matthews, in press). The notion of partnership can be taken up and deployed in different ways that often seem at odds with one another—for instance, in ways that align with the radical visions of critical pedagogy (O'Neill & McMahon, 2012) and in ways that some might view as supporting or playing into instrumentalist, neoliberal discourses (Neary, 2014). The significance and difficulty of this work also lies in the ways in which it can resonate with questions of equity and inclusion: how we destabilise hierarchies and invite new voices into dialogue about teaching and learning while simultaneously wrestling with questions about which voices are included and how power continues to be manifested (Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, & Moore-Cheery, 2016). Linked to the different ways "students as partners" can be taken up and deployed, and for what purposes, are questions about language. For example, why do we use the term "students as partners" and not "staff as partners"? What are the resonances with and/or distinctions from related terms, such as "student engagement"? Questions also arise about what kinds of collaborative relationships fall under the partnership umbrella. In other words, does a partnership need to include students and staff, or does the field of Students as Partners also consider student-student partnerships, partnerships with community, and so on? Such questions both reflect the difficulties and uncertainties of partnership and offer compelling openings for further research and discussion.

The editorial team for *IJSaP* is keen to avoid normative definitions of partnership as we recognise the emerging nature of debate and practice in the sector. Whilst accepting the need for a plurality of views on "what partnership is and might be," we subscribe to a collection of characteristics that we believe should be evident in partnership-based approaches. We embrace Students as Partners in terms of a broad set of deep principles and values—not a set of rules or prescriptions—that guide creative practices that seek to re-imagine learning interactions as more egalitarian relationships between teachers and learners (Matthews, Cook-Sather, & Healey, in press) in the most inclusive sense of those terms. These principles and values comprise the presence of multiple voices and perspectives, an emphasis on co-creation, and evidence of students collaborating with, not just helping, staff.

To us, Students as Partners asserts a "radical collegiality" (Fielding, 1999) and constitutes intergenerational learning and democratic fellowship (Fielding, 2011) between students and others in higher education. It is radical in the sense of deeply demanding of change. By advocating Students as Partners, we insist on the inclusion of students among those who can and should shape educational experiences and knowledge generation about teaching and learning in higher education. Our goal is not to displace or devalue any positions or perspectives in higher education, but rather to bring diverse voices into intentional interaction, dialogue, and collaboration.

THE NATURE OF EVIDENCE IN THE STUDENTS-AS-PARTNERS DEBATE

What constitutes evidence is context specific, and depends on the questions we ask and the answers we value. We aim to make space for differing forms of evidence that might bear meaningfully and rigorously on the wide variety of questions and experiences taken up by scholars investigating partnership. We are open to new ways of challenging or considering what "counts" as evidence. Given that partnership is an evolving and complex set of practices and processes, we steer clear of making broad judgments. We come to each genre of writing and each individual manuscript with our values and principles in mind, but also with a commitment to consider how the methods and approaches deployed fit the questions and issues addressed and how they might contribute to the development of the partnership evidence base more extensively.

We aim to gather evidence of the various and diverse ways that students work as partners with others in higher education as they analyse, develop, and enhance learning and teaching. Not only do we recognise diversity both in the processes of enacting partnership and in writing about those processes, we value these differences and seek points of contact between them. We welcome examples of people wrestling with, as well as celebrating, their partnership work, critically analysing or clarifying the terms and practices associated with partnership, and further complicating both understandings and approaches.

AN EDITORIAL BOARD FUNCTIONING IN PARTNERSHIP

The Editorial Board works in four student-staff, country-based partnership pairs supported by our senior editor and editorial manager for day-to-day operations, and we meet regularly online as a full board to discuss and wrestle with the bigger issues.

Working as co-editorial pairs and as international collaborators entails the obvious logistical challenges but also requires taking the time to learn about what each of us can contribute to the partnership and recognizing that we "contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways" (Cook-Sather et al., 2014, p. 6). As in all partnerships, this learning presents challenges as we come up against our own assumptions and norms and yields insights that almost always emerge through the juxtaposition of different perspectives.

This mixing of perspectives, insights, and experiences has provided many fruitful and, at times, difficult discussions. We have, individually and collectively, needed to take the time to reflect on how we feel the journal should develop. This reflection has been both the challenge and the delight of working in partnership. As Anthony puts it,

> Some challenges I have faced are around not so much confidence but a case of self-perceived competence. At first, I didn't think I could contribute or had any weighting behind my views, but I've grown into the role, and support from other Editorial Board members has been useful. It has been a challenge coping with the demands of a new PhD and being a part of the board. Ultimately, however, it's a great project and journey to be a part of.

COLLABORATING, CONTRIBUTING, AND LEARNING

To give voice to the multiple considerations that motivated us to join and stay with the Editorial Board, we share some of the board members' inspirations as these reflect the overall spirit of the journal.

Given our willingness to join a team editing a new journal on working in learning and teaching partnerships, it is perhaps unsurprising that we all value learning in collaboration. Lucy points to the particular excitement she felt about "learning about working in partnership with new people in a new context;" about "the intricacies of journal production, editing, and peer review;" and about "collaboration on an international scale." Ruth highlights the value of "learning both from the written submissions, but also through the experience of working with students as partners in the running of the journal itself." Likewise, Varun articulates his hope "to gain a sense of how a journal functions and operates from its conception to its actualization, and to better understand partnership in theory and practice."

Through *IJSaP* co-editing, we are learning about working in partnership, the scholarship of partnership, international practices in partnerships, and being journal editors. For several of us, editing a journal is a completely new experience. For others, the new experience is not editing a journal, but co-editing as partners. What emerged from writing about our individual motivations to join *IJSaP* was the inextricable relationship between our experiences and emotions. Anthony explains that "at first it was very daunting and worrying to be in a completely new and alien academic environment." Cherie names clearly what we have all experienced: "Our approach is demanding (in terms of time and pace) and has felt daunting at times!" And Kelly highlights the energizing aspect of these challenges: "I have enjoyed my collaboration and interactions with folk passionate about partnership. *IJSaP* promises to keep me connected to such a fun and enjoyable community of peers."

From this collaborative learning adventure, we recognise that we are personally and professionally developing, albeit in different ways, and we are relishing our opportunities to contribute to our co-editorial partnerships and the field of partnership as a broader scholarly movement. Some of us draw on extensive experience; for instance Alison writes: "I wanted to integrate the various ways I have been engaged with partnership work in higher education over the last ten years." Anita, on the other hand, looks forward to how this work will expand for her: "The practice of reading, evaluating, discussing and brainstorming are a few of the major techniques that I continue to sharpen as I know it will help me in my future endeavors as a critical thinker." Mick emphasises the power of both building on past work and moving the field forward: "I wanted to contribute to this movement by being involved in founding a high quality international journal." And Beth highlights the way in which co-creating a new journal on partnership and in partnership offers us a unique "legacy" opportunity: "*IJSaP* allows us to consider the extent to which partnership practices might inform and alter the ways in which the publishing process, and thus the development and dissemination of knowledge, work."

We are excited to bring partnership into an established academic realm where students and staff collaborating as partners is relatively uncharted territory, and we are eager to see how our co-editing approach opens up new ways of generating and publishing knowledge.

HOW YOU CAN BECOME INVOLVED WITH *IJSAP*

By valuing multiple perspectives and different ways of operating, we hope that *IJSaP* will appeal to a broad group of contributors and readers, including academics, staff, instructors, educational developers, librarians, learning resource specialists, and undergraduate and graduate students.

You can become involved with *IJSaP* through:

a) Writing for the journal in any of the genres we publish. Please contact us with your ideas. We encourage you to send us (ijsap@mcmaster.ca) your proposals for articles, case studies, or reflective pieces before you submit them.
b) Reviewing for *IJSaP*. We will provide training for inexperienced reviewers. If you are interested, please complete the reviewer expression of interest form.
c) Telling others about the journal and contributions that you found particularly interesting.

d) Checking that your library lists *IJSaP* in their catalogue and knowing it is freely available from https://mulpress.mcmaster.ca/ijsap.

We also welcome hearing about your views on the journal and which contributions you find most stimulating and useful. Please send us an email (ijsap@mcmaster.ca). Table 1 gives some quotations from reviewers and authors who have already been in contact.

Table 1: Some responses from reviewers and authors

"I really appreciate the resources for reviewers that you've set up. It's a great model which I wish more journals would consider." (Reviewer)

"I have reviewed for many journals, conferences and grants. This is the first time I have received a message . . . showing how my feedback was incorporated into what was sent to the author(s). And how positive and encouraging your tone [is] to the author(s), while at the same time maintaining rigor." (Reviewer)

"Thank you very much to you and your team for the level of feedback we received on the article we submitted to the *International Journal for Students as Partners*. I have never received such constructive, detailed, and helpful feedback and wanted to say thank you for the time spent on this to help develop the work." (Author)

"Thank you sincerely for the speedy response and detailed feedback. It helped immensely to receive that preliminary review in advance." (Author in response to feedback on article proposal)

We invite readers to bring both an open and a critical mind to this collaborative endeavor and to add your voices to the debate about terms, practices, theories, and implications of partnership work. We offer the journal as a forum for lively and constructive debate that values a diversity of experiences and perspectives rather than reifying norms and practices that work against radical collegiality.

NOTES

1. The biographies of Editorial Board members are available on the IJSaP website.
2. Among the journals which include aspects of Students as Partners are: International Journal of Student Voice; Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal, Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education, and The Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change.

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OPINION PIECE

A Framework to Explore Roles Within Student-Staff Partnerships in Higher Education: Which Students Are Partners, When, and in What Ways?

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INTRODUCTION

We are witnessing an expansion of research and practice involving students-as-partners in higher education. Within the "Students as Partners" (SaP) discourse there is growing recognition that SaP initiatives are diverse (Dunne, 2016). Authors such as Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, and Moore-Cherry (2016), Bryson, Furlonger, and Rinaldo-Langridge (2015), Buckley (2014), and Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) have suggested that SaP research and practice can be differentiated in a range of ways. For example, there are SaP initiatives focused on either governance or pedagogy; SaP can involve work with individuals, small groups of students or whole cohorts of students; and in situations where a subset of students are invited to become partners, they may be elected or selected. Many of the discussions about which students are involved in SaP work emphasises the importance of inclusion as a principle underpinning practice (Moore-Cherry, Healey, Nicholson, & Andrews, 2016; Bovill et al., 2016), and some practitioners and researchers have underlined the importance of trying to enhance inclusion of hard-to-reach students (REACT, n.d.) and previously excluded groups (Cook-Sather & Agu, 2013).

Whilst recent work is drawing attention to the potential benefits of whole cohort approaches to SaP (Bovill, 2017; Moore-Cherry et al., 2016), it may be difficult, impossible, or even undesirable in some contexts to involve all students all of the time. This might seem heresy within a new journal focused on SaP, but there is a danger that partnership is perceived to be universally positive, to involve all students and that all situations call for partnership. I support wholeheartedly the values that underpin SaP work: respect, responsibility, and reciprocity (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014), and therefore I try to enact these partnership values in all of my work, but I also recognise pragmatically that there are situations where partnership may either be challenging or undesirable.

A range of challenges to enacting partnership have been highlighted in the literature. These challenges include: the relative difficulty of establishing and maintaining partnerships when working within tight time constraints; situations where teachers have limited contact with students; situations where the requirements of professional bodies might constrain what is possible; the large size of many university classes; the resistance of students if they have been enculturated into a passive learning mode at university through over-reliance on lectures; student skepticism about partnership if they have experience of previous empty claims of partnership; and staff skepticism about the benefits of involving students more fully in learning and teaching (Bovill, Morss, & Bulley, 2009; Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Whilst Bovill et al. (2016) and Cook-Sather et al. (2014) suggest a range of ways in which these challenges can be overcome and re-envisaged, the clear message is that full partnership might not always be possible or desirable.

Using the ladder of student participation in curriculum design, I have argued elsewhere (Bovill & Bulley, 2011) that there are many levels of participation that are possible, and that partnership implies and requires a very high level of participation. This conceptualisation of partnership as just one of many types of student participation helps to highlight the challenge of trying to work in partnership in all contexts—meaningful partnership requires a high level of equality and contribution from partners.

There are benefits to recognising the limitations of partnership. In many situations where partnership is promoted, student views are reified at the risk of overlooking the important contribution of expert teachers. Similarly, if we try to mainstream partnership approaches that have been successful in several small classes, we should not be surprised if the partnership that results takes on very new forms in large-scale settings. We run the risk of enacting partnerships that do not feel like partnerships to those involved, with the resultant danger of alienating some students and academic staff in the longer term.

I suggest that the principles of respect and responsibility should, and can, inform most of the relationships between students and teachers in higher education, but reciprocity is a more complex issue due to academic staff taking final responsibility for some high-stakes issues such as assessment. Although some authors have provided excellent examples that suggest partnership is possible in assessment (see, for example, Deeley, 2014), we need to recognise that there are times when specific students, groups of students, or teachers need to take specific responsibility for learning and teaching processes. Acknowledging that contexts are different helps us to adopt appropriate SaP approaches in particular settings. This is about recognising the huge range of ways in which different students can engage as partners in different aspects of learning and teaching at different times.

One framework that helps in considering which students and staff should be partners, when and in what ways, is the participation matrix. This is a tool that has been used extensively in the international development field to map the different types of engagement by different actors at different stages of projects (Department for International Development, 2003). The matrix is frequently used to map out stakeholders and partners participating in development projects, and has recently been used to explore the roles of students and other stakeholders involved in participatory educational building design (Könings, Bovill & Woolner, in press). Figure 1 illustrates a participation matrix as an example of collaborative evaluation in a classroom.

Figure 1. Example participation matrix illustrating the nature of participation by students and staff in a collaborative evaluation project

Level of involvement / Action research stage	Inform	Consult	Participate	Partnership	Control
1. Course design	All students				Teacher
2. Evaluation design		Student group (n=18)		Teacher + Student group (n=2)	
3. Conduct evaluation		Teacher	Student group (n=18)		Students (n=2)
5. Analysis of results	Student group (n=12)			Teacher + student group (n=8)	
6. Dissemination				Teacher + student group (n=8)	

All SaP projects will look different and involve different actors. The participation matrix offers a way to be transparent about the different roles of different actors at different stages of a SaP project. In common with many SaP projects, this example shows the teacher leading the initiative at the start (Bovill, 2014; Heron, 1992). At later stages the teacher is working in partnership with different subsets of the student cohort.

One of the drawbacks of the matrix is that it does not reveal underpinning rationales or values. As a teacher, my values are critical in guiding the way that I relate to students and colleagues. I try to ensure at all times that I provide meaningful participation opportunities to all students, that participation opportunities are voluntary, that I enable students to adapt their roles at different stages of work as appropriate, that I create an environment of respect in which students and I can learn and develop, and that I remain open-minded to suggestions from students for new directions in our work.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

The participation matrix is based on the premise that it might not be desirable to aim for full partnership all the time and that students or staff may be in control at different stages of work. Importantly, this matrix can also be used by students to explore which teachers should be involved in projects they are leading, at what stages, and in what ways. Ideally, teachers and students come together to plan and undertake work, but where one person starts a project and then encourages other colleagues to join, the matrix can be helpful in highlighting who of those involved need to lead, work in partnership, participate, be consulted, or simply be informed about specific elements of work and when. The matrix helps us acknowledge that some kinds of student participation may not be desirable in all situations; for example, a new class of inexperienced students might feel out of their depth if a teacher tries to hand over control of designing the whole curriculum on day one without guidance (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Shor, 1992). In other situations, staff participation may not be desirable, such as when students are happy and capable to lead work uninterrupted by staff, or when staff are struggling to relinquish control. The participation matrix enables us to consider carefully how and when different actors play different roles in collaboration, and therefore has immense potential to be useful to the higher education SaP community.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

Catherine Bovill *is a Senior Lecturer in Student Engagement, Institute for Academic Development, University of Edinburgh. She is a Senior Fellow of the UK Higher Education Academy, and an Editorial Board member for Teaching in Higher Education. She has published and presented widely on students-as-partners and co-creation of curricula*.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

A Systematic Literature Review of Students as Partners in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

"Students as Partners" (SaP) in higher education re-envisions students and staff as active collaborators in teaching and learning. Understanding what research on partnership communicates across the literature is timely and relevant as more staff and students come to embrace SaP. Through a systematic literature review of empirical research, we explored the question: How are SaP practices in higher education presented in the academic literature? Trends across results provide insights into four themes: the importance of reciprocity in partnership; the need to make space in the literature for sharing the (equal) realities of partnership; a focus on partnership activities that are small scale, at the undergraduate level, extracurricular, and focused on teaching and learning enhancement; and the need to move toward inclusive, partnered learning communities in higher education. We highlight nine implications for future research and practice.

KEYWORDS

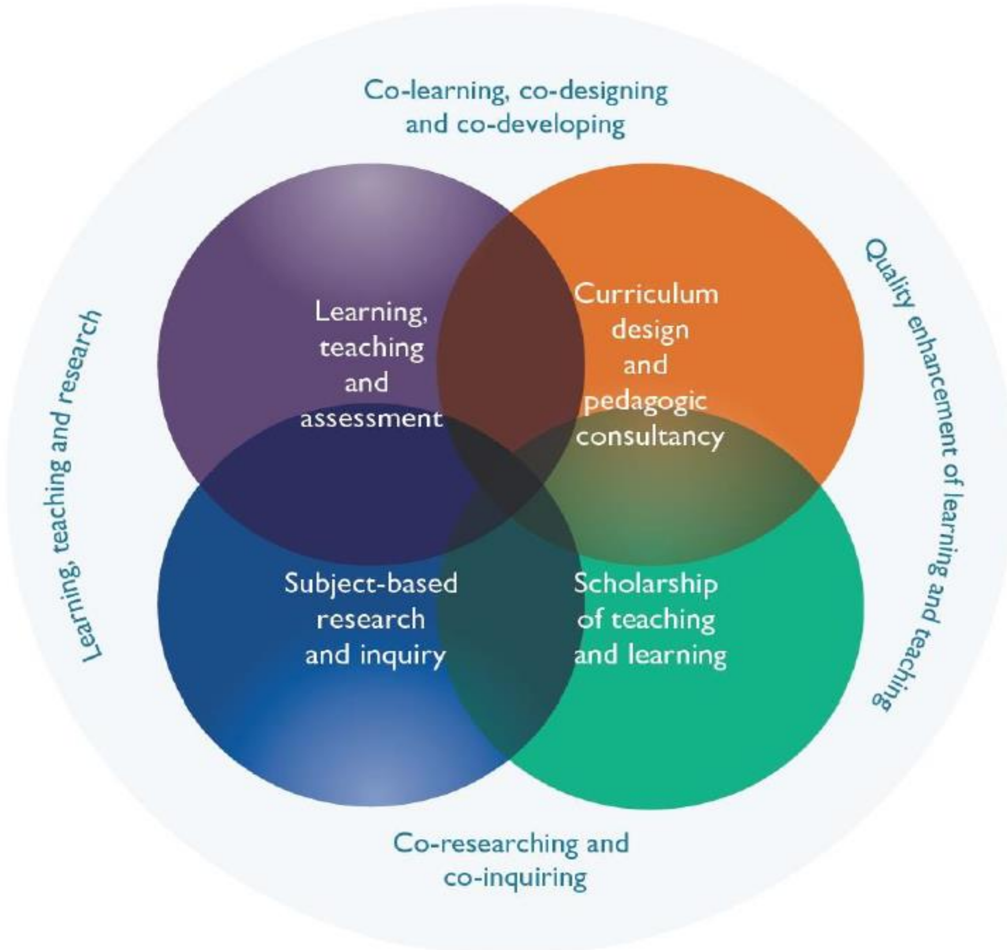
students as partners, student-staff partnership, higher education, systematic literature review

"Students as Partners" (SaP) embraces students and staff (including academic/faculty and professional staff) working together on teaching and learning in higher education. Partnership is a "reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis" (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten 2014, pp. 6-7). Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) describe SaP as "a relationship in which all involved—students, academics, professional services staff, senior managers, students' unions, and so on—are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together" (p. 12). Acknowledging that SaP is inherently process-orientated rather than outcomes-driven, Matthews (2016) distinguishes between student engagement, which emphasizes what students do at university, and SaP, which is focused on what students and staff do together to further common educational goals. SaP is enacted within "an ethic of reciprocity" (Cook-Sather & Felten, 2017) that is underpinned by partnership principles of respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility in learning and teaching (Cook-Sather et al., 2014).

While SaP can encompass a range of practices and pedagogies, the common thread is a re-positioning of the roles of students and staff in the learning endeavor, grounded in a values-based ethos. Partnerships can happen within or outside of curricula; between individuals, small groups, or large cohorts; in courses (also known as modules or units); or across entire programs of study. To make sense of the plethora of partnership practices, Healey et al. (2014) propose a model (Figure 1) to highlight where students and staff may engage as partners to further learning, teaching and research, and teaching enhancement efforts across four overlapping categories: subject-based research and inquiry; scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL); curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy; and learning, teaching, and assessment. This model positions students and staff as co-teachers, co-inquirers, curriculum co-creators, and co-learners across all facets of the educational enterprise.

The beneficial outcomes of engaging in partnership are emerging in published literature. Cook-Sather et al. (2014) report positive learning impacts for students, while Bovill et al. (2010) and Werder, Thibou, and Kaufer (2012) describe an increased sense of leadership in, responsibility for, and motivation around the learning process for students and staff engaging in partnership. Scholars report a transformed sense of self and self-awareness for both students and staff (Werder & Otis, 2010; Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Cook-Sather & Abbot, 2016) alongside the development of more inclusive teaching practices (Cook-Sather & Agu, 2013). Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, & Moore-Cherry (2016) discuss the challenges that exist in SaP work in terms of three broad categories. First, the customs and culture of higher education often make it difficult for both students and staff to take on new roles and perspectives. Second, institutional structures, practices, and norms typically present practical barriers to the kinds of collaboration and shared power involved in partnerships. Third, establishing an inclusive approach to partnership can be challenging; yet, inattention to this issue risks leaving out already marginalized students and staff.

Figure 1. Model depicting ways of engaging students as partners in higher education



Source: From *Engagement Through Partnership: Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, by M. Healey, A. Flint, and K. Harrington, 2014, The Higher Education Academy, p. 24. Copyright 2014 by the Higher Education Academy. Reprinted with permission.

Previously published research offers early insights into a range of SaP practices, and into the outcomes and pragmatic realities of engaging in such work. With more staff and students coming to embrace SaP and translating the principles into practices that suit their local contexts, understanding what research on partnership communicates across the literature through a scholarly analysis of publications is both timely and relevant.

CONTRIBUTION OF STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research and practice in the partnership arena is gaining significant momentum as SaP gains prominence internationally (Bovill & Felten, 2016; Cook-Sather, 2014). Matthews, Cook-Sather, & Healey (in press) point to such prominence through the rise of special issues of established journals, citing volume 21, issue 2 of the *International Journal for Academic Development* and volume 23, issue 5 of *Mentoring & Tutoring: Partnership in Learning*, as well as featured pieces in newer journals, including pieces in volume 1, issue 1 of *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal* and in volume 4, issue 2 of *Teaching, Learning and Inquiry*. Alongside these noteworthy publications, they also cite a new journal dedicated to partnership research (*International Journal for Students as Partners*), and international teaching and learning workshops focused on partnership practices (e.g., the International Summer Institute on Students as Partners, hosted by McMaster University, Canada). Our initial intention in conducting this literature review was to learn more about students as partners by reading this breadth of often disparate literature in an organized manner. As we began to discuss our approach, we realized we could make a broader contribution for those who, like us, were grappling with the realities of translating theory and research into practice. Thus, the overarching question guiding our literature review was: ***How are* "students as partners" *practices in higher education presented in the academic literature?*** In this article, we consider the following sub-questions:

1. Who authors SaP work, from what disciplines, and in what contexts?
2. In what areas are students and staff engaged in partnership?
3. Who partners in SaP initiatives, at what scale, and in what relation to the curriculum?
4. What and how often are positive and negative outcomes reported for students and staff engaged in SaP initiatives?

Our aim is to explore the published literature in the emerging SaP field and contribute an evidential baseline that might guide future directions for research and practice.

METHODS AND ANALYSIS

We conducted a systematic literature review inspired by the works of Amundsen and Wilson (2012) and Matthews et al. (2013) and informed by Kennedy (2007). This involved "defining the body of literature"; reviewing the literature based on an analytic framework; and analyzing and interpreting results.

Defining the body of literature: inclusion and exclusion criteria

As SaP encompasses a diverse range of existing practices and terms in higher education, searching standard databases was not feasible in returning a comprehensive set of articles. Our body of literature was sourced from combining two "expert bibliographies" from active researchers (Alison Cook-Sather and Mick Healey, see for example, Healey (2016)), both highly cited and recognized experts in the SaP field (as evidenced by keynotes, consultations, and invited talks) who have created reference lists of relevant works. We asked these two experts and a third, Peter Felten, to confirm the comprehensiveness of the compiled database. Given our focus on works situated explicitly within the language of SaP, we then checked the database by searching Google Scholar using the term "students as partners." given our focus on works situated explicitly within the language of SaP. This process resulted in an initial database of 386 published works (peer-reviewed articles, reflective essays, book chapters, research reports, conference papers, and case studies) from 1968 to 2016.

Kennedy (2007) suggests that defining the body of literature for any literature review inevitably includes and excludes work, and those conducting such reviews need to be clear about what criteria were employed. Inclusion criteria for works to be analyzed in our study were: (1) written in English; (2) situated in higher education; (3) published between 2011-2015 (inclusive); (4) self-identified by the authors as "students as partners" or similar terms; (5) based in an empirical study and grounded in the literature; and (6) peer-reviewed. These criteria excluded purely theoretical work, articles testing a data collection instrument, works not explicitly situated as SaP, and works that were not situated within the citation of other literature.

The process for refining the article database was twofold. First, works other than conference papers, journal articles, book chapters, and professional society research reports were removed along with works not published between 2011 and 2015. This resulted in a database of 130 items. Second, researchers read all remaining works and further culled those that did not meet the inclusion criteria. This resulted in 65 works being analyzed. A bibliography of these analyzed articles is available at http://espace.library.uq.edu.au/view/UQ:449124.

Review team

The analysis was conducted in partnership, involving 12 students and 8 staff, a total of 20 researchers, from 6 different higher education institutions and 4 countries: Australia, Canada, the UK, and the USA. Researchers came from a range of disciplines (e.g., biosciences, communications, education, geography, history, and physical sciences).

CONDUCTING THE ANALYSIS

Our analysis approach followed that of Matthews et al. (2013) involving three rounds of piloting an online survey-style analysis instrument, followed by partnered analysis. First, three phases of testing the online instrument were conducted, which involved researchers working within "country teams" (i.e., teams comprised of members from the same country) that read, discussed, and analyzed the same articles and entered results into the online survey. Differences in interpretation were identified and discussed, and the analysis instrument was revised accordingly. This iterative process was essential for revealing implicit differences in how the researchers conceptualized and classified SaP works.

To conduct the final analysis, each article was read and analyzed by two researchers independently. These researchers then consulted each other regarding the analysis and came to agreement on the classification of the article and the responses to be entered in the analysis instrument. Where researchers could not agree, they indicated the need for a third researcher's consultation. Once consensus was reached about an article, the data were entered into the analysis instrument so that information was captured in a standardized format.

Framework for analysis

The purpose of our analytical framework was to systematically capture data from each article guided by our pre-determined research questions whilst also reducing variability in the interpretation of the published research. Two papers (Amundsen & Wilson, 2012; Matthews et al., 2013) were heavily drawn on to develop the analytical framework, which aimed to interrogate individual articles in a rigorous and repeatable manner, shaped by certain questions. Our analysis instrument systematically guided the collection of data about each article according to the sections and categories shown in Table 1. All categories or answers in the analysis instrument sections were drawn from our existing collective knowledge of the SaP literature prior to data collection. When new categories arose in the open response ''Other'' option for each question, we compiled these data into new categories; results are reported below.

Table 1: Sections and categories from the analysis instrument used to systematically review and collect data from analyzed articles

Analysis Instrument Section	Categories/Options Within that Section
Demographic information	journal, year, country of first author
Institutional context	single university, multiple universities in the same country, multiple universities in different countries, other (specify)
Authorship	staff or students, staff or student first author, other (specify)
Disciplinary context	discipline, collaboration of disciplines, other (specify)
Student involvement in reported initiative	number, undergraduate or post-graduate, other (specify)
Students in reported initiative partnering with	other students, academic teaching staff, professional teaching support staff, other (specify)
Curricular location of reported initiative	within graded curriculum (if so, single subject or across several subjects), extra-curricular, other (specify)
Payment for student participation in reported initiative	Paid (incl. scholarship or stipend), not paid, unclear, other (specify)
Positive and negative outcomes of reported initiative for students	engagement, sense of belonging, confidence, learning gains, trust with staff, shift in power relationships, engagement of under-represented cohorts, insight into staff's experiences, other (specify)
Positive and negative outcomes of reported initiative for staff	changed teaching practices, new curriculum resources, trust with students, shift in power relationships, motivation, insight into students' experiences, other (specify)
Fit of reported initiative into existing models	Healey et al. (2014) "Engaging Students as Partners" model

RESULTS

A total of 65 scholarly articles, book chapters, and research reports drawn from 28 research journals and nine books formed the analyzed dataset used to explore our broad question: How are "students as partners" practices in higher education presented in the academic literature? Below, we report results from the four sub-questions that are the focus of this article.

Demographics of publishing on SaP in higher education

Eighty-nine percent of the analyzed papers (n=58) were written by staff first authors, while 5% (n=3) had undergraduate student first authors, and 2% (n=1) were written by post-graduate first authors. The remaining were not specified. Overall, 99% (n=64) of articles included a staff member as a co-author, with the single outlying paper not classified due to lack of in-text detail. Twenty-one papers (32%) also included a student (17 of these being undergraduates) as a co-author.

Partnership initiatives were most commonly conducted within a single university (80%, n=52), with 20% (n=13) conducted in multiple institutions. Partnerships were most frequently implemented at the institutional level (outside of a specific discipline, for example, at the institutional level, 40%, n=26) with four classed as multidisciplinary collaborations among disciplines (5%). Summary statistics describing those initiatives conducted within a disciplinary context are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Prevalence of different disciplinary contexts of partnerships

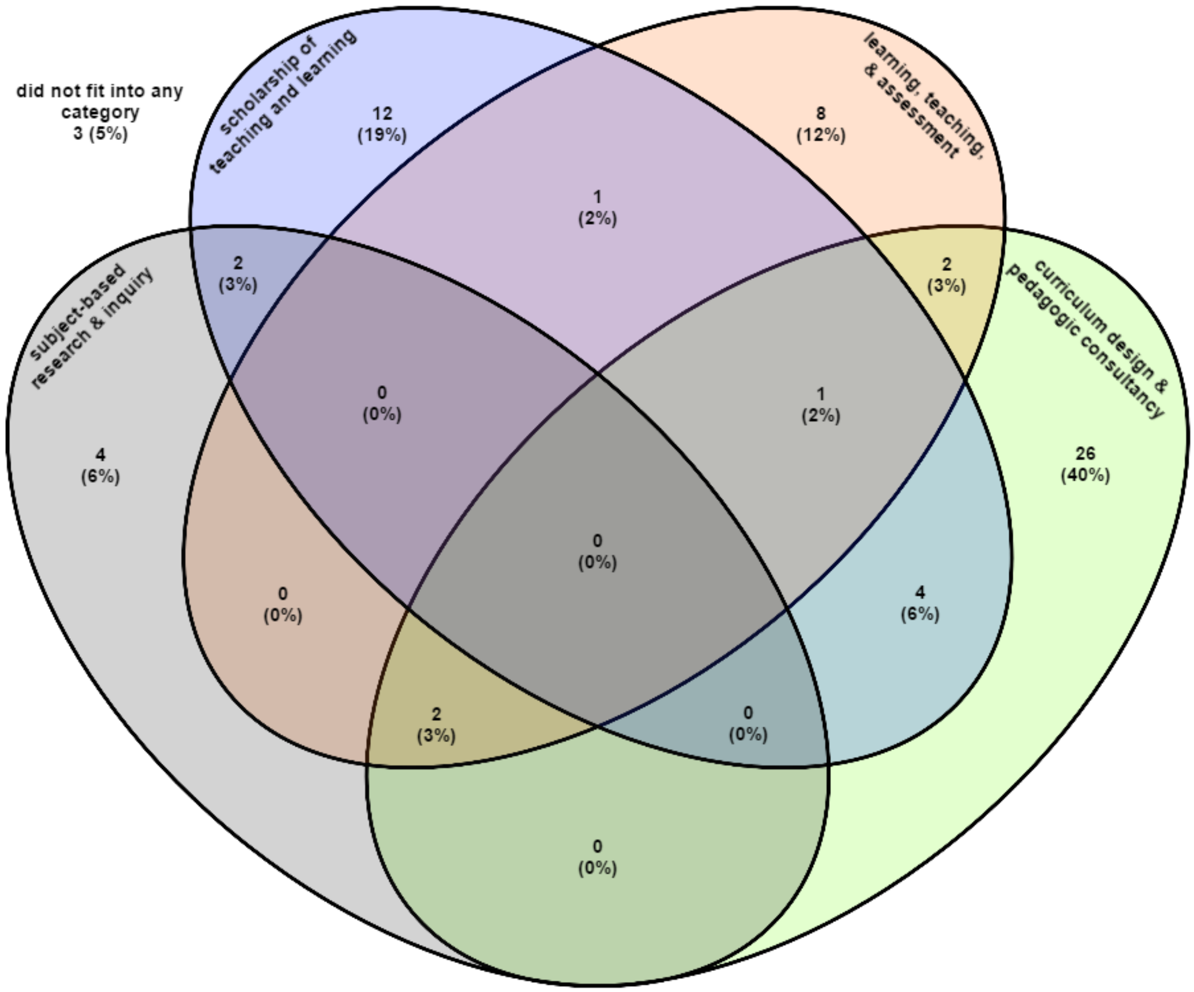
Disciplinary Context	Percentage	Number
Outside specific discipline (e.g. at the institutional level)	40	26
Health, medical, and behavioral sciences (including psychology)	22	14
Science, engineering, technology, and mathematics (including architecture, computer science, information technology)	17	11
Humanities, arts, and liberal arts	14	9
Social sciences	12	8
Business, economics, law, and marketing	8	5
Multidisciplinary collaboration	6	4

Note: Some papers were situated in more than one disciplinary context and were thus selected in multiple categories. Therefore, the sum total of numbers here will be greater than the sample size. Percentages were calculated as portions of the whole sample, so will not add up to 100%.

Areas for engaging SaP in higher education

Analyzed papers were categorized according to which quadrant of the Healey et al. (2014, Figure 1) "Engaging Students as Partners" model the partnership initiative best "fit" into. Each number reported here represents the total number of papers identified as belonging to a particular Healey category individually or in combination (overlapping) with other categories: 54% (n=35) categorized as "curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy"; 31% (n=20) as "SoTL"; 22% (n=14) as "learning, teaching and assessment"; and 12% (n=8) as "subject-based research and inquiry." Three papers (5%) did not fit into any of the quadrants. Some papers (20%, n=13) described initiatives that were categorized as "overlapping"—fitting into more than one quadrant of the model. Graphical representation of these categorizations (singular and overlapping) is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Partnership initiatives according to categories of partnership

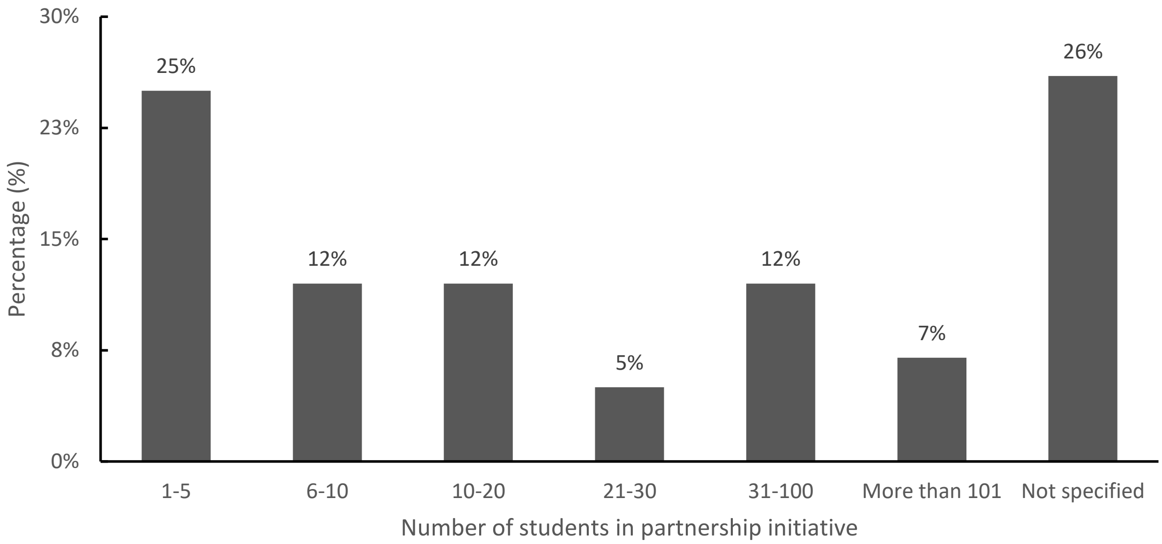


Individual and overlapping categorizations of partnership initiatives (N=65) within the four quadrants of the Healey, Flint, & Harrington (2014) "Engaging Students as Partners" model.
Note: 62 papers were assigned to at least one of the categories; three papers did not fit into any category.

Partnering in higher education: Partners, scale, and curricular location

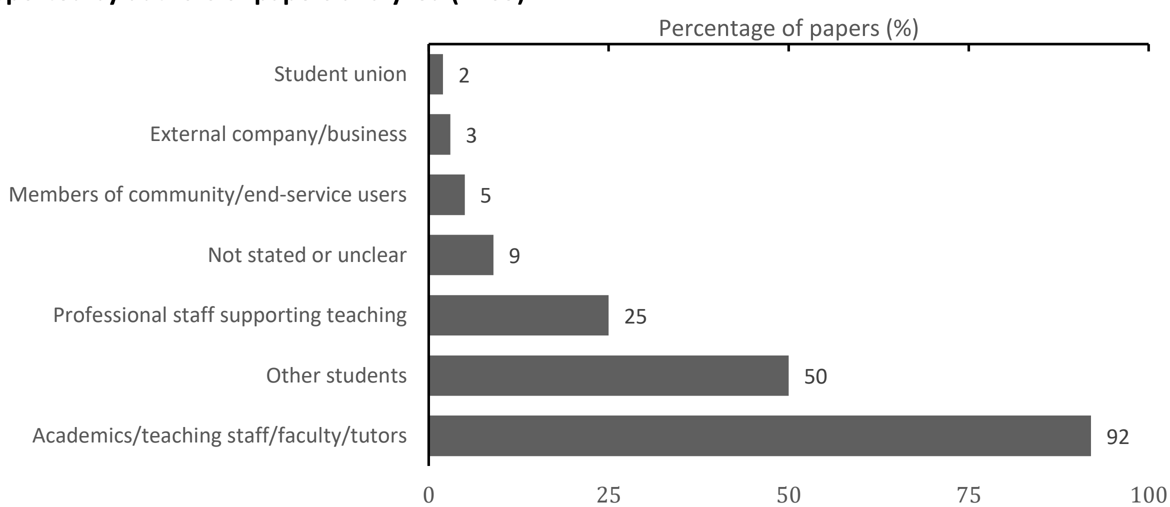
Described partnership initiatives were most commonly small scale including 1-5 students (25%, n=16). Very few large scale initiatives were recorded (Figure 3). A large portion of the articles analyzed (26%, n=17) did not explicitly specify the number of student partners involved in the initiative.

Figure 3. Number of students involved in partnership initiatives described as reported by authors of analyzed papers (n=65)



Students of diverse academic levels were involved in partnership. Undergraduate students were most frequently involved (74%, n=48), with postgraduates being involved less often (20%, n=13). Finally, 18% (n=12) of articles did not specify the level of students involved.

Figure 4. Visual representation of who students partnered with during their partnership initiatives as reported by authors of papers analyzed (n=65)



The majority of initiatives saw students partnering with academic/teaching staff/faculty/tutors (92%, n=60) and/or other students (51%, n=33). Student-student partnership presents a diverse set of activities in higher education. Such partnerships in the analyzed articles were framed explicitly by authors as partnership activities that extended beyond, for example, group work. An example of one of the student-student partnerships occurring alongside of staff-student partnership in our dataset is in Pedersen, Lymburner, Ali & Coburn (2013), which detailed the organization of an undergraduate psychology conference where students partnered with each other on specific tasks and during the general organization, as well as with members of staff, to achieve their goal of creating a conference. Further details about who was involved in the reported partnership initiatives are presented in Figure 4.

The majority of partnerships took place outside of the graded curriculum as extra-curricular (non-graded) activities (59%, n=38). Partnerships were also reported in a single unit (also called course, subject; 12%, n=8), as well as in multiple units that involved students being graded (12%, n=8). The remaining 11 papers did not offer sufficient detail for categorization. We recorded that 35% (n=23) of partnership initiatives paid students (this includes payment via scholarship or stipend), whilst 26% (n=17) did not. Many publications did not explicitly state whether students were paid (37%, n=24).

Positive outcomes of partnership for students and staff

The majority of papers reported positive outcomes for students (92%, n=60). The full list of positive outcomes for students is shown in Table 3 with frequencies. “Other” positive outcomes for students included increased quality of teaching, financial benefits, enhanced student-staff communications in tutorials, and enhanced creativity for students. Many papers (79%, n=51) also reported positive outcomes for staff. The full list of positive outcomes for staff is shown in Table 4 with frequencies. “Other” positive staff outcomes included staff saving time through partnership, enhanced staff experience in research, and freeing up staff to engage more students.

Negative outcomes of partnership for students and staff

Negative outcomes were less frequently reported for students with 74% (n=48) of papers not reporting any. For those papers that did report negative student outcomes, details are shown in Table 5. Very few negative outcomes were reported for staff with 85% (n=55) of papers not stating any. The most prevalent negative outcomes reported were that partnerships reinforced pre-existing power inequalities (5%, n=3), gave feelings of vulnerability (3%, n=2), and increased stress/anxiety (5%, n=3). The following negative outcomes for staff were also mentioned once: “decreased motivation for teaching,” “inhibited the relationship or trust between students and staff,” “challenges maintaining quality control of output,” and “failed to achieve engagement from all students.”

Table 3 : Positive outcomes of partnership for students

Positive Outcomes for Students	Percentage	Number
Increased student engagement/motivation/ownership for learning	56	37
Increased student confidence/self-efficacy	45	29
Increased understanding of the "other's" experience (e.g. students understanding staff experiences)	39	25
Enhanced relationship or trust between students and staff	37	24
Increased student learning about their own learning (meta-cognitive learning, self-evaluation, self-awareness)	35	23
Raised awareness of graduate attributes or employability skills or career development	32	21
Increased sense of belonging to university or discipline or community	31	20
Improved student content/discipline learning (actual or perceived)	29	19
Positively shifted identity as student/learner/person/professional	28	18
Enhanced student-student relationships	22	14
Positively shifted traditional power dynamics between students and academics	19	12
Improved learning outside of discipline, including critical skill development not linked directly to employability	17	11
Engaged or empowered under-represented students	9	6
Not stated	8	5
Improved academic performance (as reported via assignment or grades)	6	4
Networking and building critical relationships	3	2
Publication and policy change	3	2
Opportunity to pursue own research questions and development as researcher	3	2
Insight into how research is conducted	3	2
Other	8	5
Total		285

Table 4: Positive outcomes of partnership for staff

Positive Outcomes for Staff	**Percentage**	**Number**
Enhanced the relationship or trust between students and staff	43	28
Development of new or better teaching or curriculum materials	31	20
Increased understanding of the "other's" experience (e.g. staff understanding student experiences or vice versa)	28	18
New beliefs about teaching and learning that change practices for the better	23	15
Not stated	22	14
Re-conceptualization of teaching as a collaborative process to foster learning	19	12
Positively shifted traditional power dynamics between students and academics	15	10
Positively shifted identity as student/learner/person/professional	14	9
Increased motivation for teaching, research, and participation in partnerships	9	6
Find teaching to be more enjoyable/rewarding	9	6
Programmatic changes/changes to teaching	6	4
Improved personal career prospects and networking	5	3
Metacognition/knowledge and understanding of teaching and learning	3	2
New research and publication	3	2
Inspired by student partners	3	2
Increased/improved communication	3	2
Other	5	3
Total		157

Table 5 : Negative outcomes of partnerships for students

Negative Outcomes	**Percentage**	**Number**
Inhibited the relationship or trust between students and staff (implying shift in “power” relationships but don't say “power” or “hierarchy”)	6	4
Lack of improvement/lack of challenge in desired areas	3	2
Reinforced pre-existing power inequalities or hierarchical structures (terms “power” or “hierarchy” explicitly used)	3	2
Decreased student engagement/motivation/ ownership for learning	3	2
Lack of one-on-one supervision	2	1
Decreased student confidence/self-efficacy	2	1
Decreased academic performance (as reported via assignment or grades)	2	1
Reduced student-staff contact time	2	1
Inhibited relationship between students and other students	2	1
Negatively shifted “identity” as student/learner/person/professional	2	1
Decreased sense of belonging to university or discipline or community	2	1
Feeling isolated from peers after leaving course	2	1
Frustration at slow pace of pedagogical change	2	1
Larger time commitment than expected	2	1
Not stated	74	48
Total		69

LIMITATIONS

It is important to acknowledge that the results reported here are specific to the body of empirical partnership literature that was defined by our selection process to create the initial database of works and the inclusion/exclusion criteria. The development of the database is biased toward works on partnership as identified by experts in the field. While it was necessary to establish clear criteria for a systematic literature review, we acknowledge that important research and discussion occurs outside of empirical studies, such as in purely theoretical articles, reflective essays, practice-based case studies, opinion pieces, and in those bodies of knowledge that reflect partnership but are not framed explicitly as SaP with associated terminology (e.g., subject-based research and inquiry).

DISCUSSION

Four themes that cut across our results emerged from our analysis and interpretation of the data. We present and discuss these themes below aiming to respond to the broader question of how SaP is presented in the recent academic literature. We then propose nine implications to guide future practice and research.

Reciprocity of partnership

Cook-Sather and Felten (2017) discuss how an "ethic of reciprocity" enables partnership practices:

> a process of balanced give-and-take not of commodities but rather of contributions: perspectives, insights, forms of participation. There is equity in what is exchanged and how it is exchanged; however, those who are involved in the exchange do not get and give exactly the same things.

Reciprocity in partnership is premised on dialogue, negotiation, and exchange of ideas between partners. This interaction positions both students and staff as having essential expertise to contribute to the goal of furthering education. Bird and Koirala (2002) described shared goals, risks, and learning as essential, while Healey et al. (2014) framed staff and students as co-learners. Partnership literature has also positioned students and staff as collaborators (Taylor & Wilding, 2009) and colleagues (Matthews et al., in press). Reciprocity in partnership thus inherently subverts the traditional power hierarchy between learners and teachers by re-positioning partners as learners and teachers.

Our review explored how students and staff participate in co-authorship, and illuminated who gets to tell the empirical story of partnership in the literature. Interpreting these results through the lens of reciprocity in partnership, we found that reciprocity does not always translate into co-authorship. The fact that the majority of articles had a staff first author (88%) with one-third listing a student co-author raises the question: To what extent are students and staff shaping the SaP body of literature together? Co-inquiry and co-authorship represent two important ways in which collaboration can exist within the context of partnership. Extending co-inquiry through to the writing process creates an opportunity for meaningful incorporation of student expertise and the positing of students as equals (Little, 2011). While our literature review captured a plethora of SaP practices premised on the ideals of reciprocity and shared responsibility, the artefacts (publications) of those interactions tended to be staff-centric. There are many explanations for why staff might be more likely to lead and co-author such works than students. In some instances, for example, the timeframe for the research and publication process may extend well beyond that of the partnership initiative that forms the focus of such reporting. In other instances, students may not have the time or interest in engaging in this process within the context of heavy university workloads or career aspirations outside of academia where publishing is of less value. These results nonetheless suggest that the reciprocity of partnership enacted in practice is not necessarily extending fully into research. This trend also raises the question: Are there new ways of thinking and new genres of writing that can transform how SaP research is conducted and reported that would encourage the extension of partnership through to publication?

The "ethic of reciprocity" lens also helps make sense of the way outcomes are reported about partnership, and where outcomes for both students and staff might be anticipated. Authors of the analyzed articles reported considerably more outcomes (both positive and negative) for students than for staff. This student-centric reporting of partnership may potentially reflect that SaP can be seen as a strategy to enhance the student experience, thereby prioritizing the student response. This does, however, potentially communicate a deficit mindset derived from a history of student engagement rhetoric, which implies that engagement, and by extension partnership, is something "done to" rather than "done with" students (Matthews, 2016). The combination of these results with those on authorship practices raises tensions around whether empirical literature has the tendency to conform to the traditional paradigm of staff-centric reporting on student-centric outcomes, rather than demonstrating a more reciprocal process of students and staff learning, inquiring, and reporting together.

Making space for sharing the (equal) realities of partnership

Reporting bias, whereby authors tend to report only positive results, has been acknowledged in higher education research (Dawson & Dawson, 2016). Our results suggest similar bias in the emerging SaP literature where positive outcomes around partnerships dominate. It is important to recognize the realities and challenges that partnerships may face especially as partnerships or partnership programs are evolving (Marquis et al., 2016; Bovill et al., 2016; Allin, 2014). This recognition is particularly necessary insofar as some of the negative outcomes mentioned in the dataset (e.g., reinforcing power inequalities or inhibiting the development of trust) run counter to the avowed goals of partnership work. Attention to when and how partnership efforts might result in outcomes antithetical to their purposes seems essential to realizing the potential of such work, and conversely, to not overselling its positive aspects.

Dawson and Dawson (2016) proposed several reasons for reporting bias in higher education research: orientation to positive outcomes amongst funding bodies, blurred boundaries between SoTL and educational research, poor research design, or academics feeling pressure to produce. We also suggest that inequalities may exist in the focus of, or methods used by, publishing authors of our analyzed articles insofar as they may focus more predominantly on "what worked" for students. Conversely, students may feel a certain pressure, within the power dynamics of higher education, to report primarily positive outcomes and thus might not be critical of the staff who may be responsible for assessment. All these are possible explanations for the positively oriented trend of reporting in our SaP literature review results. There are, however, real dangers for SaP in withholding challenges and lessons learned from failures affecting those who want to establish partnerships. As one example, Mercer-Mapstone, Dvorakova, Groenendijk, and Matthews (in press) articulate that "based on reading literature that tended to emphasize the positive outcomes of students as partners," both student and staff authors felt they needed to enact an idealized notion of partnership that was aspirational and left "no space for the nitty-gritty messiness and conflicts that are also an inherent part of the realities of genuine partnership." Ensuring that research focuses equally on the positive and negative aspects of both student and staff experiences will be important not only in ensuring early adopters go in with a strategy for facing such potential challenges— "eyes wide open" so to speak—but also in embracing the reciprocal nature of partnership itself.

Engaging in partnership practices in higher education

Our categorization of initiatives according to the Healey et al. (2014, Figure 1) model points toward significant trends within current empirical research. The prominence of curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy and, to a lesser extent, SoTL, suggests a much greater emphasis in recent literature on the "enhancement of learning and teaching" side of the model than on "learning, teaching, and research partnerships." These results run counter to the prevalence of higher education partnership practices indicated by Healey et al. (2014) who state, in the development of the model, that: "whereas most students in a programme may be engaged in learning and research, it is very rare that most students in a programme are engaged as partners in the enhancement of learning and teaching practice and policy, beyond giving their opinions or evaluations" (p23).

We can look to other results in the current study to help explain such a trend. Our findings suggest that the majority of articles analyzed focused on making sense of what partnership looks like outside of the curriculum where "enhancement of learning and teaching" activities tend to occur. Such activities outside of the curriculum also tend to include smaller numbers of students, as was the case in our results. This highlights, then, a trend in our review of practitioners engaging in partnerships that are small scale, extracurricular, and focused on teaching and learning enhancement. Perhaps this makes sense as such activities may be more appealing or manageable to those wishing to adopt and report on partnership practice. Another explanation might take into account the practical considerations or restrictions that exist within classrooms and the fact that power dynamics can play out particularly strongly in classrooms (Flint, 2016). Partnerships are relational by nature which also may contribute to this trend as relationships are more easily cultivated on a one-to-one or small-group basis.

The predominant focus on curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy, and SoTL may also point towards an explanation for the significant focus on partnerships at the undergraduate level where such activities are more likely to occur. This does, however, suggest that partnership practices at the postgraduate-student level is potentially an under-explored or under-reported arena worthy of future research.

The fact that most of the partnership activities described in the empirical literature happen outside of students' coursework supports the finding that comparatively less attention has been paid to the "learning, teaching, and research partnerships" side of the Healey et al. (2014) model. This side of the model tends to include larger numbers of students where issues of "scaling up" present challenges to SaP work.

This focus might also be explained by the fact that many practices in subject-based research and inquiry, and learning, teaching, and assessment are reported in research that does not employ a partnership lens. There is a large, distinct body of literature on undergraduate research and inquiry (e.g., Healey & Jenkins, 2009), some of which takes up initiatives and ideas that overlap substantially with discussions of partnership (see Levy, 2011; Neary, 2014).

Partnership itself, however, is less often considered within this literature (see, however, Little, 2011). Similarly, a substantial thread of assessment research is premised on dialogue and trust between students and educators (see Boud & Molloy, 2013), and separately, literature on student-to-student learning relationships (see Newton & Ender, 2010; Bryson, 2014) also resonates with partnership, yet neither bodies of literature use a partnership framework or language. It makes sense that established pedagogical research is not explicitly linked to SaP given that SaP is a newer language that encompasses many existing practices. Thus, future research that brings together these bodies of literature and considers points of congruence and discrepancy between them might generate significant insights (Marquis, 2016).

Toward inclusive, partnered learning communities in higher education

Healey et al. (2014) state that "embedding sustainable partnership beyond discrete projects and initiatives requires that working and learning in partnership becomes part of the culture and ethos of an institution" (p. 8). Matthews et al. (in press) argue that "the extent to which we value students and staff working collaboratively informs the transformative potential of partnership," which represents a "radical cultural shift" toward inclusive "egalitarian learning communities." Several universities internationally have drawn on this transformative aspiration of SaP to guide institutional strategies for teaching and learning or have integrated SaP significantly into university practice and culture (e.g., Bryn Mawr College, Haverford College, McMaster University, Plymouth University, University of Birmingham, University of Queensland, Ulster University, University of Winchester). This indicates a move toward large-scale enactment of SaP practices by students and staff across disciplines in both the formal, assessed curriculum, and beyond in extra-curricular teaching enhancement and policy efforts.

The partnership initiatives described most frequently in our study, however, were predominantly isolated case-study examples of small-scale practices external to the assessed curriculum. Focusing on and enacting partnership more frequently at this level does risk taking an "elite" approach (Kuh, 2007) to partnership pedagogies which potentially prioritizes voices that are already privileged and engaged (Flint, 2016; Felten et al., 2013; Cook-Sather, 2015).

Hart (1992), in the context of school-level education, argued that opportunities to participate in one's own education must be made available to all students. This notion translates easily to the context of partnership in higher education particularly within the aim of building a learning community where students and staff are valued as partners. If we seek to understand how such cultural change occurs, then it is important to explore multiple practices that span disciplines within institutions and how those practices signal the manner in which students and staff are enacting SaP as members of partnered learning communities. Some (e.g., Macfarlane, 2016) have argued against "mainstreaming" and enforcing concepts like student engagement (and by extension, partnership), suggesting that this process does not account for students' different interests and preferences, and therefore divests them of their autonomy and agency as learners. It is arguable then that institutional SaP opportunities should be made available in ways that traverse both curricular and extra-curricular domains as it is difficult to imagine, for example, how a learning community of partnership in higher education might be built when the majority of practices are occurring outside of the classroom.

If such learning communities are to be as inclusive as possible, we might also look beyond numbers to how people are enabled to engage in partnership and with whom. Our results indicate that approximately one third of initiatives paid students for their involvement. This raises issues of equity among student cohorts, and between the students and the staff with whom they partner. Non-payment creates challenges for students who cannot afford to undertake unpaid partnership initiatives outside of the curriculum, privileging certain students for reasons that have nothing to do with the goals of a partnership. Similarly, if students are not being compensated for work that paid staff typically would complete, serious questions about equity and reciprocity can arise. These results echo Bovill et al. (2016) in suggesting that concrete strategies for considering questions of inclusion and equity in partnership initiatives are required.

Our findings also indicate that students were positioned as partnering with academics/faculty/teaching staff/tutors more than other roles. This reflects the common understanding of "partnership" in the literature that positions partnership as a collaboration between academics and students. Interestingly, we found that the second most common partnership structure was that of student-student partnership—troubling the predominant rhetoric of "student-staff partnership" or literal interpretations of SaP. This does, however, re-vision a broader view of a partnered learning communities and points towards the need for deeper consideration around the language of SaP. This also suggests there is space to tease apart some of the complexity and nuance around inclusivity in partnership as to who is engaged and included in partnership learning communities.

Implications for future partnership research and practice

We have presented and discussed the results of a systematic literature review on students as partners in higher education. This evidential baseline has many implications that we highlight here in the hopes of guiding future research and practice.

1. We found low numbers of inter-institutional or cross-disciplinary initiatives and studies. Future research illuminating how partnerships translate across disciplines, institutions, countries, and cultures would be valuable in pointing towards which facets of partnership might be context-specific and which might be more generalizable.
2. Authorship of publications was staff-centric with low rates of staff-student co-authorship. Exploring how and why students and staff do or do not extend co-inquiry into co-authorship would be useful in elucidating mechanisms to create space and practices for students to shape partnership research alongside staff. At times, practitioners may default to the normative hierarchical university paradigm when reporting and publishing on SaP, naming staff as authors and obscuring the roles of student partners in this work.
3. The outcomes of partnership were reported with a student-centric focus. This suggests a potential need for further research on outcomes for staff aligning with the notion of reciprocity and equal benefit to both student and staff partners that is central to partnership (Cook-Sather et al., 2014).
4. A focus on reporting positively-oriented outcomes was observed across the literature. We encourage practitioners to enter into the brave spaces of partnership

(Aroa & Clemens, 2013; Cook-Sather, 2016) by exploring and sharing in more detail the challenges and negative outcomes of partnerships that would help to complete the narrative around these complex relationships.

5. The categorization of initiatives according to the Healey et al. (2014) model was weighted significantly toward partnership activities that focus on the enhancement of teaching and learning. Teasing apart reasons behind where, how, and why practitioners choose certain partnership practices in light of these findings would be of great value. Furthermore, exploring through a partnership lens bodies of literature such as subject-based research and inquiry, student-student learning, and teaching, learning and assessment not explicitly framed as SaP—but which have values that resonate with partnership—would expand thinking across these bodies of work.
6. Scaling up partnership initiatives and making opportunities accessible to the majority rather than a select few are frequently raised tensions in this arena and were prevalent in our results. The question of whether and how partnership initiatives might be expanded will be integral to the endeavor of creating learning communities which foster a culture of partnership, allowing more sustainable practices in the long term.
7. Partnership initiatives were predominantly framed as occurring between students and academic staff. Further exploration of where and how partnerships are occurring among, for example, students and other students (with a particular sparsity of research on postgraduate students), students and professional staff, or students and stakeholders external to universities, would move toward a more inclusive understanding of partnership.
8. A large number of the papers analyzed lacked sufficient detail to be categorized within our analysis framework. Future research might focus on describing the context of SaP initiatives and their institutional settings more fully in order to help others adopt the range of innovative practices shared across the literature.
9. There was a predominant focus on outcomes for individuals immediately involved in partnerships. While logical, further consideration of if and how partnership is working to transform institutional cultures more broadly would help to shore up (or complicate) claims about its radical potential (Matthews et al., in press).

CONCLUSION

Our intention in conducting this systematic literature review was to explore the empirical research to understand what the research on partnership communicates across the literature in an effort to support the translation of partnership research into practice. We have highlighted four cross-cutting themes that emerged from our results: reciprocity; realities of partnership outcomes; context of practices; and inclusive, partnered learning communities. Drawing on these themes, we proposed nine implications to guide future research and practice. These results, trends, and implications highlight the fact that SaP as a theory, an ethos, and a practice is as complex, nuanced, and multifaceted as the educational institutions within which partnerships unfold. Through the examination of practices reported in literature that spans institutions, countries, and contexts, we hope to illuminate new avenues for SaP research by establishing an evidential baseline for inquiry into SaP, and to propel the field into new and fruitful directions that enrich teaching and learning in higher education.

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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 anticolonial 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.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Decoding and Disclosure in Students-as-Partners Research: A Case Study of the Political Science Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The Decoding the Disciplines (DtD) methodology has been used by faculty to identify "bottlenecks" to student learning: disciplinary concepts or practices that prove challenging or troublesome to students. This article outlines what happened when a student-faculty partnership research team applied the DtD approach to a specific disciplinary practice in political science. The research team, led by three undergraduate students, compared how faculty and students decoded the task of writing a literature review in political science. This research yielded both insights into why the literature review is a bottleneck in political science and reflections on the practice of partnership in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL). Results from the interviews revealed fundamental differences in how faculty and undergraduates conduct literature reviews in this discipline, including a troubling disjuncture as students become more expert in this process. Further results about the student-faculty partnerships highlighted important tensions related to disclosure and power in conducting SoTL research.

KEYWORDS

Student partnerships, decoding the disciplines, political science, literature reviews, SoTL

Over the past decade, the Decoding the Disciplines (DtD) methodology has been used to study "bottlenecks" to student learning in a range of disciplines (e.g., Pace & Middendorf, 2004;

Miller-Young et al., 2015; Shopkow, Diaz, Middendorf, & Pace, 2012; Zhu, Rehrey, Treadwell, & Johnson, 2012). Scholars at Indiana University first developed DtD because they recognized that "the mental operations required of undergraduates differ enormously from discipline to discipline, [and] these ways of thinking are rarely presented to students explicitly" (Middendorf & Pace, 2004, p. 3). "Decoding" or deconstructing essential disciplinary concepts yields crucial information that has the potential to positively impact learning within any discipline. While highly generative, the DtD approach involves faculty talking with fellow faculty members to explore a bottleneck as a peer-to-peer dialogue on what they want students to learn. In consultation with David Pace, one of the founders of DtD, we set out to discover what would happen if students and faculty partnered to use the DtD methodology to investigate a bottleneck to student learning, something that has never been reported in the literature.

SoTL scholars are increasingly inviting students into the research process as partners (Felten, 2013; Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014; Werder, Pope-Ruark, & Verwoord, 2016), though the actual practice and ramifications of student-faculty partnerships in SoTL remain relatively underexplored (Allin, 2014). Since a fundamental purpose of DtD is to understand student learning (Diaz et al., 2008), student perspectives on disciplinary bottlenecks seem to be essential to understanding student expectations of learning in a discipline. We also believe that student research partners are particularly well positioned to explore, analyze, and interpret any potential mismatch between teacher and student perceptions of bottlenecks to learning. Because of this, student-faculty partnerships in DtD have the potential to reveal not only different perspectives on common bottlenecks but also distinct challenges and opportunities for research in the scholarship of teaching and learning.

METHODOLOGY

The literature review is a staple of scholarly writing in many disciplines, including political science (Ridley, 2008). Literature reviews require the author to synthesize the findings or methods of multiple scholars and to position one's own work in relation to the broader field (Ridley, 2008). This type of scholarly writing is an apt bottleneck to use in a decoding study because it is a common assignment in political science courses that poses challenges for many students. Indeed, Cisco (2014) found that this is a particularly frustrating assignment—a bottleneck to learning—because students often have "difficulty with the structure of the literature review" (p. 42). In the political science department in this study, students begin to write literature reviews in their second year in a research methods course and continue to do so in courses through their final year when they have to complete extensive research paper.

Our research team consisted of three undergraduate students, one faculty member, and two external faculty consultants. The three undergraduates were in their final year of university and had studied political science. The faculty member, actively engaged in student-faculty partnership research, asked these students to participate in this study because he had worked with one of them before. One of the external faculty consultants co-created the DtD process, so he advised on preparing for the interviews participated in analyzing the results. The other external partner had experience with the DtD methodology, qualitative research methodologies, and SoTL. While the students on the team led each aspect of the project except for the initial conceptualizing of a DtD partnership study, the team worked cohesively at each phase to induct students into the DtD methodology and to empower them to employ qualitative interviewing and analysis techniques.

This study was conducted at a mid-sized, teaching-intensive university in the United States. We received approval for our research process from the university's Institutional Review Board (human subjects research ethics board). In order to gather multiple voices from the political science department, we not only invited faculty but also students in their fourth and second years of study at the university. We focused on students at different stages in their undergraduate studies in order to complicate the "student" perspective (Goldschmidt, 2014). The undergraduates on our research team emailed an invitation to participate in the study to every second- and fourth-year political science major in the department. Five fourth-year students who had completed their political science senior seminar agreed to join. The senior seminar was their capstone or final integrative course, where each student wrote an extensive research paper, including a literature review. Three second-year students who had completed a political science research methods course also agreed to join. The research methods course serves as a core part of the program; it requires students to assemble a portfolio of research-related tasks including an abbreviated literature review and typically marks the first time students in this field create a literature review.

Three political science faculty members volunteered to be a part of our study. Within this group, each faculty member had recently taught either research methods or the senior seminar, although our faculty participants were not necessarily the professors who had taught the students in this study. The faculty participants included both male and female and tenured and tenure-track professors, and their teaching experience ranged from five years to more than twenty years. We refer to specific participants by their label and a number (i.e., Fourth-year #2, Faculty #3, etc.) throughout this paper to maintain anonymity.

The Decoding the Disciplines methodology aims to assist faculty in thinking about what they want students to learn by breaking down complex tasks into component parts which then can be readily assessed. The methodology promotes peer-faculty dialogue on disciplinary practices and an exploration of how students learn those practices, and it also prompts faculty to share what they are learning about student learning after having engaged in this process. The phases of the process include: defining the challenging bottleneck to student learning, uncovering the mental tasks associated with the bottleneck, modeling those tasks for students, embedding motivation to complete tasks, assessing those tasks, and sharing work among colleagues to disseminate practices (for an overview of DtD, see: http://decodingthedisciplines.org/).

For the purpose of this study, we engaged in the first two phases of the DtD approach to gather perspectives on the literature review as a bottleneck and outline how each participant described the mental tasks involved in writing a literature review. The core DtD methodology is a semi-structured interview between faculty members where the interviewer prompts his or her colleague to reflect on and articulate the steps needed to navigate a specific disciplinary task which has been identified as a bottleneck to student learning. The interviewer's task is to help his or her colleague to make explicit all of the steps a disciplinary expert would take to work through the bottleneck. Middendorf and Pace (2004), for example, explain that "the task of the interviewers was to repeatedly probe beneath the surface, asking questions such as, 'Just how are the students supposed to do that?' or, 'What does that instruction assume that students are able to do?'" Because the undergraduate students on the research team were conducting these DtD interviews, they decided to design a question protocol as a reference guide (and sought advice from the two faculty consultants in a Skype session). Even though the typical DtD process does not involve asking faculty about how they teach a bottleneck, we made the intentional decision to gather information about how faculty in our study teach the literature review so that we could explore the similarities and differences between how these faculty (a) teach students to conduct a literature review and (b) conduct a literature review in their own research.

Students on the research team conducted every interview, with one student serving as the primary interviewer and the other two acting as note-taking observers. In addition to asking each participant the same set of semi-structured interview questions, the student researchers prompted each interviewee to outline on a whiteboard his or her process of writing a literature review. Interviews were recorded to capture audio only, and the student researchers transcribed all 11 interviews. Then each student researcher separately read the transcripts, looking for salient points of each interview, before the three student researchers merged these points into categories and then themes (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Saldana, 2015; Creswell, 2014). Once the students consolidated their emergent themes, they invited the faculty member and two faculty consultants to analyze the transcripts by coding for these themes. Then the full research team met via Skype to discuss what each researcher had uncovered and to reflect on the process of having students take the lead on DtD interviews and analysis.

One of the main limitations of our study is its small size. Because of this limitation, we will not make conclusive claims about the political science literature review or students-as-partners in DtD research. However, we present our findings in the spirit of Kenneth Elbe's observation that "it is attention to particulars that brings any craft or art to a high degree of development" (quoted in Huber & Hutchings, 2005, p. 36). First we will present our interview analysis, followed by a discussion of the process of engaging in student-faculty SoTL research partnerships.

Decoding faculty research practices

In the faculty interviews, the research processes revealed both the nature of the disciplinary literature and the analytical and organizational skills that faculty experts employ in literature reviews. Faculty #1, who conducts primarily qualitative research, explained that the structure of a literature review emanates in a "radial" fashion from the topic to its surrounding issues. He further discussed the importance of context in how he begins this process, asking, "Where does this fit and what do other people have to say about it?" Once this contextual question is answered, he then determines the literature he will read and identifies the audience for his research. Faculty #2, who focuses mostly on quantitative research, described a process of searching multiple databases for articles and then sorting those articles by themes. Faculty #2 outlined a standardized template for both the process of conducting and the format for writing every literature review. Unlike Faculty #1's "radial" and emergent approach, Faculty #2 emphasized the importance of having a consistent analytical and organizational approach to the literature review. Faculty #3, another quantitative researcher, described the literature review as an iterative and "creative" process of asking a question informed by theory, exploring the relevant literature, and then revising the question. Like Faculty #1, Faculty #3's literature review process varies depending on the context of the inquiry, but it always aims for comprehensiveness.

Although they outlined different approaches to literature reviews, all emphasized the recursive, iterative nature of the literature review process. The three faculty each recognized that undergraduates would not be able to replicate their specific expert practices when conducting a literature review. Faculty #3, for example, remarked, "What I do is so different than what undergraduates do because I already know the literature." The most significant gap between their approach and an undergraduate approach, each concluded, emerged from their relationship with the discipline; for instance, Faculty #1 noted that undergraduates are just beginning to learn the field of political science, but "it's different for me because I'm embedded in it."

Decoding faculty teaching processes

Despite the individual differences in faculty research practices, all three described teaching the literature review as a step-by-step process intended to build student knowledge and skills along the way; in other words, the process they teach is distinct from the "radial" or nonlinear approach they attributed to their own research practices. The two more experienced professors explained how their teaching processes evolved from the realization that students do not come to class automatically knowing how to write a literature review. Faculty #2 recalled, "When I first started teaching as a grad student, I just didn't really get it. I figured that everyone knows what that is, so I don't need to waste time telling [them]." Having learned that this assumption was problematic, she developed a segmented teaching approach that is echoed in each faculty member's descriptions.

Faculty #1's approach to teaching a literature involved four steps: identify a topic, synthesize material, tie concepts together, and have a conclusion to lead to another research question. This professor used sequential assignments requiring students to write a "scholarly literature essay" based on a small set of sources to practice the task of "tying concepts together." To reinforce the practice of organizing literature into themes, this professor also regularly used exam questions asking students to practice skills necessary for conducting effective literature reviews, such as analyzing arguments, variables, and conclusions within scholarly abstracts.

Faculty #2 framed the process of teaching students to conduct a literature review as a series of steps designed to help students learn to read disciplinary research: "I tell them what to look for [in the scholarly articles]—research question, theories, the type of citations, who are they citing most frequently, what kind of method, what kind of statistical analysis, and of course you read the conclusion." This professor asks students to annotate the sources because "annotations help structure the material—because students are meant to read, annotate, and then categorize the annotation in some way related to the topic." Faculty #2 links the annotations to the development of the structure of a literature review paper. The emphasis in this step-by-step approach is on skimming many articles and completing an annotated bibliography as an interstitial step leading to the organization of the literature into themes.

Faculty #3 asks students in the research methods course to build a portfolio of work to help "compartmentalize each of these steps" of developing a full literature review. This "modified version" of the literature review focuses on analytical reading: "the first thing that they have to know is how to really extract every piece of information as efficiently as possible from articles, so it's really about reading articles and understanding the structure of articles." Faculty #3 admitted this might be counterintuitive to many students who have been instructed to read deeply and now were being urged to "read a lot of stuff superficially." Skimming and scanning literature might be a common student practice, but it often is not how students have been taught to read in their prior schooling.

Despite the variations, all three faculty emphasize the importance of learning discrete skills by taking deliberate steps through the literature review process. However, the sequential steps taught in the process run counter to how the professors conduct literature reviews in their own research. There is a gap between their own recursive, immersive practice and the more structured, linear, and time-limited assignments that they give their students. While breaking down a complex task of expert practice into smaller tasks is pedagogically sensible (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1991), our DtD interviews of undergraduates raise the possibility that this approach may unintentionally create a bottleneck for students who are learning the literature review process.

Decoding student approaches to the literature review

In interviews with undergraduate participants, the first questions posed by our student research team focused on the purpose of a literature review in political science. Both second- and fourth-year students explained the literature review as simply a way "to place their own research within a disciplinary context." Second-year student #2, for instance, described the purpose as "[analyzing] the literature that is already out there before coming up with our own hypothesis about what [I] wanted to study." Another second-year student explained that the purpose is to "[connect] the background on the research you're doing in terms of the content to see what other people in your field are looking into, and how it relates to what's out there already on your topic." Among the second-year students, the purpose of the literature review was closely tied to knowing about existing scholarship and relating your own topic to this body of research.

Students in the fourth-year political science capstone course at the time of the interviews indicated that the purpose of the literature review is "to condense and reiterate the existing literature to lay a foundation for the rest of the paper" (Fourth-year #4) and to "present what other scholars have already done on the subject, make it relatable so that when you do an analysis or whatever you're doing in your research, you've already presented their research" (Fourth-year #2). Fourth-year students demonstrated an understanding of the literature review as a necessary framework for the rest of their research paper while second-year students focused on the need to review or "know" the literature itself.

The consistency of these student responses suggests that understanding the purpose of a literature review is not a bottleneck to learning in political science, at least not for the students we interviewed. Instead, bottlenecks seemed to emerge when students attempt to apply their understanding. A gap emerged between the segmented, sequential version of a literature review students are often taught and the complexity of actually conducting a literature review in the discipline.

All three of the second-year students we interviewed outlined the process of writing a literature review in basic terms: find a topic, search for articles, and write. One student insisted: "It is not complex." However, when we asked them to decode this process in detail, all of the second-year students struggled to explain the approach they used. Second-year #3, for example, could not identify any specific steps in this "simple" process:

> Interviewer: When you did the [literature] review for Research Methods, what were the steps that you did, exactly?
> Second-year #3: Sure… I just wrote, kind of. I don't know… I just wrote it.

Indeed, the interviewer's probing questions about the steps each student used to conduct a literature review seemed to frustrate our second-year participants. After some back and forth, second-year #2 flatly denied ever being taught how to do a literature review, although all three faculty in their interviews insisted this is a core component of every research methods course in the department. This student stated, "I don't think we ever really stopped and were [taught] 'This is how to write a lit review.'" During the interview, each of the second-year students described the literature review process as basic and straightforward. Yet as each interview unfolded, these students seemed to come to the realization that the process of weaving multiple scholarly articles into a cohesive analysis linked to their own research question was in fact very challenging. For the second-year participants, one bottleneck appeared to emerge when transitioning from collecting research to writing a draft literature review.

The fourth-year student participants in our decoding interviews also noted this as an important bottleneck to their learning. As one fourth-year student described:

> I think the hardest part for me is condensing an argument into this sort of simplified, essentialized two sentences [and] then weaving together a narrative of several arguments, without using quotes or plagiarizing. To find a way to weave it all together to make sense, but not only just to make sense of it, but to also make sense of where my argument is going.

Other fourth-year students also acknowledged the difficulty in finding and reviewing multiple journal articles to make them relate to their topic: "making sure they all relate in some kind of understandable concrete way would be the hardest for me. That's what I really struggled with in my research methods class" (Fourth year #5).

Despite the difficulty of the task, we found some evidence of fourth-year students moving away from the step-by-step approach to a less linear process for the literature review. Fourth-year #1, for instance, described the process as "very much stream of consciousness, back and forth," with his reading of relevant scholarship leading him to revise his research question, which prompted him to return to the literature. Although this is comparable to how faculty describe their own expert process, Fourth-year #1 and his peers repeatedly told interviewers that this approach is "not how you're supposed to do it, I know, but that's how I feel comfortable writing." One of his peers described a similar process, and then labeled it "wrong" because it did not follow the neat, step-by-step script ("the right way") she was taught.

This fourth-year misunderstanding of the "messy" nature of expert practice is the most troubling bottleneck that our study identified. Our interviews surfaced a disjuncture between the highly structured and orderly way students are taught to conduct literature reviews and the complex, iterative approaches that expert scholars use to carry out their work. This bottleneck ironically may lead to students becoming less confident as they become more proficient in the process of constructing a literature review in political science.

Our small study cannot justify any firm claims about this or other bottlenecks, but we believe this suggests a need for further research and for critical reflection on the ways that common pedagogical practices might effectively teach discrete skills while simultaneously (and unintentionally) undermining the potential for students to develop expert practices.

Students as catalysts in decoding and SoTL research

As a scholarly team, we are convinced that our student-faculty partnership was essential for us to identify this bottleneck. The three student researchers first pointed out the literature review as a potential bottleneck for political science students and thereby adopted a "learning position" (Takayama, 2015) within their disciplinary community to understand their own practice, the faculty members' practices, and those of their peers. The students also conducted all of our decoding interviews, gathering the evidence we analyzed together in this project. As a team, we uncovered provocative issues related to disclosure and power when students are part of a SoTL research process as both interviewers and interviewees.

Decoding power dynamics

As the literature on student-faculty partnership suggests (e.g., Cook-Sather et al., 2014), power dynamics emerged as a core issue in our study. However, the most salient tensions were those that existed between the student interviewers and their interview subjects, not those within the research team. Throughout our interviews, modes of communication varied depending on the apparent power dynamics between the interviewee and the student researchers. As student researchers, we found that interviewing faculty was a very different experience than interviewing peers. This variance shaped the interview content and process: Faculty interviews were lengthy and occasionally off-topic, our fourth-year peers spoke casually and conversationally, and the second-year students said relatively little.

We found our position as students (albeit on the verge of graduating) conducting and leading a methodologically sound interview to be a possible barrier to ascertaining the information we sought in our research. Yet, "with a partnership approach, it is in the tensions raised, and in being prepared to acknowledge, confront and work with them in new ways, where the potential for new learning, and the 'social and educational transformation' of higher education, resides" (Healey, et al., 2014, p. 56). We experienced these "tensions" in our interviews, suggesting that the identity of the decoding interviewer might inhibit disclosure or elicit different information from a person being interviewed.

Interviewees were asked to explain in great detail how he or she goes about the process of researching and writing a literature review. This was the launching point in the interview sequence that asked participants to write or draw their steps on a whiteboard while narrating their thought process. When we asked faculty members to answer this question, all three interviews took on the form of a lecture. Typically, in the DtD process, interviewers interject questions such as "Why do you do this?" or "Where did this step come from?" in order to elicit tasks that might otherwise be tacit. As students interviewing faculty, we found it more difficult to interject such prompts as the faculty member took on this lecturing stance. We soon recognized this format readily mimicked a traditional classroom dynamic where a professor talks and explains ideas on a whiteboard while a group of students listen quietly, taking notes.

Additionally, we noticed that faculty being interviewed by students seemed to sidestep questions that challenged their identity as a teacher or researcher. Unwillingness to disclose information might take the form of not answering the question completely, as was the case with one faculty member, who repeatedly used circuitous responses to deflect the question of breaking down the process of writing a literature review. The other two faculty participants seemed to shift into lecture mode either as a customary way of talking to a student or else to direct the conversation away from certain aspects of our reflective prompts. If these interviews had been conducted by another faculty member, as typically occurs in decoding, perhaps these professors would have been more willing to disclose research or pedagogical concerns—and perhaps they would have been more reticent on other topics.

We also discovered there was a difference between how long faculty and students took to explain their literature review process. When answering our core interview prompts, faculty took an average of six minutes to respond to the question, and they rarely acknowledged the (admittedly somewhat meek) attempts to interrupt by the student researcher. In contrast, the student interviewees' responses consisted of two minutes at the most. In terms of the DtD process, the length of response times illustrated participants' tendencies to act on habits and assumptions about power. Within the student-faculty dynamic, students often possess a comparatively low level of agency and tend to defer to experts (Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, & Moore-Cherry, 2016). In our interviews with faculty, there seemed to be an expectation for us, current students at the time, to act as passive listeners rather than interviewers guiding a research process. This might explain why faculty participants chose to stick to a pattern of communication familiar to them: talking at length to dispense their expertise.

Different power dynamics occurred during the interviews with both fourth-year and second-year students. Our fourth-year participants all knew at least one of the interviewers personally. As a consequence, the interviews flowed more like conversations among people who recognized each other as equals. They were not reticent or resistant in describing the challenges and opportunities of learning literature reviews. For the second-year students, being faced with a panel of three fourth-year student interviewers produced a different dynamic. The second-year students were typically brief in their responses, perhaps due to discomfort with talking in front of a group of older students or because they lacked things to say as relative novices in the discipline. Either way, interviewing second-year students was less like a probing DtD inquiry than an invitation to consider themselves members of the political science major or as members of a disciplinary community (beyond the research methods course) through explaining their writing process (Adler-Kassner, Koshnick, & Majewski, 2012). Although they were sometimes apologetic or hesitant, the second-year students also gave earnest responses while engaging with our questions during the interviews. While conducting and evaluating DtD interviews (and similar SoTL research), it may be important to consider how participants will adapt their communication style given their perceived relationship to the researchers.

While we had difficulties with disclosure with faculty interviews, fourth-year students did not appear to avoid questions to the same extent. Indeed, fourth-year students readily disclosed uncertainty: "I don't think I understood what a [literature] review actually was. I know they explain it and you get books, but sometimes the concept just didn't happen" (Fourth-year #3). With different interviewers, however, students might be more reticent to admit these struggles or gaps in their learning, especially if a faculty member in the discipline were to interview students about challenges.

When interviewing second-year students, a lack of disclosure was a component of the interviews. We suspect these undergraduates had rarely, if ever, been prompted to be explicit about their own learning processes prior to our decoding interview. This was perhaps best illustrated when we asked Second-year #1 to write out her process for writing a literature review, and she said, "Do you want me to map it out? I mean, I can. It's not very complex." Disclosure was potentially inhibited in this case because the second-year student did not see her writing process as sophisticated enough to merit exploring deeply. Having an interview conducted by a faculty member rather than students might exacerbate this problem with second-year students, who often had a difficult time decoding their thinking and writing processes, even to fourth-year peers. Student interviewers enabled the second-year and fourth-year students to discuss key practices in their discipline despite their confusion and struggles. Indeed, we suspect the decoding interview might have been a helpful reflective experience for our student participants, particularly the second-years, because it encouraged them to articulate their learning processes in new and productive ways.

Overall, our research suggests that students welcomed the opportunity to disclose their uncertainty to undergraduate researchers, while second-year students struggled with the type of reflection the decoding process demands, having possibly never been asked to reflect on their own thinking about their studies. We theorize that if different researchers were involved in the study, their data would have looked different than ours. For instance, if faculty had conducted the interviews with fourth- and second-year students, we hypothesize students would have been less willing to admit uncertainty or truly describe their personal process (often not the exact steps taught by faculty) for constructing a literature review.

The dynamics described around disclosure and power reveal existing hierarchies within interviews that might inhibit particular members of a student-faculty partnership gathering certain kinds of information. Both partnerships and the DtD process require participating students and faculty to step into unfamiliar territory, which may prompt resistance or skepticism (Bovill et al., 2016). From our interview experience with faculty, disclosure (or lack of it) was subject to the complex power relationship that arose between students as interviewers and faculty as interview participants. In other words, the results of every DtD interview will be determined at least in part by the position of the interviewer in relation to the interviewee. Having a faculty member or an undisputed disciplinary "expert" conduct DtD interviews with peers will elicit a certain kind of rich information but may elide other points; having students conduct that same interview may bring other insights into view.

Our research presents only one perspective on how power dynamics effect data collection by student researchers. Our anecdotal evidence supports the hypothesis that faculty and students both have difficulty in shedding the identities they adopt in a traditional academic setting, even when the situation in question is one in which the student is meant to be viewed as a peer. In the interviews we conducted, the students conducting the interview would ideally have been viewed as members of the academic community. The fact the interviews did not play out this way suggests power dynamics between faculty and students are persistent, regardless of setting.

Power dynamics are a cultural norm, created by the identities we each adopt and how those identities contrast with the identities of other persons. In academia, these identities are typically based on experience and prestige, such as how long one has been in higher education, how many papers one has published, or what schools one attended (Coate & Howson, 2016). When faculty interview students, the power dynamics of the relationship parallel the power dynamics inherent in an interview setting, namely that the interviewer is in charge. When faculty are interviewing other faculty, the dynamics are likely more nuanced and less stark than those between faculty and students. But when students become the researchers, the typical power dynamics are reversed: The student is now directing the interaction. Based on our limited data, both students and faculty resisted this to some extent during our interviews. We believe this is an important area for further research of SoTL partnerships. Future scholars might compare data collected from interviews conducted by students to the data collected from interviews conducted by faculty. This sort of research would allow a direct comparison between how both the results and the processes vary between the two conditions, providing insights into how student-faculty partnerships might conduct their research.

CONCLUSION

Our small study explores the possibilities of bringing student voices into the Decoding the Disciplines process, both as interviewers/researchers and as interviewees/subjects, in order to better understand disciplinary bottlenecks. This novel approach demonstrates that students can make valuable contributions to DtD and SoTL research more broadly. We believe that some of our findings emerged because our inquiry involved students interviewing peers. In particular, the confusion fourth-year students described about their “messy” and therefore “wrong” literature review process highlights an important paradox in teaching and learning. The common pedagogical processes of using small, discrete steps to teach complex tasks might help novices become more proficient in a disciplinary process; yet, these steps also might hinder student confidence as performance becomes more expert and less scripted. Balancing the cognitive demands of disciplinary work while developing confidence in those skills poses a distinct pedagogical challenge to consider within a program of study. Delving into this bottleneck with more students learning to conduct literature reviews, or other complex disciplinary techniques, is a rich area for further research.

This study also suggests the need for further exploration of how the identities of researchers and participants influence the processes and outcomes of SoTL inquiries conducted in partnership by students and faculty. Our student interviewers noted the different responses to their questions from faculty and from fourth- and second-year students. No SoTL research team will be able to eliminate power dynamics or challenges with disclosure, but careful attention to the role of identity in preparing interview protocols and analytical frameworks may make it possible to bring additional perspectives and insights into our scholarship on teaching and learning.

Before conducting the interviews contained in this research article, the university's Institutional Review Board (human subjects research ethics board) successfully reviewed and approved this study submitted by the research team.

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RESEARCH ARTICLE

"I am wary of giving too much power to students:" Addressing the "but" in the Principle of Staff-Student Partnership

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ABSTRACT

Staff and students coming together to enhance learning is a key educational challenge facing the higher education sector. Literature proposes different ways of achieving this through co-creation, partnership, and collaboration. This paper focuses solely on staff perspectives of a staff-student partnership project aimed at improving feedback strategies. Through a mixed-methods approach, staff in four disciplines in one UK university were questioned in regard to collaborating with students, asked to take part in a co-creation experience, and then invited to take part in a follow-up interview. Findings indicated that staff initially supported greater student engagement in curriculum development but were wary of substantial change in the design of curriculum content. Some doubted the experience and abilities of students in this context. The overarching response was a positive statement followed first with a "but" and then with the issues that could be caused by a partnership approach.

KEYWORDS

staff perspectives; partnership working; co-creation; feedback; educational change

INTRODUCTION

Students should play an active part in their education (Marquis et al., 2015). It is argued that the use of staff-student partnerships to adjust, design, and complement curriculum design is one of the most significant challenges and opportunities facing higher education today (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014; Bovill, 2013; Ryan & Tilbury, 2013). There are many ways that students can and do work in partnership with universities. This paper focuses solely on staff and students working collaboratively to co-create part of their curriculum with a specific focus on assessment. According to Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) a partnership "is a relationship in which all participants are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together" (p. 7).

In the UK, there have been national calls for the sector to explore and enhance the ways in which students can become more involved in the design and delivery of their own learning experiences. For example, the National Union of Students suggests that students should be more involved in shaping their own learning and contributing to course content and delivery (NUS, 2012). This is supported by regulating bodies' agencies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency, which calls for universities to "provide opportunities for students to influence their individual and collective learning journey" (QAA, 2012). This approach has gained substantial support from within the Higher Education Academy (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014), to the extent that the need for change appears to be almost unquestioned. However, within this context of the general acceptance of and support for enhancing opportunities for staff-student partnership lie a number of other generally acknowledged issues: What is the extent of academic resistance to such work? What are the issues of concern? And, how can these be addressed? This paper offers some answers to these questions from the perspective of a group of academic staff in a UK university who were involved in a staff-student partnership project to co-create assessment and feedback strategies.

The literature suggests that where staff and students come together to explore curriculum issues and design, it is normally initiated by academics (Deeley & Bovill, 2017). However, unless the claimed benefits are understood by staff, the value of co-creation may never come to fruition. Partnership work may not be easy to adopt, due in part to the strength of established cultural norms, alongside the challenge of establishing the mechanisms to enable students to participate in decision-making (Bovill & Bulley, 2011). Therefore, academics are only likely to be persuaded into developing staff-student partnerships if there are strong reasons as to why they should commit their time and energy in an already crowded higher education climate.

THE BENEFITS OF COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP WORK

The benefits of staff-student partnerships are frequently reported in academic literature (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014), with suggestions that partnership can be a positive experience for both staff and students (Piper, 2006). In a Swedish anthology on active student participation, Gardebo and Wiggberg (2012) propose that students are an unspent resource in an educational system that is struggling to manage the sheer growth in size of student numbers whilst maintaining the quality of experience. Strategic and appropriate involvement of students can facilitate the design of curricula that are engaging and empowering, and active involvement in assessment can enhance motivation and student engagement and may also help to foster the development of a learning community (Deeley & Bovill, 2017).

This is not a one-sided arrangement, and from a student perspective, there are also many benefits to working in partnership for the development of learning (Zaitseva, Clifford, Nixon, Deja, & Murphy, 2010). Such benefits include the development of academic knowledge, study skills, and disciplinary knowledge, as well as more confidence in expressing such skills (Delpish et al., 2010). A pedagogic case for learning and working in partnership is outlined by Healey et al. (2014), who suggest that such work has the potential for transformative learning whilst acknowledging that it may still involve a relatively small number of students, that it may not suit everyone, and that it requires further research. This study adds to this body of knowledge by exploring staff views of co-creation before and after being involved in a partnership project.

THE TYPES OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Previous studies have analysed various ways in which students can be involved in their own or others' learning experience. Bovill and Bulley (2011) offer a continuum of levels of student participation in curriculum design where the level of interaction ranges from a dictated curriculum where there is no interaction, to a curriculum where students have some choice and influence, and, finally, to a curriculum where they are in total control. It is therefore desirable that academics are aware of ways in which their own needs might be met by the various models of interaction.

Other literature confirms the breadth of opportunities offered by different forms of partnership, including student involvement in pedagogical planning (Bovill & Bulley, 2011), students-as-researchers (Maunder, Cunliffe, Galvin, Mjali & Rogers, 2012), and students as strategic developers (Healey, Mason O'Connor, & Broadfoot, 2010). Dunne and Zandstra (2011) propose a theoretical model for integrating students into educational change and detail how the involvement of students in cross-university research initiatives drove institutional change and contributed to student engagement. Their matrix for students as change agents has four positions:

a. Students as evaluators of their HE experiences
b. Students as participants in decision-making processes
c. Students as partners, co-creators and experts
d. Students as agents for change

This framework offers a model by which to explore ways of working with students and was utilised in this study to frame how staff viewed partnership co-creation in their own work. In this study, we agreed with Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, and Moore-Cherry (2016) who, in relation to co-creating a course-level feedback strategy, asserted that "co-creation of learning and teaching occurs when staff and students work collaboratively with one another to create components of curricula and/or pedagogical approaches" (p. 196).

STAFF PERSPECTIVES OF COLLABORATION

Some literature suggests that staff may be reluctant to become involved in partnership work (Bovill et al., 2016). Despite sector-wide knowledge of its strategic importance and evidence of its associated benefits, as a pragmatic activity, partnership working is considered "unfamiliar" for some students and staff (Bovill, 2014). In this sense, staff may struggle with the challenge of actually making it happen (Allin, 2014). Healey et al. (2014) identify that "change can be experienced as deeply threatening to one's personal and professional identities" (p. 21). Partnership working can challenge accepted roles and practices and evoke feelings of vulnerability and risk (Bovill, 2014). The general reluctance to expend time and energy in such work may be related to an underlying resistance to change amongst an academic community that is adjusting to loss of autonomy, "change fatigue," and increased managerialism (Sundberg, Josephson, Reeves, & Nordquist, 2017).

Disciplinary cultures and practices will impact staff perspectives of and willingness to engage with partnership working. In this sense, whilst some staff will be willing to engage and embrace this practice, others may be less willing or feel less able to do so. There is some evidence, for example, that the professional requirements of some degrees leads some staff to question the potential involvement of students in designing curricula. In a study in a law school in the UK, Brooman, Darwent, and Pimor (2015) found that although staff were concerned about the need to maintain control due to the external body requirements, staff-student collaboration enhanced teaching and learning practice. Seale (2009) suggests that this new area of participation has the power to both empower students and increase the possibility that staff will respond to student voices.

ABOUT THIS STUDY

This study aims to answer calls to develop our understanding of the "pedagogies of partnership" (Healey et al., 2014) and the need for more evaluation studies investigating initiatives where students have been co-creators of curricula (Bovill et al., 2016). Given the rising profile of this type of activity, it is imperative that such methods are subject to exploration and evaluation in order to test their veracity. This article discusses the perceptions of teaching staff both before and after an intervention regarding working in partnership with students.

We focus on the important aspect of staff willingness to engage in putting partnership activities into the heart of their academic practice. In particular, we explore the changing perceptions of a cross-disciplinary staff group before and after they worked in partnerships with students to create a feedback strategy. What were staff perceptions of such processes before the intervention? Did this change after the intervention? What conclusions can be drawn for the potential of partnership processes in higher education curriculum design?

The project was funded by a competitive, institutional funding stream for initiatives designed to support the enhancement of teaching, learning, and assessment practices. The aim was to explore ways in which second-year students and programme staff can work together as co-creators in developing feedback strategies and processes for the future. This cross-discipline project was conducted at a large university in the northwest of England and included four degree programmes: events management, law, sport and exercise sciences, and quantity surveying, which were all located in different faculties. These programmes were chosen as they were subjects that the researchers taught. The core project team included four academic staff members and three student project officers. The project officer was a paid position, and students were selected through an application and interview process. The three successful candidates were all studying in full-time master's degree programmes in sport and exercise science, one of the four subject areas. Prior to the commencement of the project they were involved in extensive discussions about staff-student partnership and they were supported throughout by the research team.

The student project officers facilitated 12 co-creation workshops (four per programme) where they explored students' perceptions of feedback and co-created a programme-level feedback strategy. These workshops involved a total of 60 students and 35 staff members. The project officers worked with undergraduate students to review and develop ideas for a course-level feedback strategy and subsequently came together with the staff team to review and refine it. The staff were sent the students' ideas about their course-level feedback prior to the co-creation workshop. They then met with the students and, between them, they created the programme feedback strategy (see Nixon et al., 2016). The overall process resulted in a programme-level feedback strategy for each of the four programmes, written by staff and students.

Within the project, we aimed to position the students as partners in structuring the teaching and learning process. In this sense, we recognized the student as an "active collaborator" (Dunne & Zandstra, 2011, p. 4), as an expert at being a student (Cook-Sather, 2014), and as an expert on the "experience" of learning in higher education (Crawford, 2012, p. 60). The project aligns with Bovill and colleagues' (2016) conceptualisation of students as pedagogic co-designers where there is a shared responsibility for aspects of teaching and learning which requires staff to explore differently their assumptions about their role in the learning experience (King & Felten, 2012). Similar approaches to student positioning are described elsewhere (Cook-Sather, 2014; Jensen & Bennet, 2016; Woolmer et al., 2016).

METHODS

The four programmes used in this study were purposively chosen because of the subject connection of the research group; each of the researchers worked in one of the subject groups across the university. Participants of this paper were academic staff members working in each of the four programmes of study. Their background and demographics were not collected, which may be a limitation to this study when exploring the results. A mixed-method sequential explanatory approach (Creswell, 2003) utilising questionnaires and interviews was undertaken (Johnson & Christensen, 2011), and data was collected in two phases.

In phase one, staff perceptions about co-creation were gathered using a survey format. A survey was electronically disseminated to all staff in the four participating departments. The survey covered three main topics: staff perspectives on co-creation, involvement of students in curriculum design, and barriers to involving students in curriculum design. The survey comprised nine questions that were structured in an open and closed format. The 35 academic staff members who responded to the questionnaire were based in the following disciplines: events and management (n = 5), quantity surveying (n = 4), law (n = 10), and sport and exercise science (n = 16). Responses to closed questions were collated and represented using descriptive statistics, and inductive thematic analysis was undertaken on the qualitative comments to identify themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In phase two, all staff participants who had taken part in the project were invited to attend a semi-structured individual interview to discuss their experiences and perspectives of engaging in the process. Sixteen academic staff members took part (this was out of a possible 21), with interviews facilitated by the student project officers. A semi-structured interview guide was used to ensure consistency in interview approach and to allow freedom in response whilst also ensuring a degree of commonality across the transcripts (Flick, 2009). Interviews took place in a familiar work setting, during work hours, and within a space where participants could be overlooked but not overheard. Interviews lasted an average of 14 minutes (range 8–17 min), were audio recorded, and were later transcribed verbatim. Interview questions were developed based upon the experience of working in partnership with the students; the result of this narrow focus was that the interviews were short in length. For analysis of qualitative data, verbatim transcripts of interviews were read and re-read to allow familiarisation with the data. Thematic analysis techniques were used to identify core and common themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The researchers then discussed and debated emerging themes in the data with reference to the study aims. Key emergent themes and participant quotes have been used to ensure authenticity in the represented data.

University ethics approval was granted for the project and all staff and students received participant information sheets and were verbally briefed about the project and their right to withdraw at any time. All signed consent forms. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, all the data from the project has been held either in secure password-protected files or a locked filing cabinet.

FINDINGS

Staff perceptions of staff- student partnership prior to the project

Overall, the findings from the staff participants indicate that, prior to the project, there was a positive perception of working in partnership with students but that it comes with many difficulties both philosophical and practical. The personal philosophy of almost half of this group (42%, *n* = 15) aligned with the "students as evaluators" category in Dunne and Zandstras' (2011) continuum of co-creation. Which relates to internal university surveys, and in this case to module evaluations, plus the external monitoring questionnaire, which in the UK is the National Student Survey. Of the other three categories 28% (*n* = 10) of staff viewed students as participants in the decision-making process, with students as partners, co-creators, and experts, and students as agents for change each gaining 8% (*n* = 5) of the sample.

Staff perceptions and understandings of staff-student partnerships and their philosophy regarding their role as an academic were found to influence their willingness to consider engaging in such activities. An indication of this was the perspectives regarding the boundaries of their role as an expert or the "assessor" (or as an experienced professional) relative to student participation as the "assessed." The wider higher-education environment was also highlighted as offering issues to working with students in this manner. Comments included (emphasis added):

> "There is clearly a powerful role for students and student feedback **but** in an environment shaped by fees there is a clear onus on staff to provide a quality and bespoke product."

"I am wary of giving too much power to students; I am happy to respond to their feedback, **but** I am not sure that I would be happy with them 'designing' any substantive module components."

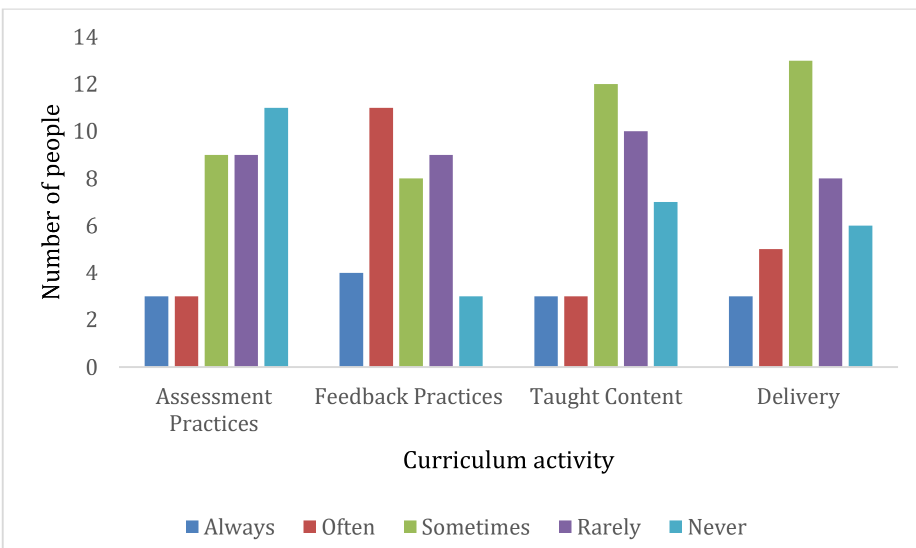
"I would welcome it **but** not in terms of content as we are the experts."

"There is scope to involve students in some elements of module creation, **but** I feel that this should not extend to assessment or taught elements."

These quotes demonstrate that although there is a sense of partnership activity being beneficial, the reality in terms of actually making it happen is perceived to be more problematic. Participants discussed the issues of fees and the need to provide what they saw as a quality and tailored product, as well as class and cohort sizes and issues related to the academic year where planning may take place when the students have finished for the summer months.

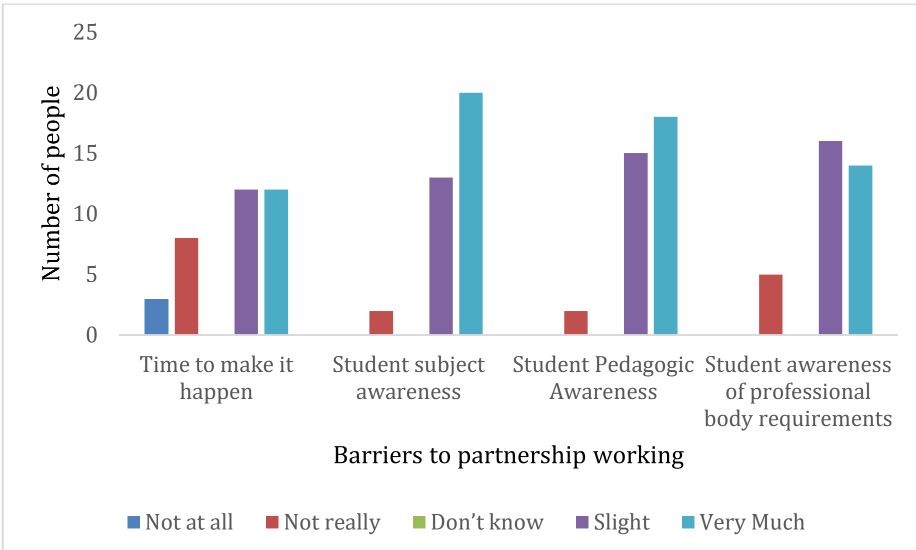
When asked about particular areas where they currently involve students in curriculum design (Figure 1), assessment (the focus of this project) was highlighted as an area where they rarely or never (57%; *n* = 19) engage students in assessment aspects of curriculum design. Only one member of staff responded that they often engaged students in assessment aspects of curriculum design.

Figure 1. Do you currently involve students in designing the following areas of curriculum?



In relation to barriers to partnership working, the staff perceived, students subject and pedagogic knowledge and professional body awareness as issues to partnership activities (Figure 2). Time was considered to be a neutral issue but was still a key barrier to over 75% of the sample. This data strongly suggests that the staff felt the students themselves were the biggest barrier to working in this way. The key themes emerging form the data were around the suitability of students to engage in a partnership process in relation to variances in student willingness to engage, interest, motivation, subject knowledge, and expertise.

Figure 2. To what extent do you think the following represent barriers in relation to involving students as co-creators?



A perceived lack of engagement was highlighted as an issue, perhaps because the students that do engage are not always representative of all students. There was a sense that, because of variances in motivation and commitment, some students could actively contribute to the partnership process, whilst others could not. One participant noted: "co-creation to my mind requires a high degree of maturity and motivation on the part of students. The majority of students will seek to engage in their learning experience to a minimum degree necessary to achieve their award." The perception of the staff in regards to subject content was that they were the expert and the students could not get involved in this aspect of the curriculum design. For example, one participant asked, "how does a student know what the curriculum should consist of when they don't know a great deal about the subject?," and another stated that "the limitations of their understanding of the relevant subject matter, quality measures, and pedagogic issues would mean that this can only take place on a limited basis." Staff perceived there to be a lack of expertise and relevant subject knowledge, which affected what they believe students can contribute if they were to work in partnerships.

Staff perceptions of staff-student partnership after being involved in the project

Following the project, the staff involved spoke favourably about, to use the participants' own words, the idea of "integrating ideas from the students," involving students in "some elements of module creation," and "making tweaks to course structure" based upon "meaningful dialogue." Some staff articulated the importance of student perspectives; one, for example, stated that “there is clearly a powerful role for students.” In this sense, in principle, the partnership was welcomed, as evidenced by the following comment: “I have no problem in principle involving students in curriculum design and delivery.” The partnership process enabled staff to gain an appreciation of student perspectives (they noted that “it’s been a while since we’ve been students”), and as a result it highlighted to them the differing perspectives of staff and students as regards to feedback, with one participant noting, “we had very different ideas about what is, sort of, covered by the term feedback.” One participant commented:

> It means that perhaps a lot of the assumptions that certainly I, and I think some of my colleagues have been working on, have perhaps been flawed. It confirmed that students think more about their learning as a process than I thought they did.

This suggests that getting staff involved in partnership work may help staff and students come together to develop the learning experience in a positive way. Staff expressed their willingness to reconsider their practice with specific reference to the discussion topic of feedback as a result of engaging in the partnership, stating, for example, “I certainly reflected on [feedback] in terms of my own development and my own practices going forward.” The participants felt working in this way was useful from the perspective of student engagement and in providing opportunity for staff-student dialogue to enable staff to meet the expectations of students. One participant, for example, explained: “I think it’s a useful mechanism to use in addition to regular student engagement sessions,” and another said, “I’m trying to get, to meet the students as much as I can, on how they want to learn.” In addition, the process served to motivate staff by “reinforce[ing] that it is something that [they] can do something about as staff” and by giving them “that additional motivation to do something about it.” The process also provided evidence of the requirement to reflect upon practice for staff less willing to consider change by giving them an opportunity to return to those staff members who are "more reluctant . . . to change practices.”

DISCUSSION

Before being involved with students in developing course-level strategies, this group of staff saw working with students as part of university processes (i.e., module evaluations) or decision-making (i.e., working at the institutional level); they did not see students as partners or agents of change (Dunne & Zandstra, 2011). Co-creation can challenge academics’ understanding of their roles and responsibilities in designing learning and teaching (Bovill, 2013). The cross-discipline group of staff involved in this study, whilst positive about the concept of co-creation on the whole, offered issues and problems that would make it difficult to carry out in practice, which we have labelled as the “but” in co-creation. No differences were found between the four subject groups, except for the law staff who were more wary of working in this way due to external accreditation. Further research is needed to explore those subject areas with external accreditation in order to ascertain whether this is a real or perceived issue.

The barriers around staff-student partnerships centred mainly on the students themselves (i.e., in terms of their willingness, interest, and expertise). Some staff considered partnership to be something that challenged their professional legitimacy since it handed power to the students. If staff consider partnership in this way, it would make sense that they are less likely to engage with it, suggesting that the staff still saw themselves as the expert rather than the reorientation that Bovill et al. (2016) suggest might happen from the expert to the facilitator of learning.

Staff interviewed after the co-creation process demonstrated some reinforcement of the reservations for involvement cited in the initial questionnaire. Staff perceiving themselves as the experts and concern about students' subject knowledge were common themes from the interviews. One participant, for example, explained: "I think that my judgment on the core content of the module is going to be stronger than the students I'm teaching," and another acknowledged a "fear of not knowing if they're competent enough to engage in the co-creation process." However, there was a sense that the experience of working with the students had offered an opportunity to appreciate another point of view. In this sense, the shared dialogue (Cook-Sather et al., 2014) provided an opportunity for staff and students to understand each other's perspectives and the ideologies and boundaries within which they operate. These positive outcomes were found to be more related to staff members' understanding of the student perspective in relation to feedback, which suggested, in alignment with the literature, that there is a benefit in staff and students working in partnership (Nygaard, Brand, Bartholomew, & Millard, 2013).

It was also felt that the process enabled students to gain an appreciation of staff perspectives, which may help develop a more shared perspective of feedback. Our findings support previous literature in framing the partnership process as something that creates a shift in understanding, or a "threshold concept" in academic development (Cook-Sather, 2014; Meyer & Land, 2005). Staff reflections on practice as regards to both feedback and co-creation showed it to be beneficial in terms of personal development and, as a consequence, beneficial to the students they teach, which fits with the idea of a partnership threshold where staff and students understand and act on the collaboration (Marquis et al., 2015). The originality of this study lies in the evidence that with some engagement in partnership work, staff can experience its benefits and cross the threshold into seeing students as co-creators of learning the threshold."

Addressing the "but" in co-creation

There is significant evidence in the literature that co-creation has many benefits (Healey et al., 2014), but fostering this with staff who might not engage in the pedagogic literature will not be without its difficulties. After all, it will be a change in culture and practice for many. However, with the exception of Cook-Sather et al. (2014) and Curran and Millard (2016), there appears to be a scarcity of practical guidance for academic staff wishing to engage in partnerships with students on the subject of curriculum design and development. In order to support others in this type of activity we have taken the main messages from the staff who participated in this study and now offer suggestions to support this type of curriculum development activity.

Increasing staff willingness and involvement

The sense of unfamiliarity with the partnership concept and the perceived lack of student competence supports suggestions regarding the need for preparation and support for both staff and students in the process. Little et al. (2011) suggest that before we can get more involved we need to overcome any wariness staff have and convince them that it is worthwhile. The small-scale activity of designing a programme-level feedback strategy was seen as both positive and successful for all cross-disciplinary teams. Therefore, deciding on a starting place for staff and students to work together would seem to be a good place to start for programme teams, which aligns with Cook-Sather et al.'s (2014) practical recommendations for encouraging co-creation. Learning from this, programme teams could choose an area of their curriculum that is perhaps not working as well as they would like and set up a staff-student partnership to explore the issues and offer solutions.

Developing students in the partnership process

Staff felt that they were the decision makers and the subject experts, and they questioned both student engagement and expertise. It has to be recognised that staff will have, on the whole, greater knowledge and expertise (Allin, 2014). However, if staff are truly to move away from the position of power and authority, we have to find ways of utilising the staff expertise to empower the students in a way that works for them. Could a partnership approach be built into an early module or unit where the teaching staff and the students work together on one element of the curriculum? Student competence and confidence can also be developed through training activities (Jensen & Bennett, 2016), and this could also be undertaken with staff to start building on the idea of working together.

Staff as facilitators

Our findings suggest that we need a shift from the staff member as the expert to that of a facilitator of developing knowledge and learning. Training is needed to support staff in moving from the position of expert, and case studies are required to enable programme teams to see the benefits of this type of activity. A process plan, external facilitation, and a clear objective all helped in this study. Students facilitating staff-student interactions diffused any potential power implications. Negotiating roles is seen as crucial to a positive outcome. Programme teams could work with students who are further on in their academic journey to support those just arriving and utilise post-graduate students to mediate and facilitate the activities between staff and students.

Partnership can be a staff development activity

Working with students can alert staff to areas where training and development activities are needed. Higher Education is an evolving environment and by listening and working with students, we can benefit and enhance both the staff and student experience. An understanding and development of the roles that staff and students play in the higher education arena are critical to this. As Bovill et al. (2016, p. 205) state, the fact that these roles are "socially constructed and changeable can help both staff and students begin to think in fundamentally new ways about teaching and learning." Programme teams willing to work in this way should gain support from central university support for teaching and learning. An external viewpoint can help to support both groups and can then support the dissemination of practice. Re-focusing on a different way of working takes time and evaluation, and this needs to be supported where possible by the wider institution.

CONCLUSION

Although not a new area of study, co-creating the curriculum is emerging as an area of interest in higher education literature, and yet despite this, it is far from common practice across universities. The strengths of the many different approaches suggest that there can be a very positive outcome when students and staff come together to develop and explore learning experiences (Curran & Millard, 2016). However, this does not come without significant barriers. This study has found that through a partnership experience, where staff and students came together to look at a programme-level feedback strategy, the staff stepped over a threshold in relation to their thinking about working with students.

Across the four disciplines engaged with in this study, staff, in relation to Dunne and Zandstras' (2011) model, perceived students as evaluators. Unsurprisingly, this was reflected in the lack of co-creation that had been undertaken up to that point. Almost everything that was said about working in partnership was prefixed with a "but," showing that staff felt the idea had merit but that delivering on this merit was not perceived to be simple. The "but" in staff's otherwise positive view of partnership was also due to the perceived lack of engagement and subject awareness of the students. Partnership activity has been found to increase student engagement and motivation (Little et al., 2011). However, as students may be reticent, a period of transition where students get used to working in this way may be helpful.

Another factor in relation to the "but" was that of professional legitimacy. Clearly, staff placed themselves in the position of expert, and for co-creation to work, this stance is not helpful. Co-creation processes can challenge learning relationships and the power dynamics that underpin them (Ryan & Tilbury, 2013). Empowerment of learners in curriculum design, whilst challenging for some, is reported as a transformative process by pedagogic literature. Therefore, despite the potential difficulties, the end result seems to be worth the struggle. Training and development is crucial for both staff and students; further research is needed of case studies that show the benefits and also models of engagement. If we are to overcome these "buts," new ways of working and understanding will be crucial for future success.

The research was successfully reviewed according to the university regulations.

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REFLECTIVE PIECE

Reflections on an International "Change Institute" for Students as Partners: A Student Perspective

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INTRODUCTION

In May 2016, the Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation, and Excellence in Teaching at McMaster University (formerly known as the McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning) hosted its inaugural Summer Institute on Students as Partners. The purpose of this international event was to "build the capacity and understanding of faculty, staff, and students to develop, design[,] and implement initiatives to promote the practice of Students as Partners in teaching and learning" (MacPherson Institute, 2016). Over the span of 3 days, teams comprised of faculty, staff, and student partners had the opportunity to participate in either the workshop program or the Change Institute (CI), both of which were organized and facilitated by students and faculty/staff partners.

The workshops offered attendees opportunities to explore how student partnerships can be fostered in an array of contexts such as in teaching, learning, and assessment; subject-based inquiry and research; curriculum design and pedagogical consultancy; and the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014). Simultaneously, the CI offered a program for teams to develop their institution-specific students-as-partners initiatives and interact with other teams during sessions led by students and faculty/staff facilitators. Student partners played an instrumental role in the CI, from organizing to planning and facilitating workshops and sessions. The philosophy of Students as Partners was therefore threaded throughout, making the CI a unique opportunity for all involved.

In this reflective essay, we describe our experiences as three student facilitators and consultants at the MacPherson Institute's inaugural CI. The questions that we have chosen to reflect on in this essay come from an exercise in which we each thought of two questions for reflection, collated these in a document, and then produced individual, written responses for each. We then met as a group to decide which questions we felt best captured our experiences at the CI and could offer others interested in building their own students-as-partners initiatives some useful insights (for example, how assumptions often get in the way of engaging in partnership or how failure can be an important element in the process of building successful partnerships). In further refining our chosen questions and responses to write this essay, we chose to retain our individual voices and perspectives (Werder, Thibou, & Kaufer, 2012), recognizing that each of us approached the partnership experience with our own set of assumptions and experiences and thus have a unique perspective to share.

In what ways was partnership enacted throughout the CI?

Rafaella: As a student facilitator and consultant at the CI, I especially enjoyed the freedom in articulating my thoughts and using my expertise to help teams navigate through their projects. This was largely due to the efforts of committed staff partners who made us feel welcomed and included in the entire process. For example, as student partners, we were invited to all relevant operational planning meetings and social events. In this way, the CI represented the kind of socialization that Kotzé and du Plessis (2003), in an article on students as co-producers, identify as being a key component of student engagement and sense of purpose. We were also encouraged to actively and creatively participate in various aspects of the CI, including drawing from past partnerships to frame our sessions. For example, my experience helping to construct a model for a new Leadership in Teaching and Learning Fellowship Program as part of the MacPherson Institute's Student Partners Program (SPP; Cockroft et al., 2016) helped me gain experience in sharing my ideas about program development with both students and faculty/staff in a multidisciplinary environment.

Anita: Having opportunities to build relationships with my student and faculty/staff partners before the CI took place created trust and openness among our team members, which made for a strong partnership experience. We knew what working with each other would be like and felt comfortable sharing our thoughts with one another—things that can often take a long time to establish when working in partnership. I also felt that the CI was helpful for consolidating what I had learned in prior partnerships and allowed me to reflect upon these lessons in new ways. For example, in a past partnership experience, I recall often feeling frustrated and let down because I did not feel adequately supported by my faculty partner in terms of their time commitment to the project. But, in reflecting on what I had learned at the CI and some of my more recent partnership experiences that have been much more positive, I realized that I never actually articulated to them how I was feeling because I was too afraid of offending them. It often seems easier to try to avoid the uncomfortable moments of partnership at the risk of offending those with whom we have close working relationships, but learning how to articulate how we are feeling and what it is that we need from our partners is an important part of upholding our end of the partnership "bargain."

Sabrina: The embedded quality of partnership as it was enacted throughout the CI contributed immensely to my overall level of engagement with the process. Because I was meaningfully involved in the early planning stages of the CI, I felt a sense of ownership and pride over the work we were doing. Importantly, I felt that I could be critical. I spoke up when I noticed that we needed to provide additional opportunities for intergroup collaboration and found that my suggestions were actually valued. Moreover, the CI's commitment to partnership at the planning stage prevented the contributions of student facilitators from becoming tokenized. As a result, I was able to interact with the faculty/staff members involved in a far more meaningful and equitable manner than I would have been able to had we been operating within the traditional hierarchical paradigm of student-faculty/staff collaborations.

Were there any assumptions you made coming into the CI? In what ways did your experience as a student partner challenge some of these assumptions?

Rafaella: When I was asked to facilitate a couple of sessions and act as a student consultant at the CI, I found myself both surprised and excited at the thought of having students run a conference-style session for faculty/staff and their student partners. But I also went into the CI wondering if my contributions would be relevant or even meaningful to the teams I interacted with—until I walked into a room packed with student partners from across the globe! It was confidence-inspiring to see other student partners being part of the operational planning committee, facilitating workshops, and taking the lead on their own partnership projects. The CI not only provided opportunities for teams to build upon and strengthen their partnerships, but it also became a space for important discussions that encompassed a variety of perspectives. For instance, during the CI, I facilitated a discussion on developing partnership learning communities where students and faculty shared their perspectives about fostering self-generating and powerful learning communities. I became much more excited and confident about participating in the conversation, enabling me to contribute to teaching and learning in ways I could have never imagined when I first started.

Anita: Having read about each team's project and goals for the CI in advance of their arrival, I realized that I had made a number of assumptions about each project team—for example, where they were in the process, the way that power might play out in their partnership, or some of the challenges that they might face in developing their initiative. While some of these assumptions proved to be true, others did not. I realized that an essential part of my role was putting assumptions aside and taking the time to get to know each team while they were at the CI. It was important that members of each team be the ones to tell me about their roles, goals, and expectations rather than the other way around. This is also applicable to partnership more broadly, where it is important to recognize how our assumptions may shape how we interpret the perspectives or actions of our partners. It was also interesting to see some of the teams' roles, goals, and expectations shift over time, which reminded me of the dynamic nature of partnership and the importance of flexibility and adaptiveness on the part of all involved, including those of us serving as facilitators and consultants.

Sabrina: Given my prior experience as a student partner, I carried some assumptions about what partnership looked like into my work with the CI. My understanding of my university's institutional structure led to the mistaken impression that student partnership initiatives would always or even often originate within institutional structures that are explicitly pedagogical in their nature and purpose (i.e., teaching and learning centres). I quickly came to realize the narrowness of my assumption: Partnership projects can be conceived of and facilitated at every level from the individual classroom to high levels of administration. The diversity of approaches, from engaging students as curriculum consultants to creating student-led mentorship programs, created a rich environment for the exchange of ideas and ample opportunities for collaboration both within and between institutions. Significantly, I discovered that the principles and strategies of partnership I had learned through the SPP at MacPherson (for example, authenticity, honesty, inclusivity, reciprocity, empowerment, trust, courage, plurality, and responsibility [Higher Education Academy, 2015]) were much more widely relevant than I had initially believed and were in fact applicable to a vast array of projects and scenarios. Understanding this has allowed me to enact these principles in subsequent collaborations and to form more meaningful professional relationships.

What were some of your most significant "lessons learned" from this partnership experience that you will take with you moving forward?

Rafaella: Prior to the CI, I was unaware that I had the skills to act as a student consultant. One of my tasks was to consult with one team who planned to implement an initiative that I was worried did not authentically engage students in partnership. I posed a few questions that compelled the team to think differently about their project—for example, would the students working as part of this initiative have the resources they would need in order to carry out the intended project goals? How might the team go about ensuring that their student-led initiative would be sustainable from year to year? As the CI progressed, they were able to utilize some of the frameworks we presented to successfully create a project plan, which I felt integrated the philosophy of student partnerships in a meaningful way. It was rewarding to see that an idea I proposed had helped this team move forward. Although they expressed that they still had plenty of work left to do, I recall their gratitude for having the concentrated amount of time to work closely with their partners.

Anita: Much like my fellow student partners, I had not had much consulting experience prior to the CI, nor had I ever built a students-as-partners initiative from the ground up like many of our teams were doing. Although I had done lots of things as part of the SPP at MacPherson—from examining the impact of a national teaching fellowship program to creating an international database of the literature on Students as Partners—it was so much easier to think about the skills that I didn't have as opposed to the ones I did. I also had reservations about facilitating activities in front of such a large group of people since I have never considered public speaking to be one of my strengths. But, coming away from this experience, I felt that I had made a positive contribution as both a facilitator and a student consultant, and I felt more confident in my ability to do both. A couple of attendees complimented me on my public speaking abilities, which helped me become more confident in this area. I also realized that while I may not have had prior experience as a consultant, my perspective as a student was valuable to the teams and was something that people were interested in.

Sabrina: I came to appreciate the importance not only of having trust in your partners, but also knowing that they have trust in you. At the time of the CI, I had just completed my undergraduate degree. Although I had previously worked as a student partner at the MacPherson Institute, I was still uncomfortable with the notion of speaking from a position of expertise to teams of attendees comprised at least in part of faculty/staff and university administrators. As I was embarking on a completely new and unfamiliar role, it was no surprise that I experienced what others have described as imposter syndrome (Parkman, 2016). I feared that I would not be taken seriously, or worse yet, that my knowledge would somehow prove insufficient. However, it was clear from the very beginning of our work together on this project that my faculty partner did not share my reservations. Her trust and support enabled me to draw upon experiences from inquiry-based courses in my undergraduate degree to assist a group at the CI in the planning stages of designing a new course. She encouraged me to consult individually with the attendees, both with and without her supervision, and was fully confident in my ability to provide meaningful guidance. In so doing, I was able to realize the full value not only of my knowledge of academic partnership, but also my unique perspective as a student. The experience also demonstrated how faculty confidence in student partners can help students to fully realize their leadership potential.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

As we reflected upon our experiences as student facilitators and consultants at the MacPherson Institute's inaugural CI, it became very clear to us that this was a positive example of how students can be partners in teaching and learning. Our reflections illustrate the ways in which we felt truly included and valued as students, how some of our initial assumptions about partnership were challenged, and the lessons that we will carry forward. We would like to draw readers' attention to several of these lessons which we feel might help others who are interested in establishing their own student-faculty/staff partnership initiatives.

First, any successful partnership initiative takes time to build. Although 3 days may seem like a short time, the teams who attended the CI were given a considerable amount of concentrated work time to make progress on their initiative, regardless of the stage it was at. This time allowed for focused discussion about important elements of the initiative, with a focus on establishing how to move forward on a practical level. Some of the discussions were aimed at finding ways to meaningfully and feasibly integrate student involvement within the specific initiatives. In addition, several teams commented on the value of using impact assessment as the starting point for program development. For example, teams discussed the potential processes/activities within their initiative that they could evaluate and listed specific indicators while planning for their projects, which allowed them to transition from broad ideas to more specific and feasible ones. Teams also used some of the concentrated time to further build their projects, bridge gaps, acknowledge challenges, and work towards more sustainable initiatives. This approach to project development may be particularly beneficial for teams because it affords them the opportunity to think about the various elements of their project free of most distractions and also has the added benefit of allowing teams to get input about their project from others with similar but external perspectives.

Second, working as student facilitators and consultants in the CI reaffirmed how much development and change can occur in the span of 3 days, thus illustrating the dynamism that is inherent in student-faculty/staff partnerships. It is, therefore, critical that those engaging in partnership be open to the process of partnership and flexible with respect to roles, goals, and expectations since these things can—and often do—change and evolve as a project progresses.

Third, although the experiences we detailed in this reflection were very positive, they were predicated on our past failures. Had we not experienced partnerships that had not gone well (for example, when we felt disempowered and hesitant about sharing our opinions or felt that we lacked the mentorship we needed to succeed or that our contributions were not valued), we would not have had a good understanding of how to build a good partnership nor how to be effective facilitators. Part of the process of building a good partnership includes acquainting teams with the possibility of failure or even debriefing and rebuilding after a failure has already occurred. Therefore, we wish to convey to our readers that past failures or the fear of imperfection should not be a deterrent to building student-faculty/staff partnerships. Failures are often the best learning opportunities for those involved in partnership.

Finally, despite being relatively experienced in terms of our prior involvement in student-faculty/staff partnerships, we each entered the CI with some doubt in our abilities to adequately serve as student facilitators and consultants. This illustrates the potential fragility of partnership identities—when we step into new contexts, major doubts can often arise. It was through the support of our faculty/staff partners and the willingness of those present at the CI that we were able to grow our confidence and fully immerse ourselves in our roles. From our perspective, therefore, creating a culture that is trusting of students and encourages them to openly share their insights is the most important thing that faculty/staff can do to create a positive partnership experience for their student partners. And, for fellow students who may be experiencing imposter syndrome when faced with the prospect of a new partnership experience: Don’t be afraid to step outside of your comfort zone and try something new! We guarantee that you have more to offer than you will initially allow yourself to believe.

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REFLECTIVE PIECE

Reflections on Developing the Student Consultants for the Teaching and Learning Program at Reed College, USA

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DEVELOPING OUR PROGRAM

At Reed College, many classes are taught as discussion-based conferences in which students and faculty must come prepared to engage in dialogue about the day's material, take risks and feel discomfort as they challenge themselves, and create shared ownership in their own active learning (Oleson, 2015). Collaboration is fundamental. The Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) opened in Fall 2014 to help faculty develop and improve their methods of instruction and to promote productive pedagogical feedback to professors (Oleson, 2016). In 2014, we started a student-consultant program at Reed since faculty-student partnerships seemed a promising approach for faculty to receive feedback essential for improvement (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014). This essay, reflecting on the development of the program, was co-written by Kathy Oleson, Professor of Psychology and former Director, Center for Teaching and Learning at Reed College (2014 – 2016) and Knar Hovakimyan, Reed College '16, student-consultant for four semesters. Shifts in perspective from one author to the other are indicated with the particular author's first name included in brackets following the pronoun.

Bryn Mawr and Haverford's Students as Teachers and Learners (SaLT) program coordinated by Alison Cook-Sather was on Reed College's radar as we set the foundation for our CTL. As part of a Mellon Foundation-funded pilot grant, Reed professors visited CTLs across the country, including Bryn Mawr and Haverford's Teaching and Learning Institute, to learn about best practices. During the 2013-2014 school year, a team of three professors, one staff member, and four students who were piloting a student-consultant program at Reed invited Alison Cook-Sather to visit in late February. Seeking input from an expert was critically important in developing our own student-consultant program at Reed.

Alison met with me (Kathy), the incoming director of Reed's new CTL, during her visit. She also conducted a workshop for 26 faculty and staff on "Partnering with Students to Promote Active and Engaged Learning." Given the enthusiasm generated by her visit, the eight-person team conducting the pilot program hosted a follow-up luncheon panel during finals week that 30 staff and faculty attended. This panel provided faculty with details about Reed's pilot program and served as a link between the ideas in Alison's broader workshop to Reed's particular context. Knowing that many professors were interested in participating in a similar program and with strong support from the Dean of Faculty, I established the Student Consultants for Teaching and Learning Program as a defining part of the Center's programming. I formally launched it in Fall 2014 and it continues today. Our Student Consultants for Teaching and Learning Program pairs faculty members with students who act as paid consultants to instructors by providing them with targeted feedback on their teaching.

I initially emailed faculty who took part in Alison's workshop or who attended the panel to see if they would like to participate, starting with those who had shown interest. Any professor who asked to be a part of it was in. The first semester we had six faculty-student partnerships but that number grew to seventeen by the second semester. Seventeen pairs was the upper limit of what I could facilitate. I wanted the program to be inclusive; now we solicit participation from all faculty. Initially, some professors expressed concerns about having a student "evaluating" them in class. From the beginning, I stressed that they would be *partnering* with students and that I would not be writing evaluations as the director. To build trust and openness, I emphasized that the program was for development and improvement and separate from the evaluation process. Over time, these concerns dissipated based on the enthusiasm generated by the pilot program and, later, by word of mouth.

From the beginning, our program has involved flexibility, with faculty at varying levels of seniority volunteering to participate and each partnership determining the specific details of their work together. The structure of the program includes many features of Bryn Mawr and Haverford's SaLT program. Alison's generosity in sharing her SaLT materials for us to use as templates ensured a high quality foundation. The student consultants (who are not enrolled in the faculty member's class) and professors are paired before the semester begins. For students, it is a paid job — one of the best ones on campus, according to my consultants. Students submit a cover letter and resume and ask a professor to recommend them. Talking to professors providing references gives me (Kathy) an opportunity to explain the program to faculty. Professors volunteer and do not receive compensation or course releases; unlike those participating in the SaLT program, they do not attend any course meetings. They attend a few lunches. Professors are free to request a specific student as their consultant; alternatively, they indicate preferred consultant qualities (e.g., that the student has taken the relevant class, that the professor does not know the student) and the director pairs them. One challenge is creating a large pool of consultants with various qualities. I have encouraged faculty to nominate students. It is also important to ensure that this position is well advertised.

The faculty-student collaboration is maintained throughout the semester as the student consultant attends class sessions, taking extensive notes about what happens in the classroom. The specifics are determined within each partnership. Sometimes the consultant observes once a week, whereas in other partnerships they observe every class meeting. Sometimes the partnership begins with the consultant attending one course and then switching to another one. Giving faculty-student pairs autonomy was important (Deci & Ryan, 2000), although students and faculty were encouraged to contact me (Kathy) if issues came up. The pairs had confidential conversations each week to discuss the course. As a professor noted in anonymous feedback, "It was also a really nice way to spend one hour per week—discussing pedagogical theory, practice, and strategies. Something that I don't do very often with my colleagues."

Additionally, there are weekly meetings of all student-consultants with the director. Students discuss the goals that they are working on in their courses, provide support and advice to each other, and learn new techniques. Finally, the consultant solicits for the professor written and in-class verbal midterm feedback from students in the class. These key structural elements are important in the program's success (Pitts & Baumgardner, 2016).

SUCCESS OF REED'S PROGRAM

This program has been highly successful at Reed, with six or more faculty participating each semester. A few key features help to explain why the program thrives. First, unlike some student-consultant programs at other colleges, faculty members at different stages in their careers have taken part. For instance, the first semester included four junior faculty and two senior faculty, all highly motivated to participate and improve. More faculty at all stages participated the next semester. Including senior professors widely viewed as effective teachers provided legitimacy. Additionally, it showed that the purpose of the program was not only to learn to be a better teacher but also to develop teaching styles to grow with the students and culture on campus.

Second, many faculty participants want to *keep* participating. All six professors who took part that first fall asked if they could continue the next spring. We decided it was best to have new faculty-student pairings, but I (Kathy) allowed all to participate again which, in retrospect, was a great decision. Ten additional professors and one staff member who teaches a not-for-credit student leadership class wanted to participate the next spring. We had the funds to pay for seventeen consultants. The best advertising that our program could have was faculty who found it valuable enough to keep committing time and energy to it over multiple semesters.

Third, each faculty-student partnership is shaped by the goals of the professor. During the first meeting, faculty explain to their consultant what they hope to accomplish in the program, where their problem areas are, and what the focus should be throughout the semester. The goals determine where the consultant concentrates their note-taking and discussions with faculty; without a clear articulation of what they are trying to accomplish or a commitment to meeting regularly to work on these goals, partnerships can falter. The flexibility in setting goals allows for professors to take advantage of the program for their particular teaching goals. As the program director, I (Kathy) met each week with the consultants to provide training in communicating constructively, taking effective notes, and so forth. I received feedback from some faculty that their consultants were being "too nice." This is understandable—students are being put in a new role of providing critical feedback to faculty in a one-on-one conversation. I made it clear that faculty volunteered for this program because they were open to feedback and wanted to make changes. This training was done in a group conference format and was adapted to support the particular teaching goals and issues that came up in the various classes.

I (Knar) worked as a consultant with four different professors at different stages in their careers and teaching completely different topics in completely different styles. In some classes I was familiar with the subject matter, but, in others, it was new to me. In each case, I felt that my job was to team up with the professor to help them address whichever issues they wanted to work on. For example, when I was working in a conference-style humanities course, my observations and comments were focused on class dynamics and how the students were responding to each other and the professor. When working in a biology lecture course, I focused my attention on the clarity of the presentation slides, and the professor's movement through the material. I would discuss these different strategies and situations in weekly meetings with Kathy, and she would provide training to support my particular partnership.

THE UNIQUE VALUE OF STUDENT CONSULTANTS

A consultant has a unique take on what goes on in a classroom. As a student who is among their peers, a consultant is able to understand what's happening in the classroom from the students' perspective. At the same time, by meeting weekly with the professor to discuss concerns, issues, and goals, the consultant also understands the classroom in terms of the professor's intentions. As a team, a student-consultant and professor can think critically about ways to improve the class that might be difficult to see without working in the program (see Wagner-McCoy & Schwartz, 2016, for additional examples.)

During my (Knar) second semester as a consultant I was working with a professor who told me that their biggest concern was running out of time during lecture. For most of the semester, we worked on time-management strategies and presentation techniques that would ensure all the material would be covered. When I collected the mid-course feedback, many students commented that the professor was moving through the material too quickly during lectures. Both the students and professor were identifying the pace of the lecture as a problem, but when I met with the professor, we were able to dig deeper by thinking back to previous discussions and looking back at notes. We realized that the problem was that students did not have enough graded work outside of the classroom. Since students were not doing the foundational work that would prepare them for lecture, they were unable to understand as well as the professor expected them to. As a result, the professor would spend more time in class answering questions and would run out of time to cover the material. By looking at these types of problems together and dedicating time to talking about them, the professor and student consultant can see deeper issues and work on innovative and creative ways to deal with them.

EFFECTS ON FACULTY

The program has transformed professors' experiences in the classroom, their overall approaches to pedagogy, and the quality of their teaching. One faculty participant wrote in anonymous feedback about the program:

> The benefits were many. In some ways, it was just fun to have a partner of sorts in the classroom with whom I could debrief. It made the experience less lonely, for lack of a better term. The comments were very helpful in producing greater awareness of the ways my actions impact discussion. I hope that I can maintain this sense of perspective in future semesters.

Another professor wrote:

> I felt true collaboration with my [student consultant]. They brought excitement that matched mine to the course and the problem solving of how to encourage great discussion in class. They also served as a support and cheerleader at times when I felt unsure or frustrated. The most productive elements were the weekly meetings and wonderful classroom notes.

As Luker and Morris (2016) stress in their recent essay reflecting on participating in Reed's student-consultant program, "collaboration is powerful."

Two of the faculty participants, Kara Becker and Michael Pitts, recently received tenure. In their tenure dossiers, they wrote eloquently about its impact on their teaching. As Michael Pitts noted:

> The most significant factor that has helped improve my teaching has been my participation in Reed's 'student consultant program' run by the Center for Teaching and Learning. I've now participated in this excellent program during three separate semesters for three different courses... The most important skill I learned through participating in the teaching consultant program is how to better focus my attention on classroom dynamics and students' comprehension of the material.

Kara Becker wrote:

> I have participated for four semesters in the Student Consultants program offered through Reed's Center for Teaching and Learning. This experience has been by far the most productive activity related to my growth as a teacher.... A key takeaway from my participation in this program was that all students should be treated in a way as "consultants." I've found that the more I include my students in a conversation about why we're doing what we're doing, the more they are empowered to take ownership over the process….I'm proud of the progress I've made as a teacher and am thankful to have developed relationships with students who were both peers and supports to me during the last two years.

EFFECTS ON STUDENTS

The program instills a feeling of value in students. Consultants learn that their ideas and feedback are immensely valuable to faculty (often much to the student's surprise). When asked to provide advice for future consultants, an anonymous consultant shared:

> I think one of the most important things is to remember that your faculty partner is probably Really Excited about doing this. They think that you are valuable! They think that your notes, your time, and your insights are all worthwhile, whether or not you are an expert in whatever they are teaching.

The students in student-consultant classes also learn the importance of their role in class. One student-consultant anonymously shared: "As a student I take away an understanding of my own influence in the classroom, as well as ideas for how to collaborate more fully." These lessons are helpful to students' individual success as well as the success of the entire classroom.

For me (Knar), it was daunting to build a partnership with a professor, and at the beginning of each new partnership, I struggled to feel useful. It was challenging to step out of my student shoes and play an entirely different role in the classroom, where the professor would rely on my understanding of what was going on and my ideas about it. I was surprised by how helpful I was able to be to my faculty partners. I started to give feedback to other professors with whom I was not consulting. I would tell them which materials I found most helpful in class, but when problems came up, it was still difficult for me to approach them. I found myself wishing that each of my classes had a student consultant. Similarly, some students who applied to work as student-consultants noted on their applications that they were interested in the program because they had had a student-consultant in a previous class.

EFFECTS ON CLASSROOM CULTURE

This program encourages students and professors to actively work on making the classroom the best learning environment that it can be. Students working as consultants gain perspective on what teaching and preparing a class entails. This insight was so helpful to me (Knar) that I often suggested to faculty that they be clearer about their intentions in the classroom in order to help their students know how to succeed. There is a level of transparency that inherently goes along with the program, which in itself is beneficial to the class (see Becker & Wood, 2016, for further consideration of the positive role of transparency). In my experience, students in a student-consultant class are more aware of their personal responsibility to the rest of the class.

The experimentation that happens in student-consultant classes contributes to this sense of openness in the classroom. Sometimes a strange new assignment or structure to the classroom produces great results (and sometimes not). Professors who have been teaching for decades can try something completely different with their consultant and get regular and immediate feedback. The experimentation shows students that faculty are actively working on improving the classroom. This pushes students to focus on their personal roles. The willingness in students and faculty to come up with and execute innovative and creative solutions through the student-consultant partnerships helps our program shine.

The pedagogical reflection that occurs in the program also has an impact on campus culture. As one consultant anonymously shared:

> I've generally felt a much deeper connection to, and appreciation for, Reed. I really love that Reed supports this program, and encourages professors to be thoughtful in their teaching. It has made me feel more appreciative of my classes and the school generally.

A consultant emailed me (Kathy) thoughts they had shared with their faculty partner, noting:

> The project of constantly reflecting on the process of teaching will continue to change the way students and professors interact with the pedagogical process. When a course is treated as a living, malleable entity, students will engage with it more.

The transparency between faculty and students, the experimentation in student-consultant classrooms, and the reflection on teaching establishes a sense of teamwork for everyone involved. Both students and professors have a sense of responsibility for learning and contributing to the class. This effect does not stop at classrooms with consultants. Much of what students and faculty learn in the program has an impact outside of the program, not just for themselves but for others on campus, whether through word-of-mouth or workshops conducted by the CTL. We too find ourselves impacted by our involvement with this program, agreeing with the ending sentiment of an email Kathy recently received: "To conclude, Kathy, I consider my job as a student consultant to be one of the best things I did at Reed."

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NOTES

1. In some previous presentations of this program, it was referred to as the Student-Consultant or Student-Consultants for Teaching and Learning Program.

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REFLECTIVE PIECE

Confronting Apprenticeships of Observation: How Student-Faculty Pedagogical Partnership Complicates Conceptualization, Understanding, and Practice of Effective Pedagogy

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INTRODUCTION

In 1975, Dan Lortie introduced the term "the apprenticeship of observation" to refer to the years students spend watching their teachers teach them and the ways in which these observations inform their views of what constitutes good teaching. The apprenticeship of observation poses three challenges for aspiring and practicing educators. First, the ideas they form about effective teaching are based on only one learner's preferences, needs, and experiences: their own. Therefore, they may not have a broad understanding of what works for students whose learner profiles (i.e., strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles) differ from their own. They may favor teaching in the way they would like to be taught, rather than in the ways that their students need. Second, their repertoires of practice are limited to that which they have seen. Without first-hand experiences with alternative teaching approaches, they may lack the knowledge and the will to move beyond the models they have experienced. Third, the apprenticeship of observation gives students only a partial view of the work of teaching. They do not see the behind-the-scenes deliberations that go into choosing curricular materials, developing a lesson plan, and assessing students. Differentiation techniques, in which teachers engage students in different activities or assignments based on students' unique interests, learner preferences, or needs, are obscured in the apprenticeship of observation.

Although teacher-education programs present an ideal space and time for aspiring K-12 teachers to confront and overcome their apprenticeships of observation, few higher education professors have comparable opportunities to recognize the influence of their apprenticeship of observation on their instructional approach, to interrogate it, and ultimately to move beyond the limits it has imposed on their conceptualization, understanding, and practice of effective pedagogy. In recent years, student-faculty partnerships have emerged in higher education as a means of supporting instructors in reflecting on, analyzing, and, in some cases, changing their teaching practice (Cook-Sather & Abbot, 2016).

In this essay, we consider how student-faculty partnerships create opportunities for both college students and professors to confront their apprenticeships of observation, and we explore the challenges and benefits of doing so with one another. We begin with a short description of the context of our partnership, the Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT) program at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges, and then detail our experiences as a student and a professor in such a partnership. We draw on examples from our recent work together to show what our partnership looked like in practice and to illuminate the insights, inspirations, and ongoing questions this collaboration has generated for us about our apprenticeships of observation.

THE CONTEXT OF OUR PARTNERSHIP: THE STUDENTS AS LEARNERS AND TEACHERS PROGRAM

Based at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges since 2006, the SaLT program takes the form of semester- or year-long one-on-one partnerships between faculty members and undergraduate students who are not currently enrolled in the course upon which the faculty member focuses for the partnership. The student partner takes a range of approaches to observing, analyzing, and engaging in constructive dialogue with the faculty partner (Cook-Sather & Motz-Storey, 2016). This reflection essay explores the student-faculty partnership between its two co-authors: Gwendolyn, an undergraduate at Bryn Mawr, and Jerusha, an Education Professor at Villanova. In the spring of 2016, we undertook a pedagogical partnership, the second partnership Jerusha had undertaken through the SaLT program (Conner, 2012). This partnership focused on a graduate education course Jerusha was teaching.

Nearly every week throughout the semester, Gwendolyn attended Jerusha's class and took detailed notes, which contained her observations on teaching methods and interactions, as well as on any particular issue Jerusha had asked her to attend to. We also met before and after each class to review the lesson plan and its implementation. Gwendolyn offered advice on a specific section of the lesson or on how to engage and support a particular student, drawing on conversations she had had with her fellow student partners and with the director of the SaLT program, Professor Alison Cook-Sather, at Bryn Mawr College. During these meetings Gwendolyn shared what she had noticed and heard, what she thought had worked and didn't work as intended, and any suggestions she had for new approaches moving forward.

Together, Jerusha and Gwendolyn made sense of unexpected or puzzling moments in class, such as when students did not engage with the material in an intended way or particularly struggled with an activity. We also analyzed spur-of-the-moment decisions Jerusha had made to deviate from the lesson plan. In addition, we looked ahead to the subsequent week, anticipating upcoming learning objectives for the students in the course as well as areas of teaching that Jerusha might like to try to improve. Gwendolyn also served as a resource for the students to improve their learning experience. For example, she assisted in obtaining mid-semester feedback from the students, and she offered them the opportunity to come forward with problems or challenges they were not comfortable discussing with Jerusha.

In what follows, we detail the insights, new practices, and ongoing questions our partnership yielded. Using the lens of the apprenticeship of observation, we focus on the concept of listening.

JERUSHA'S INSIGHTS INTO LISTENING

Our relationship began with a simple question. Gwendolyn sat in a chair in my office and asked me, "How do you like to be listened to?" The question surprised me. I had never considered this matter before, and I told her that I didn't know that I had a preference, though I do appreciate eye contact. She then volunteered that she did not like it when people interrupted her or spoke over her. As I chuckled and responded, "Who does?," she shot me a look. I had just spoken over her! She was not done with her thought, but I had interjected. I had done exactly what she was trying to ask me not to do.

As we continued to try to get to know one another, to review the syllabus and my goals for students in the course, I found myself becoming painfully self-aware of my tendency to want to finish her sentences, especially when she seemed to be searching to find the right word. I wanted to convey that I heard, understood, could relate, and could help, but she was cautioning me that she would not interpret my overtures in the way that I intended them. My efforts to establish rapport might instead be seen as efforts to exercise my authority and to minimize her agency. I was humbled knowing I would have to find other ways to signal to her that I was listening and that I understood.

Although she had held up a mirror for me in our very first conversation, it wasn't until our first debriefing session after class that she helped me to recognize that this "over-speaking" tendency of mine spilled over from the one-on-one setting of my office to my classroom. Reviewing her notes from her first observation of the class, Gwendolyn asked me if I realized that I hummed while students were speaking. I was stunned. I hum? How distracting and disrespectful! As Gwendolyn clarified and illustrated, I recognized what I would call my proclivity to respond to students' comments with non-verbal vocal expressions that signal agreement ("mm-hmm!"), interest ("uhhmm!"), or uncertainty ("hmmm?"). As I reflected on this tendency, at first defensively, I realized that I had reasons for doing it. Sometimes, I wanted to help someone who was rambling to wrap up. In those cases, I was offering a non-verbal punctuation mark. In other cases, I was trying to underline or highlight what I saw as a valuable or insightful comment for the other students. I believed these noises, accompanied by my facial expressions, smiles, raised eyebrows, head nods or tilts, would communicate my desire to move on from, affirm, punctuate, or question a student's comments. But that Gwendolyn heard these vocalizations of mine as humming troubled me. While I knew why I was doing them, I didn't know how they were being heard or received by my students. Perhaps my students heard them as irritants too.

As I write this, I wonder now why I didn't simply turn Gwendolyn's question to them. "How do you like to be listened to?" Instead, I shared with them that Gwendolyn had helped me see this tendency of mine and that I was working on it, but I never asked them how they thought I was doing on those accounts or whether it was something they wanted me to change. During class discussions, I became acutely self-aware, knowing that Gwendolyn would be listening for my humming. I fought hard to curb this well-worn tendency; I sometimes caught myself slipping in a "hmmmm" and felt an immediate sense of shame. At points, I wondered if I was paying more attention to myself and how I responded than I was to the students' actual comments. At the same time, this struggle forced me to think more deeply about why it is that I feel the need to use these cues to signal to students that I am in control of the conversation, even when I am not speaking.

Throughout the semester, as I struggled with these questions, I learned that I want to be listened to in the way that I tend to listen to my students. I want to hear affirmations and incredulity, to see head nods and head tilts, a cocked eyebrow or furrowed brows; and I interpret these expressions as signs of engagement. I don't mind when people finish my sentences (especially if they do so with the words I would choose, or even better words). Gwendolyn taught me that I have unwittingly, unintentionally imposed my preferences on my students. Even though I am well aware of the apprenticeship of observation, I had never been challenged to confront or address this verbal listening tendency of mine until I met with Gwendolyn, and even when she called it to my attention, I found it very hard to unwind.

GWENDOLYN'S INSIGHTS INTO LISTENING

Over the semester that I worked with Jerusha, I would additionally meet weekly with other students working as partners in the SaLT program and the program's director Alison Cook-Sather. At these meetings, we would exchange experiences that went well in our various placements, as well as concerns that had come up. These meetings were essential to processing my own experience and to my ability to give Jerusha helpful feedback. The students in these meetings had a wide variety of experiences as learners, generating a broad range of strategies and ideas to be shared with the group. I listened to what other students shared, always with an ear to what I could share with Jerusha. This kind of listening pushed me to consider options for engaging Jerusha's students that I might not have thought of or considered based only on my own experiences and preferences as a learner.

One particular phenomenon in Jerusha's classroom that I noted was that she would often run out of time and be forced to end class with open questions for them to think about as they made their ways drove home. Through collaborative discussion in my student-partners meetings I discovered a solution that could enable Jerusha to be more productive at the end of her class: exit tickets. I viewed this tool as a vehicle for her to listen to her students and for her students to listen to themselves about their learning, rather than have their voice and thoughts trail off at the end of class.

The student partners I met with discussed how they had appreciated the exit ticket activity as a chance to reflect, as well as the chance to engage with any material that they might have not gotten the chance to talk about in class. An exit ticket is a low-stakes activity at the end of class that a student can do in just a few minutes. This can take many forms including a one-minute mini-essay or a three-question quiz. This activity also holds students accountable for doing the readings and learning from class activities and allows them to ask questions or share reflections that they might not have offered during class. This exercise is enhanced by picking specific questions that the student will be able to write down quickly and that the teacher can look over and follow up on later with a student if necessary.

In creating a specific exit ticket that would work for this class, Jerusha and I first decided to invite students to write down one thing that that they said, one thing that someone else had said, and one thing they wish they had said. We hoped this exit ticket might prompt the students to recognize the imbalance between the different students' voices in the classroom that we had noticed ourselves, as they reflected on not only how they were contributing to the conversation but how other students were contributing to the conversation as well. This would, in turn, lead them to reflect on the conversation happening in the classroom in a new way.

We also tried a three-Ws exit ticket (this exit ticket asks students to complete the following statements: One thing I *wonder* after class tonight is..., one thing I *wish* I had done or said differently in class tonight is..., and one thing I *want* to try to do in this class moving forward is ...) and an exit ticket that asked students to write down three words that for them captured the substance of the class that evening and then to share them in a whip-around, which quickly moves from one student to the next. This whip-around was followed by a short debrief on some of the most commonly chosen words as well as outliers and their significance. Even now, Jerusha continues to use variations of the exit ticket in her classes to encourage students' metacognitive reflection and create opportunities for listening at the end class.

OUR ONGOING QUESTIONS ABOUT TEACHING AND LEARNING

Although our formal partnership is concluded, the ways in which we each helped the other to challenge our apprenticeships of observation and the particular effect of those apprenticeships on our assumptions about and practices of listening continue in the form of questions both of us are taking forward.

Jerusha: Among the many things our partnership yielded, including greater self-awareness, new pedagogical techniques, and a strong friendship based on mutual respect and reciprocal learning, were several lingering questions. For me, these questions concern issues of authenticity and perspective. I have given more thought to whether it is desirable (or even possible) for a teacher to adjust her natural style or personality in the classroom to suit students' needs or preferences. When, if ever, should we repress our natural tendencies as teachers because they may be off-putting to students? While we all know we cannot force ourselves to be something we aren't in the classroom (for example, even if I wanted to be more funny in the classroom, clever witticisms and jokes are not things that come easily), is it equally problematic to repress something we are? I also wonder whether differentiated listening in whole class discussion contexts is possible or desirable. Would splitting the difference between mine and Gwendolyn's listening preferences result in a listening pedagogy that has all the faults and none of the advantages of a method that is more authentic and better aligned with some but not all of the students' needs? Even as I continue to struggle with these questions, I know that thanks to my partnership with Gwendolyn, I am growing into a more attuned educator with a more expansive understanding of students' learning and listening styles and preferences.

Gwendolyn: The partnership I had with Jerusha was without a doubt an eye-opening experience for me as a student, as I engaged with and learned much about what it means to be learning. As a student, I was made aware of how my preferred form of learning—both listening and being listened to in particular—strongly impacted the way that I observed her classroom. The past 19 years had trained me well in my role as a passive student, and I often caught myself slipping into that role rather than being the active observer I wanted to be. My instinct to sit, listen, and take notes on everything that Jerusha said heightened my awareness of both how other students were reacting to her and her activities and how she was saying what she was saying.

CONCLUSION

While considerable research draws attention to the importance of building students' metacognitive habits and helping them to learn how they learn, it may not be as necessary for all students to recognize, let alone to overcome, their apprenticeships of observation, as it is for teachers. However, we have found that it can be useful for student partners to engage with this concept as they reflect on their experiences as learners, as it can provide a shared touchpoint for discussions and a way to connect the peer conversations all student partners have to one-on-one faculty feedback and debriefing sessions. When both the professor and the student partner can speak clearly about how their apprenticeship has shaped their perceptions of effective teaching and supportive learning environments, they can co-construct a framework within which to situate their shared and divergent perspectives on the work they are doing together to support deeper, transformative student learning. We have found that when this kind of sharing happens, the professor and student can be transformed as well.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

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CASE STUDY

Extracurricular Partnerships as a Tool for Enhancing Graduate Employability

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ABSTRACT

The world of work is changing rapidly, with an increasing global demand for employees with higher-level skills. Employees need to have the right attitudes and aptitudes for work, possess work-relevant skills, and have relevant experience. Whilst universities are embedding employability into their curricula, partnerships outside of the taught curriculum provide additional, largely untapped, opportunities for students to develop these key skills and gain valuable work experience. Two extracurricular partnership opportunities were created for Bioscience undergraduates at the University of Leeds, UK: an educational research internships scheme, where students work in partnership with fellow students and academic staff on on-going educational projects, and Pop-Up Science, a unique, student-led public engagement volunteer scheme. Both schemes generate substantial benefits for all. They enhance student's skills and employability, facilitate and enhance staff-student education practices and research, and engage the public with research in the Biosciences. Collectively, they demonstrate the extraordinary value and benefits accrued from developing extracurricular partnerships between students, staff, and the community.

KEYWORDS

students as partners, scholarship of teaching and learning, intern, public engagement, employability

There is an ever increasing demand within the United Kingdom labour market for employees with higher-level skills, particularly graduates from science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines (CBI & Pearson, 2016). With the global world of work and labour markets changing rapidly, universities across the world have a critical role to play in ensuring that their graduates are workplace ready and equipped for whatever career path they choose to follow. Graduate recruiters require potential employees to have the right attitudes and aptitudes for work, possess work-relevant or employability skills, and have relevant work experience (CBI & Pearson, 2015; CBI & Pearson, 2016). With the increasing focus of students, universities, and governments on graduate employability, opportunities to gain both work experience and develop these key employability skills are increasingly being embedded within degree programmes. For example, recognising that 35% of its graduates leave science and obtain employment post graduation in non-science related careers, the School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Leeds has developed a suite of 12 different formats of final-year research projects for its students (Lewis, n.d.). Nine of these project formats are not traditionally found within science programmes; these enable students to undertake projects more closely matched to their final career destinations. The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and Universities UK report "*Future Fit: Preparing Graduates for the World of Work*" (2009) recommends that educators go further, and provide opportunities outside of the taught curriculum for students to gain this work experience and develop their employability skills.

Employers expect graduates to have experience of team-working; possess problem solving, analytical and communication skills; be culturally and ethically aware; and show self-management and resilience. Many of these attributes and skills are best developed through the utilisation of high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008) and engaged learning (Stone, 2015), for example, through working in partnership, either with fellow students or with academic staff (Crawford, Horsley, Hagyard, & Derricot, 2015; Pauli, Raymond-Barker, & Worrell, 2016). The formation of partnership learning communities is a concept that is becoming increasingly prevalent across the entire spectrum of higher education activities, from the assessment of learning and teaching, to curriculum design, the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL), and subject-based research and enquiry (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014; 2016). The benefits to students and their learning experience are many and substantial. Partnerships enhance student motivation, responsibility for and engagement with learning, and provide opportunities for students to contribute to the academic community and the co-creation and sharing of knowledge (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014).

Our aim was therefore to create two novel, extracurricular, three-way partnership opportunities for undergraduate students within the Faculty of Biological Sciences:

- educational research internships comprising of partnerships between students, their fellow students, and academic staff; and
- Pop-Up Science, a public-engagement volunteer scheme, comprising a partnership between students, their fellow students, and members of the public.

EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH INTERNSHIPS

Educational research internships are a partnership between students, their peers, and academic staff, all working collaboratively, and as equals, on the academic partner's ongoing curriculum development or pedagogical research projects. Recent projects include: the collation of an online collection of open educational resources on animal experimentation (see www.etris.leeds.ac.uk; Lewis, 2014a); student-created guidance on the use of e-learning resource-development software (Lewis et al., 2015); and the evaluation of public engagement opportunities within STEM undergraduate curricula (Lewis, Gutoreva, Carlisle, Hughes, & Black, 2014).

Internships may be for a concentrated period or spread over the academic year, fitted around students' other academic commitments or undertaken during university vacations. Interns either work individually with their academic partner or may be part of a small team. They are recruited, following personal applications, from the Level-4 and Level-5 (first- and second-year) cohorts of students enrolled on any of the Faculty of Biological Sciences' undergraduate degree programmes. Each intern undertakes 75 hours of paid work, paid in two installments, one-third at the start of the project and two-thirds on completion. Internships are extremely popular, typically 3-4 times oversubscribed, with up to 12 interns recruited across the Faculty each year.

Internships are a true collaborative partnership between the interns and their academic partners, embodying many of the nine principles of partnership identified by Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) including (a) authenticity, or a real-life work experience; (b) inclusivity, or being open to all and adapted to suit different student needs or circumstances; (c) empowerment, where students have the opportunity to take ownership of their internship and to lead in its direction; (d) mutual trust between partners, involving making the most of the knowledge, skills, and attributes of each to drive the internship forward; and (e) collective responsibility for ensuring the success of the project.

Our aim is for students to get the most out of this opportunity, to reflect on and learn from their experiences, and to implement this learning in later stages of internship (Gibbs, 1988). They create personal reflective blogs for themselves; initially they reflect on their aspirations and motivation for undertaking an internship. At the end of the internship, they write a reflective case study. Participation in this scheme is recorded in their *Higher Education Achievement Report* (*HEAR*) transcripts, a university accredited record of their non-academic achievements (see www.hear.ac.uk/).

POP-UP SCIENCE

The creation of impact and engaging the public with one's research are increasingly required by funding bodies, and increasing numbers of Bioscience graduates are looking towards science communication as a career (Lewis, 2014b). However, public engagement and science communication are skills rarely taught within undergraduate Biosciences curricula in the United Kingdom. Further, business is becoming increasingly global in nature. To compete in this global marketplace, graduate employers require their employees to be ethically, socially, and culturally aware. Recognising this, the University of Leeds, with its innovative "Leeds Curriculum" (see http://ses.leeds.ac.uk/info/22222/leeds_curriculum) requires all of its undergraduate programmes, irrespective of discipline, to include an education in ethics and social responsibility and to promote global and cultural insight. Institutions are increasingly developing "civic" or "engaged" curricula (Stone, 2015; 2016), where cultural and ethical awareness and the development of public engagement and communication skills are acquired through community engagement activities, service learning, and capstone projects (Oden, Epstein, & Richards-Kortum, 2010; Budny & Khanna, 2012). To provide these experiences and skills development to Bioscience students at the University of Leeds, Pop-Up Science, a unique, student-led, extra-curricular public-engagement volunteer scheme was created (Spurring, Bacon, Garrod, & Lewis, 2014).

Pop-up science volunteers work in teams to create and deliver interactive public engagement activities at local community fetes, family fun days, and agricultural shows at weekends or during University vacations. The result is a three-way partnership between students, their fellow students, and the community. They do not go into schools; instead they target "hard-to-reach" sections of the community.

Students with and without public engagement experience team up, working in partnership with each other to create and deliver an event; the experienced students providing training and mentoring for their partners in the process. At large agricultural shows, students may engage with upwards of 8,000 visitors per day, an invaluable personal experience and skills-development opportunity for them. To get the most out of their experiences, students are required to blog their reflections as to why they joined, what they hoped to get of it, and any fears they may have upon joining the partnership. They then blog again after each event they participate in.

Pop-Up Science is experiential learning at its best, with students exploring and engaging with communities, cultures, and opinions different from their own. They form partnership learning communities with the public and their peers to engage with global issues that go beyond the classroom, all of which are high-impact educational practices that have been demonstrated to enhance student learning and engagement with their discipline (Kuh, 2008; Stone, 2015). This learning is not restricted to interactions between students or to a one-way transfer of information from students to the public. By forming learning communities and engaging with the public rather than just communicating with them, students create a three-way reciprocal partnership, with each partner gaining knowledge from others, and an increased awareness of other peoples opinions and values. Blogging brings authenticity to the partnership, with each student honestly and openly reflecting not only on what they can bring to the partnership but also on what they can learn from their partners (Healey et al., 2014). They form a community of practice by taking ownership and responsibility not only for their own contributions but for the collective development and delivery of events. They trust each other to be open, honest, and inclusive by sharing knowledge, skills, and experiences and by supporting and mentoring each other in the process.

Initially, the scheme was targeted at undergraduate students; it is now open to all, from Level4 (first-year) undergraduates to post-doctoral research assistants. Realising the benefits, some principal investigators within the Faculty make it a requirement for members of their research teams to participate in the scheme. There are currently over 60 volunteers participating each year.

MY PERSPECTIVE AS AN EDUCATOR

Students have the background and experience of being a student, something I haven't been for many years. The active involvement of students as full collaborative partners, not just as sources of feedback, enhances their learning journey and educational experiences (Kuh, 2008). They are best placed to advise on student interest. They understand their own and their peers' learning needs and the support students require. They can contribute perspectives or skills that I do not possess. In turn, they develop a wide range of employability skills including team-working; data capture, analysis, and interpretation; communication skills; time and project management; problem-solving; and resilience. All of these skills are highly valued by employers and can be used in students' ongoing academic studies and future careers (CBI & Pearson, 2016).

Students are an invaluable and largely untapped resource that I utilise to the full to enhance my learning and teaching practices and activities. Without educational research interns, I would not be able to undertake the volume and range of SoTL and educational research activities I do.

Similarly, Pop-Up Science is an opportunity to share my passion for public engagement with my students. It is extremely rewarding watching them develop as science engagers and learn the art of effective communication to different audiences. Initially they struggle, but with mentoring and encouragement from their fellow volunteers through the spontaneous development of inclusive and reciprocal learning partnerships (Healey et al., 2014), they soon learn this key skill, inspiring both their audience and themselves. This learning is exemplified in quotes extracted (with their consent) from their individual reflective blogs:

> "A challenge making complex tasks simple, a rewarding experience"
> Level-6 Human Physiology student

> "I gained so much from the day. I came away feeling enthused, passionate and appreciated how much I enjoyed my degree"
> Level-6 Neuroscience student

Students draw on their bioscience knowledge and a wide range of personal experiences to create innovative ways of engaging lay audiences with science. For example, a game of "whispers" or "telephone", where one person whispers a message to the next person in a line of people who whispers it to their neighbour and so on, was used to explain how nerves conduct. I learn a substantial amount from these student partners, which allows me to enhance my own activities by incorporating their ideas and practices into my own.

Being young and not the archetypal image of a scientist, undergraduates make excellent role models (Sanders & Higham, 2012). Running activities at community fetes and fun-days enables them to reach out and inspire hard-to-reach communities and those that don't normally engage with science:

> "You wouldn't think a stall like this could get the kids so inspired and interested. I had to practically drag him away"
> Parent, Springtime Live 2014

The exceptional feedback students receive from the public and the enjoyment they get personally from these activities develops their passion for public engagement and inspires them to participate again.

STUDENTS PERSPECTIVES

Students recognise and appreciate the benefits to be gained from working in partnership with their peers, academic staff, and the community. Quotes below, taken (with their consent) from their reflective blogs and case studies, suggest that, as with other engaged learning initiatives (Stone, 2015; Stone, 2016), they view these partnerships as something different from their normal educational experiences or interactions with academic staff. Here, they are equals in an inclusive partnership learning community, are empowered and trusted, and each brings their knowledge, skills, and ideas to work collaboratively towards shared goals and outcomes (Healey et al., 2014).

> "Invaluable experience in being treated as a professional rather than a student"
> Level-5 Biochemistry student

> "Enjoyed the freedom, having almost free reign to carry out project as we saw fit, pertaining to our own skills and resources"
> Level-4 Biochemistry student

Students recognise the skills they are developing and the opportunity to gain valuable work experience, both fundamental requirements of graduate recruiters and therefore the significant impact participation in these initiatives has on their future employability (CBI & Pearson, 2016; High Fliers Research, 2017):

> "Brilliant experience that taught me a variety of skills. Internships set you apart from other students"
> Level-5 Biology student

> "Very valuable, gives undergraduates a the sense of having a job, and some sort of responsibility, good for developing all sorts of transferrable skills"
> Level-5 Biochemistry student

> "Should be integral part of all degree programmes"
> Level-4 Medical Sciences student

This high-impact, engaged learning approach inspires them and increases their engagement with their discipline (Cook-Sather et al., 2014):

> "I am honestly surprised with the amount that I'm learning."
> Level-4 Neuroscience student

> "Felt rewarded when children were inspired and excited by the science we were explaining. I've developed a new found interest in the science behind it"
> Level-5 Zoology Student

Participation in these schemes provides tangible outputs that students can showcase to employers at interviews. Students are named as co-authors on any outputs including co-presenting at conferences and workshops, further enhancing their education, skills development and CVs.

Student appreciation of the value and benefits accrued from these interventions is reflected in the exceptional demand for them: Educational research internships are typically 8-times oversubscribed, and there are currently over 60 Pop-Up Science volunteers (for 2016-2017). Many return for a second internship or continue to participate in Pop-Up Science in subsequent years.

ISSUES

One of the issues we have encountered with these two initiatives is funding. There is limited external funding available for educational initiatives. Each internship carries a stipend of £300 whilst Pop-Up Science incurs travel, fete registration, and consumable costs. The educational research internships scheme was initially funded by the University of Leeds Academic Development Fund and the Leeds for Life Foundation, a charitable organisation that supports employability initiatives for students at the university. Now internships are requested in educational research grant applications or funded through colleagues' teaching awards and prizes. However, a longer-term source of funding is required. Pop-Up Science was established with the prize money from the award of the UK Physiological Society Otto Hutter Teaching Prize to the author of this case study. More recently, recognising the benefits to its students, itself, and the university, the Faculty now provides £3000 per annum towards its costs.

Selection of students also represents a challenge. Internships and Pop-Up Science are heavily oversubscribed. Due to capacity constraints, it is not possible to offer these opportunities to all students that apply. However, given that selection is based on a personal statement rather than on students' academic profiles, those students who these schemes seek to benefit (i.e., those committed to enhancing their employability or education), will gain a place by virtue of them writing more compelling applications.

BENEFITS

These partnerships generate substantial benefits for all involved: students, academic staff, the Faculty, university, and the public. They enable students to contribute to academic communities where they are co-producers of knowledge (Marquis et al., 2015), to utilise high-impact and engaged-learning educational practices (Kuh, 2008; Stone, 2015), to enrich student learning journeys and broadening their education and experiences, the opportunity to develop key employability or professional skills (Crawford et al., 2015; Pauli et al., 2016), and, through providing training or mentoring to their peers, the skills of others, ultimately to become more well-rounded, workplace-ready graduates (CBI & Pearson, 2016; High Fliers Research, 2017).

> "Invaluable, help students stand out in a highly competitive employment environment"
> Level-5 Biology student

Given the flexibility in scheduling and commitment required, these partnerships are inclusive, enabling students who have caring or other external responsibilities, which restrict their time they can engage in co- or extra-curricular activities, to gain work experience and develop employability skills.

For academic staff, student partnerships greatly facilitate their student education and public engagement activities. Students are empowered and trusted to bring knowledge, skills, and a different perspective to the partnership, creating change in the professional practices of staff and enhancing the latter's educational and public engagement activities (Cook-Sather, 2014). With universities increasingly expecting their student-education focused staff to engage in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and/or pedagogical research, working in partnership with students greatly facilitates this work (Marquis et al., 2015). For the faculty and university, partnerships enhance their students' learning experiences and employability. Partnerships are also an opportunity to showcase externally the faculty and university's excellence in student education and public engagement.

Pop-Up Science is an opportunity for the public to engage with research in the Biosciences, an area of significant and increasing interest to them (Castell et al., 2014). It is also an engaged learning approach that enables all parties to discuss science and its underlying ethical issues, creating new knowledge and understanding for all (Stone, 2015). For researchers, it provides a novel way to engage the public, particularly non-traditional or hard-to-reach audiences, with their research, which is increasingly becoming a requirement of research funding bodies. For local fete organisers and museums, it brings novelty to, and enhances, their own activities and events.

> "Your volunteers were wonderful and a credit to the university"
> Learning and Access Officer, Armley Industrial Museum

> "Thank you so much for all your hard work, providing such an exciting and interactive stand for Springtime Live"
> Educational Co-ordinator, Yorkshire Agricultural Society

REFLECTIONS

This case study provides further evidence of the extraordinary benefits that partnerships bring to a student's educational experience. It also breaks new ground by taking the concept of partnership learning communities beyond the six areas outlined in the Higher Education Academy's framework for partnerships (Higher Education Academy, 2015) into public engagement , a three-way collaborative learning partnership between students, their peers and the community.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University of Leeds Faculty of Biological Sciences Research Ethics Committee (Ref: BIOSCI 13-001).

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR

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CASE STUDY

Asking and Answering Questions: Partners, Peer Learning, and Participation

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ABSTRACT

Science is about asking questions but not all science courses provide students with opportunities to practice this essential skill. We give students ownership of the processes of asking and answering questions to help them take greater responsibility for their own learning and to better understand the process of science with its inherent uncertainty. Peer learning activities throughout the course embed multidirectional feedback within and between students and instructors. Students are our partners in the design and evaluation of exam questions and we learn from them as they rise to the challenge of identifying important information and applying it. The lab program is supported by peer assisted learning in which peer mentors partner with instructors to generate activities addressing the use of evidence and experimental design. While not all students engage as partners, those who do value these experiences and demonstrate they can use scientific content creatively and critically.

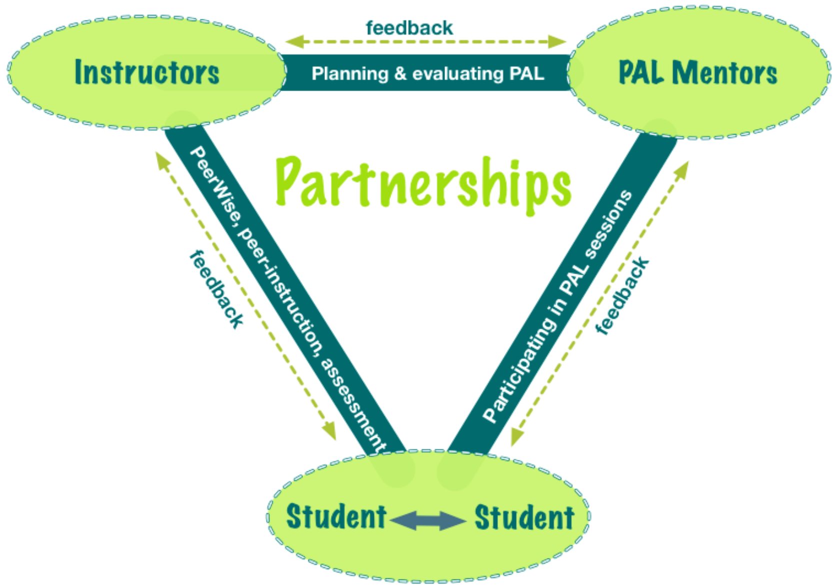
KEYWORDS

peer learning, feedback, asking questions, active learning, science

Learning to ask questions and to accept uncertainty are crucial aspects of the practice of science that are not always evident in large undergraduate classes. Students may find this difficult because of their prior experience of science as factual, leading to a reliance on rote learning and an expectation that questions have an unambiguous right answer (Hodson, 1999). To help students overcome this mindset in a second-year genetics course, we use a variety of peer-learning strategies that aim to provide students with greater ownership of the course content and its assessment. Our collaborative and process-oriented approach is consistent with the aims of the growing student-partnership movement (Matthews, 2016). Instead of the lecturers providing content, assessment and feedback, we engage students in multiple steps along the pathway to meeting the course learning outcomes. We see two aspects to this process of student engagement, which are united in their focus on questioning and process instead of transmission of knowledge. First, we aim to foster the view that science students are at university to learn to think like scientists and to understand the process of scientific discovery. We want students to understand the value of evidence and be able to critically assess data and conclusions. Second, by engaging students in the process of designing and appraising assessment questions, we hope to shift their focus from acquiring knowledge to evaluating and using it. Partnership implies responsibility, and it is therefore important to set up partnerships in ways that support students and value their input (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014). Well-designed peer-learning activities can do just this, by promoting dialogue, agency and trust (Boud & Molloy, 2013), all of which are essential for a successful partnership (Healey, et al., 2014). A comprehensive review of peer-learning models (Topping, 1996) concluded they lead to gains in learning and/or confidence for participants, with gains equivalent to those obtained by academic tutoring in the best cases. The social component of peer-learning seems particularly important, leading to increased motivation and self-efficacy, as well as confidence (Keenan, 2014; Topping, 1996). Discussion and group activities provide opportunities for students to not only gain feedback on their own learning but also to observe different study skills and strategies, leading to more informed self-evaluation. Such activities contribute to their development as self-regulated learners, which is correlated with academic success (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Zimmerman, 2013). Similarly, Boud and Molloy (2013) argue that feedback should be “repositioned as a fundamental part of curriculum design, not an episodic mechanism delivered by teachers to learners” (p. 699). This requires a shift in student thinking from being a passive receiver to an active adopter of course material. In the partnership model, feedback and engagement are the responsibility of students as much as lecturers.

We (the course convenors Susan Howitt and Alex Maier) designed our molecular genetics course with these ideas in mind, focusing specifically on partnership in learning, teaching and assessment (Healey, et al., 2014). The class has a typical enrolment of 200, limiting one-on-one student/lecturer interaction. Instead, we engage students in questioning throughout the course via multiple mechanisms including assessment question design and evaluation, peer instruction in lectures and peer-assisted learning (PAL) to support the lab program (Figure 1). All activities are optional but linked to the summative assessment by providing practice in the types of activities that are assessed through quizzes and lab reports. Thus, students can choose to become partners by taking responsibility for engaging in these activities as formative assessment. We briefly discuss each strategy and then provide some evidence of impact; our focus here is on the course convenors’ perspective as we illustrate how partnership is integrated into the course design.

Figure 1. Dimensions of partnership



We have adopted PeerWise as an online tool for question design and evaluation (Denny, Luxton-Reilly, & Hamer, 2008). This allows students to design multiple-choice questions and to answer, evaluate and comment on other questions anonymously. The exercise exemplifies the challenges in formulating meaningful questions by giving students responsibility for co-creation of assessment (Deeley & Bovill, 2015). Good question design is discussed and the lecturers model good questions in class—often using a scenario-based approach that encourages students to apply their knowledge to solve problems. We choose some of the best PeerWise questions for the final exam, accepting students as our partners in assessment.

Peer instruction is used much as it has been in physics (Crouch & Mazur, 2001) with a phone-based audience response system (mQlicker). Students in class answer a multiple-choice question individually, then discuss answers with their peers before responding again. This provides an opportunity for students to test their learning immediately after presentation of material and gives feedback to the lecturer on whether the class has understood. Students can also gauge their level of understanding relative to the rest of the class, leading to more effective self-evaluation. Studies consistently show that the discussion increases the proportion of correct responses (Crouch & Mazur, 2001). Interestingly, this is also the case even when no student in a discussion group knows the correct answer (Smith et al., 2009). This suggests that the discussion promotes learning in ways other than simply sharing information and is consistent with a constructivist view of learning. Where possible, we use questions from PeerWise but usually from previous years. Such questions are identified as student-generated to reinforce the partnership and its value.

The lab program is structured as a full-semester project in which students isolate and analyze bacterial mutants (Healy & Livingstone, 2010). The emphasis is on using and evaluating evidence; since we don't know in advance which mutants will be isolated, it is up to the students to use their data to justify their identification. The project contains an element of uncertainty, not just in the mutant outcomes, but also because the experiments are not always sufficient for a full identification. Thus, students need to be open to the idea of several possible interpretations of their data and include in their argument an analysis of what extra information is required and how it would help. Because students found the uncertainty, the incremental nature and the length of the project initially difficult, we introduced peer-assisted learning (PAL). At our university, PAL runs for first-year science courses and is used to support lecture content. We adapted it to the lab program, with four sessions throughout the semester focusing on the ways in which scientists ask questions and use experimental evidence to answer them, providing another dimension to our partnership strategy (Figure 1). The PAL mentor development program was deliberately designed (by Ruth Mills and Denise Higgins) to focus on supporting mentors to make the most of their experiences as recent students in the course, to constantly gather useful feedback from students, and to foster closer collaboration with course convenors. The planning process for PAL sessions involves the mentors (John Rivers and Aaron Smith) reflecting on past learning experiences, breaking down the thinking processes involved in these experiences and planning activities that allow students to move through the same thinking processes to solve problems or develop understanding of complex concepts. During the PAL sessions, mentors also seek to identify cues from students that may assist in understanding whether they are successfully progressing through the thinking process or if stalling is occurring along the way. This permits constant feedback during the PAL session which mentors are then able to incorporate into their reflections when planning future sessions, improving the quality of the thinking processes and activities. PAL mentors also collect feedback directly from students throughout the semester and write reports on the PAL program, both for their own benefit and for that of the course convenor and future PAL mentors.

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

A theme throughout the course is that we are encouraging students to think and actively engage with course content, rather than passively accept knowledge. We want them to be partners in the learning journey through learning to ask questions and evaluate conclusions and answers, both in the lab program and in the peer questioning strategies adopted. We can evaluate how effective this is through the level of engagement with each activity and feedback on what is valued, as well as by observing changes in students' attitudes towards learning science.

Table 1. Student engagement with different activities (averaged over three years)

Activity	**Percentage of class participating**
Writing PeerWise questions	27
Commenting on PeerWise questions	31
Answering PeerWise questions	73
Peer instruction (as indicated by lecture attendance)	30-40
PAL sessions for lab program	42

Table 2. Thematic analysis of course surveys to identify what students value and why (over three years)

Most valued aspects of the course	Student comments
Lab program	• [The labs] really gave a good idea of how science actually works • I feel like I could apply the skills and ways of thinking learnt in these pracs in other genetics research questions
Course structure and assessment	• The course had many opportunities to help students succeed with PAL sessions, the pre-exam tutorial and Peerwise • I love how we got to test our understanding the whole way through with in-class questions, mqlicker, peerwise , as well as in the tutorials • Assessment nicely structured with small tests • PAL sessions and constant feedback
Opportunities for problem-solving and developing thinking skills	• An obvious focus on understanding and applying concepts rather than just memorization • I even liked the exam! The contextual, problem-solving nature of the questions asked was very interesting.
Lecturing	• Engaging with good examples and clear indications of what was important information • Fantastic lecturers who not only displayed obvious passion for the subject, but a genuine interest in students' learning and progress

Table 1 shows the percentages of students participating in the different formative activities. PeerWise is mainly used as a bank of revision questions, with activity peaking before each quiz and the final exam (results not shown). Most students do not write questions unless some incentive is given, so we have set a minimum requirement of four questions and four meaningful comments for eligibility for a more advanced form of the course required for some degree programs, which results in students generating around 200 new questions each semester. In common with many universities, lectures are recorded and attendance declines over the semester, limiting exposure of students to peer instruction (although the questions are made available online). In the second half of the semester, we retain a core group of students who attend and appreciate the peer instruction opportunity (Table 2). PAL associated with the lab program is well attended, with almost double the proportion of the class attending compared to the first-year biology PAL program. This suggests that it is meeting a student need, most likely associated with the greater complexity of the lab program. What Table 1 also shows, however, is that we are not reaching all students with any activity. Although we do not have good data on who does not participate, it is likely that there is a minority of students who do not engage with any of the opportunities provided.

We have substantial qualitative feedback on these activities from students, through the institutional student surveys, our own PAL surveys and the extensive bank of comments on PeerWise, which are surprisingly informative about student attitudes to learning. Course surveys include an open-ended question: “What is the best thing about this course?” We have conducted a thematic analysis of answers to this question from the last three years to find out what students value and the reasons they give for doing so. The resulting themes, illustrated by exemplar comments (Table 2), indicate that many students recognize and value our efforts to integrate opportunities for formative assessment and feedback throughout the course, including the peer-led activities. The comments for the first three themes demonstrate that students are accepting responsibility for developing scientific thinking skills, consistent with the relational approach of partnership in which lecturers and students work together to achieve learning outcomes (Matthews, 2016). In addition, they demonstrate enhanced metacognitive awareness of the nature of learning tasks and the need to practice them, another recognized benefit of partnership strategies (Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten, Millard, & Moore-Cherry, 2016).

One of our goals with PeerWise was to engage students as partners in the design of assessment. Such democratization of assessment can be challenging but has benefits in improving students’ assessment literacy (Deeley & Bovill, 2015; Healey, et al., 2014). While students valued answering questions, we saw less evidence that they recognized that writing questions was a good learning experience. They did, however, evaluate questions in ways that showed that they (a) recognized the value of applying and analyzing knowledge and (b) truly became our partners in their more critical evaluation of question design. Both outcomes are illustrated by the following PeerWise comments:

> Awesome question! I love the fact that it's a hypothetical question, which means you have to really think about the answer rather than be able to look it up.
>
> I really liked how this question involved a bit of puzzling together.
>
> This question is more about memorising the facts presented in the lectures, rather than getting us to think about the content and apply problem-solving skills.

A successful partnership should result in students taking ownership of course content (Healey, et al., 2014). We see this illustrated in the degree to which creativity and humour are used in PeerWise questions (something the lecturers also model). One year, several student-generated questions featured Dr. Dimwhitt, who was “somewhat clever but not very clever” and therefore needed help in designing experiments or analyzing data. We picked up on this for the exam and used Dr. Dimwhitt questions from PeerWise as well as adding some of our own. Another PeerWise question used for the exam began, “An intron and an exon walked into a bar,” leading to a scenario that addressed the potential functions of introns. Not only do students use the course material creatively and playfully, but they also extend it, for example, by writing questions based on alternative experiments or outcomes for the lab project or, more rarely, an interesting scenario from the primary literature.

When we first introduced the lab project, there was some negative feedback from students whose prior experience was mostly labs that could be completed in three hours with a clear (and expected) result. Surveys indicated that this had led to a view of labs where the most important thing was to follow instructions in order to achieve the correct result. Many students were not seeing labs as answering questions or as modeling the scientific approach. We introduced PAL to support students in coming to terms with these issues and to help them understand the importance of critically evaluating both the data obtained and the experimental design. We aimed to engage students as partners in the scientific enterprise, firstly by emphasizing that we also did not know which mutants would be isolated and secondly by working with peer mentors to design and present study sessions. Student mentors form another component of our partnership strategy as we aimed to create a learning community (Healey, et al., 2014) with mentors reflecting on and sharing their responses as peers to the lab project. Our surveys of students attending PAL show many develop a more sophisticated and appreciative understanding of the way that science is done, as indicated by the following comments:

> Showed us how research is flexible and has different explanations.
>
> You need to think out of the box in order to draw a good conclusion because the results lead to multiple possibilities.
>
> Interpreting data and drawing conclusions is useful for determining what isn't yet known and finding opportunities for further investigation.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Our course has been designed to engage students as partners in multiple ways: through co-creation of assessment questions, taking ownership of the content, and using it productively to apply and analyze course material. Feedback from students indicates this approach supports them to take greater responsibility for their own learning as they develop better assessment literacy and become more able to think scientifically.

One concern is that not all students participate (Table 1) despite our use of multiple modalities: in-class, online, and targeted sessions. We suspect that many of the non-participants are the students who most need support. Although student survey results are mostly positive, the negative comments suggest that some students are overwhelmed by the content, prefer to learn by rote rather than apply knowledge, and do not understand the potential benefits of peer learning. These responses are indicative of students who do not yet operate as self-regulated learners (Zimmerman, 2013) but are reliant on authority to provide correct answers on an individual basis. Reaching and assisting these students remains a challenge. The nature of a partnership is that it is entered into voluntarily and that both parties have responsibilities. We can provide well-designed and relevant opportunities for formative feedback and a learning environment that values student input, but we cannot force students to take advantage of these opportunities. Institutional and other challenges associated with the introduction of partnerships are well-recognized (Bovill, et al., 2016; Healey, et al., 2014) and a culture shift in the higher education landscape may be required to change student expectations.

One way in which all students benefit, however, is through improved teaching resulting from our partnership with those students who do engage and the PAL mentors. We value the idea of multilateral feedback advocated by Boud and Molloy (2013) in which instructors are positioned as receivers of feedback from students (Figure 1). We find that PeerWise and peer instruction provide valuable insights into student thinking, through comments and responses, for example, where most students get an in-class question incorrect or where a misleading question on PeerWise is highly rated. These examples illustrate another aspect of partnership—the exposure of lecturers' implicit assumptions (Healey, et al., 2014)—and provide opportunities for lecturers to share their own learning journeys with the class. The cycles of PAL session design and implementation with new mentors each year provide another opportunity to learn from students and improve the course. Thus, the partnership appears to be positive for students, who are taking greater control of their learning; PAL mentors, who gain leadership experience; and lecturers, who remain engaged with teaching as an intellectual exercise.

This research has been approved by the Australian National University Human Ethics Research Committee.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

John Rivers *first enjoyed the molecular genetics course as an undergraduate, subsequently helping to establish and run the course's PAL sessions. He has remained engaged with the course, helping evaluate student feedback, whilst completing his PhD in Plant Sciences at the Research School of Biology, ANU.*

Aaron Smith *graduated from the Australian National University in 2016 with a Bachelor of Genetics specialising in Plant Sciences and will begin a PhD in 2017. He has been a PAL mentor in first and second year biology courses since 2014.*

Denise Higgins *is an educational developer with extensive experience in course and program development, curriculum review and design and approaches to student-centred learning and research-led education. She has managed and participated in several education research projects on high order thinking skills and reflective practice in STEM undergraduate contexts.*

Ruth Mills *was coordinator of the ANU Science Peer Assisted Learning Program from 2011 to 2014, while also studying for a PhD in physics education research.*

Alex Maier *is a molecular parasitologist and applies functional genetics approaches to dissect the malaria parasite. His educational interests lie in conveying the excitement, challenges and*

benefits of the scientific method and how best to communicate the intrinsic aspects of it. He co-convenes the molecular genetics course with Susan.

Susan Howitt *is a biochemist with an interest in educational research. She is especially interested in research-led education and how students understand research and the nature of science. She co-convenes the molecular genetics course with Alex.*

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CASE STUDY

Students as Partners in the Real World: A Whole-Institution Approach

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ABSTRACT

Students as Partners (SaP) is an approach to student engagement that has gained much traction in recent years. Evidence shows that it adds value to the learning experience and provides opportunities for students to develop the capabilities needed in their future pathways. This paper documents one university's approach to embedding partnerships in its institutional culture. The paper begins by contextualising the process in relation to wider institutional goals and outlines the three phases of implementation. This case study argues that to enable a whole-institution approach to SaP, it has been necessary to invest in strategies at a number of levels that enable partnership, from high-end policy and protocols to providing opportunities for staff and students to shape their own partnerships.

KEYWORDS

students as partners, student engagement, whole of institution approach

INTRODUCTION

Conversations about student engagement penetrate every aspect of higher education in almost every context. However, in today's climate of uncertainty, traditional avenues for engaging students are no longer enough to prepare our graduates to be "future-capable" (Bridgstock, 2016). Never before has there been so much choice for students about where and how they learn. The way knowledge is generated and shared has changed and information is easily accessible to students from many different sources. As a result, the role and function of universities in contemporary society is changing. Universities need to ensure what they offer adds value to the student experience beyond what they could learn online and equips them with the capabilities to thrive, not just survive, in their future professional pathways.

Students as Partners (SaP) is one approach to fostering student engagement. SaP focusses on engaging students in their learning and in the way in which they are taught and assessed. At the Queensland University of Technology (QUT), we define SaP as "staff and students work[ing] together to make things better, by sharing perspectives and jointly making decisions."(Shaw & Tredinnick, 2017) Ample evidence proves that the more engaged students are in their learning, the better their academic and professional outcomes (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Buckley, 2014; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, & Whitt, 2011; Thomas, 2012; Vuori, 2014). In fact, this concept is so widely accepted that governments both in Australia and abroad are embedding the broader concept of working "with" not "for" students into policy (Carey, 2016) .

While many universities implement and celebrate SaP projects and initiatives at a program level, there is little written on strategies to partner with students at an organisational level (Bell, 2016). This paper documents QUT's approach to SaP as it works to embed partnerships into its institutional culture. We begin by locating this initiative within the QUT context and outline the three phases developed to support the process. This case study includes examples of strategies implemented and identifies the successes and challenges we have experienced. We conclude by highlighting key learnings and insights that will influence SaP at QUT and cause it to mature into the future.

CONTEXT

QUT has a student population of just under 50,000. We are an urban commuter institution with three campuses. Our students expect a flexible and blended learning environment that accommodates their competing obligations of study, work, and family. QUT's branding is that it is a university for the "real world." This branding not only influences the courses we offer and the way we operate, but also influences who is attracted to work and study at QUT. Our students tend to be outcome driven and focussed on achieving in the world beyond the university context. Similarly, QUT staff encourage and maintain strong links with their professional bodies. Academic staff's commitment and belief in Students as Partners as an approach in many ways controls the extent students are allowed to co-determine aspects of teaching and learning (Luescher-Mamashela, 2013, p. 1453).

Our approach to embedding SaP in the institutional culture at QUT has been to investigate what it would take to enable all stakeholders to participate and benefit from SaP. The language of partnership in QUT documentation extends beyond the walls of the university and embraces industry and community. Any exploration of partnership and SaP at QUT must contribute to this identity and real-world focus. In the following section, we outline how we have shaped an institutional approach to SaP that responds to this context.

GETTING STARTED: INITIATING A PHASED APPROACH

There have been three distinct phases in the development and implementation of Students as Partners as a whole-institution approach at QUT. These phases have been both deliberate and organic in development. It was recognised very early on that no single strategy would suffice to embed SaP within university culture. It required a multi-pronged approach that was flexible enough to respond to needs and issues as they emerged. Outlined below is a summary of the three phases identified:

- Phase 1: Test and prototype
- Phase 2: Identify and implement strategies
- Phase 3: Systems and structures

Although the phases are in chronological order, each phase is not restricted by time, but simultaneously co-exist and merge. While our goal is to embed SaP across the institution, we are also keen to find ways to do this that allows and encourages a range of responses and approaches to SaP that will complement individual discipline's cultures.

Phase 1: Test and Prototype

In mid-2015 we first started to seriously consider SaP as a whole-institution strategy. In phase one, our focus was to prototype and test the appetite for the approach with both staff and students. In semester two of 2015, we supported five micro-curriculum design projects. We identified academics who could champion SaP within their faculty and invited them to participate. These pilots provided an early opportunity for us to identify any concerns or obstacles and garner some understanding of what SaP might look like within different disciplinary contexts. The five project foci were:

- Nursing: Develop a pedagogical approach/ framework that enables the development of clinical judgement where students learn to "think like a nurse."
- Creative industries (CI): Develop a curriculum that enables engagement with industry professionals and organisations through rich, interdisciplinary collaborations.
- Law: Identify learning approaches in a second-year subject that promote optimal outcomes for students, particularly discipline knowledge and legal thinking and analysis skills.
- Science and Engineering (SEF): Explore how students engage with different forms of assessment and the impact of the assessment process on their motivation to learn.
- Pharmacy: Develop curricular strategies for stronger professional identity, culture, and community amongst the pharmacy student cohort.

What we learned from phase one influenced and shaped our next step as each staff-student team reported back to their school or faculty on the outcomes of their projects and made recommendations for the future. Overall, feedback from participants was positive. The strongest indicator of the pilots' success is that all faculties involved have continued to work in partnership with their students in the design and implementation of learning and teaching. Each project has morphed into its own independent strategy with its own character and focus. For example, the pharmacy pilot has resulted in the development of a peer-mentor program and the science and engineering pilot has expanded to include other disciplines from within their school.

The pilots also identified some key challenges. We needed to find better ways to align SaP initiatives with other strategic priorities across the university so that working in partnership did not feel, especially for staff, as yet another task above and beyond their core duties. A couple of ways we have done this is by integrating SaP into course review processes and providing small grants for unit-based SaP strategies. Other challenges included building the capabilities of staff and students to engage in partnership and finding suitable meeting times and venues that worked with student and staff calendars. We have started to address this by delivering professional development workshops for staff and students and expanding our online resources. Even though there were challenges, the initial evaluation of impact for both staff and students was positive enough to encourage us to continue.

Phase 2: Identify and implement strategies

Phase two aimed to build on the success and lessons learnt in phase one and better integrate SaP into institutional systems and structures and provide opportunities for more staff and students to work in partnership. The first action was to establish a cross-institution SaP working party. It seemed logical that from the outset a whole-institution approach to partnership should be done in partnership with students and staff, both academic and professional. Students and staff who had participated in the pilots as well as those who had not were invited to join. A Participatory Action Research framework (PAR) guided our process. PAR has been utilised as a collaborative enquiry approach to SaP in a number of initiatives (Seale, Gibson, Haynes, & Potter, 2015). Both PAR and SaP emphasise non-hierarchical relationships and involve collaborative agenda setting, sharing in decisions about processes, and group problem solving skills. Over the past year, the SaP working party has met for 2 hours every 6 weeks to unpack what enables or inhibits the cultural shift towards working in partnership with students at an institution. Our first task as a group was to define our goal, clarify our purpose, and refine our research question to focus our inquiry. Our goal was that SaP become "just the way we do things," and our question was action based: "What will it take for SaP to be just part of the way we do things"?

As a group, we reflected on the outcomes of the pilots and identified different strategies to enable partnerships between staff and students. The next task determined by the group was to define the guiding principles for SaP at QUT. These guiding principles would then be used as a reflection tool to check that, first, we were progressing according to these principles and second, that the principles truly did align with the organisational culture and priorities. The wording of the principles is consciously active and strength based to reflect the values and vision of QUT. Our principles are:

- *SaP is relevant because it satisfies needs, affirms values, and invites action.*
- *SaP is inclusive because anyone, anyhow and anywhere, is acknowledged as able.*
- *SaP is respectful because participants responsibly see, hear, and act on contributions.*

The first principle emphasises the importance of integrating SaP into authentic learning opportunities that build graduate capabilities; the second acknowledges that opportunities to be involved in SaP need to be visible and accessible to all; and the third principle directly speaks to SaP as a "way of doing" a process rather than a product (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014).

To increase opportunities for staff and students to test working in partnership, we invited proposals for SaP initiatives linked to the following institutional priority areas:

1. Authentic assessment and its relationship to academic and professional integrity as it is at the heart of the "real world" of teaching and learning.
2. Whole of course design where staff and students focussed on a three to four year program of study rather than an individual semester long subject or unit. This past semester we supported eight projects in area 1 and five course-team SaP projects in area 2.

Our belief is that the more SaP is embedded within existing mechanisms of the university, the more it will become inclusive and accessible for students and staff.

In phase two we developed ways to recognise and reward contribution and expanded the strategies developed in phase one to build the capacity of both staff and students to engage in partnership. For example, during phase one; we facilitated workshops for the students involved to build their capacity to engage in partnership. In phase two, we investigated ways to build capacity and acknowledge contribution through other areas of the university. For example, we negotiated that the contribution of student participants in SaP projects be recognised on the pilot co-curricular record and linked SaP participants in with the leadership and development program. Similarly, we approached capacity building for staff at a number of levels. To broaden the reach of the conversation across the university we (staff and students) jointly led a conversation around SaP at the QUT Senior Leaders Group Conference, and invited all professional and academic staff to attend professional development workshops on SaP throughout the academic year. We developed (and continue to develop) resources for students and staff that provide examples and strategies that groups can implement.

The working party identified areas where we believed embedding SaP would have the most impact. We worked with the Academic Development team to embed SaP into an assessment item in the Graduate Certificate in Academic Practice for early career academics and had SaP incorporated as a key enabling strategy into the University Vision statement "2020 Real World Learning Vision" (QUT, 2017) We conducted a preliminary audit of policy and other key institutional documents to understand where SaP already existed and identified where embedding SaP in policy and procedures would enable SaP in practice. We worked with the curriculum review team to revise the language used throughout course accreditation and re-accreditation documentation to be more in line with working in partnership with students (rather than just consulting them) and to require course teams to provide not only evidence of partnership with students but also how partnerships had shaped course design.

Two conversation threads recurred during the working party meetings: first, how to measure our success in embedding SaP, and second, if SaP was the right fit for our students and institution. In response, we formed a mini-working party group of staff and students and developed whole-institution evaluation strategies for SaP. We are now in the process of collecting baseline quantitative and qualitative data on students' and staff members' knowledge and perceptions of SaP. If we are looking at SaP being part of the way we do things at QUT, we need to first measure the current state of awareness and participation in SaP activities.

Another strategy to gauge interest in SaP at QUT has been to create opportunities for those staff and students who have been involved to share their experience with others and celebrate their successes. The sharing of practice through a half-day symposium demonstrated that opportunities to celebrate and share SaP initiatives are important in fostering a sense of pride and accomplishment in both staff and students and for piquing community interest in SaP.

The final significant strategy to grow SaP at an institutional level was to fund a dedicated position to coordinate SaP across the university. The creation of this position signalled the university's commitment to SaP as a long-term initiative. The employment of a dedicated third-party facilitator or supporter is strongly advocated in SaP literature and has proven to be very useful in our context (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014).

In summary, phase two has seen some significant progress towards embedding SaP within the culture of the University. This has been achieved by both supporting practice across facilities and disciplines, and working at a strategic level to integrate SaP language and values into core processes.

Phase 3: Systems and structures

We are now at the point of transitioning from phase two into phase three. In 2017, we will work with each faculty to look at their systems and structures to support working in partnership with students and find ways to sustain practices that are not resource intensive. This includes continuing to look at ways we reward and recognise staff working in partnership, and trialling a mentorship program within faculties where staff and students now experienced in SaP can support emerging practitioners. We are also keen to investigate how we educate new staff by introducing SaP as the norm rather than the exception. For SaP to be enabled, we need to build a culture that values student engagement and participation beyond the classroom. To achieve this, we plan to work with students-as-researchers investigating how we engage with students in academic governance and the deliberative structures surrounding teaching and learning at an institution-wide, faculty, school and discipline level. Together, staff and students will develop a five-year implementation plan to guide SaP at QUT into the future.

KEY LEARNINGS AND INSIGHTS

This case study of how one university approached embedding SaP across an institution has itself been a partnership between staff and students. With each phase, our own understanding of the concept has matured which has deepened and enriched the process. We have all learnt much along the way. In our context, it has been important to invest in strategies at a number of levels that enable partnership, from high-end policy and protocols to providing a structure for people to engage in SaP and make it their own. Embedding SaP requires a shift in culture. For some disciplines, staff, and students, this shift is small; for others it is monumental. Cook-Sather (2014, p. 186) refers to SaP as a threshold concept that is “troublesome, transformative, irreversible, and integrative”. We have experienced all of these responses. Although we are in the early stages of evaluating impact on staff, students, and practice, we are seeing benefits emerging for both staff and students. For example, in a current project that explored ways to improve teamwork, students were asked to use a word to describe teamwork. The words used by students to describe the experience shifted from “painful,” “challenging,” and “frustrating” pre-SaP to “successful,” “productive,” and “fun” post-SaP. The academic staff teaching into the Unit also reported a greater sense of satisfaction when the Unit was designed and delivered in partnership with students than without (Naumann et al., 2016). One of our next tasks is to collate individual project evaluations and outcomes to identify common themes.

What we have learnt so far is that we need to provide opportunities for staff and students to have a sense of ownership and autonomy over the process rather than it being a top-down, one-size-fits-all approach. We acknowledge that different contexts require or allow different types of partnerships. Challenges that continue are the logistics of partnership and access to opportunities for all students. At QUT, like many other universities, most students have other demands competing for their time, such as work and family, in addition to study. Again, finding ways to embed rather than have SaP as an add-on activity will hopefully help achieve this. There is still a long way to go, but SaP is gaining traction within the university. This relative success has been due in large part to aligning SaP with the vision of the university and staggering the implementation in a way that is responsive to the needs of our students now and in the future. However, underlying all phases and strategies have been two key enablers. First, we have had strong endorsement of SaP from the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Learning and Teaching, and the Vice Chancellor. Second, we have approached the implementation of SaP at the institutional level by modelling the way we are asking people to work—in partnership with students and guided by the principles of relevance, inclusivity, and respect.

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CASE STUDY

The Development of Contemporary Student Engagement Practices at the University of Winchester and Winchester Student Union, UK

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ABSTRACT

This case study explores practice in four areas of student engagement activity which were developed in partnership between the University of Winchester and Winchester Student Union. The development, motivations, stakeholders, and challenges of activities built around the principles of representation, change, feedback, and research are discussed. Relationships between practices will be explored in the context of a proposal for how discrete practices can complement one another to create a community of partnership. The case study focuses on four key initiatives: Student Academic Representatives, Student Fellows Scheme, Student-Led Teaching Awards, and the Winchester Research Apprenticeship Programme. The four key initiatives are contextualised with a discussion of an ongoing project that seeks to provide greater coherence to student engagement through an institution-wide movement towards embedding partnership.

KEYWORDS

student engagement, partnership, students as partners, quality, student experience

In partnership with Winchester Student Union (WSU), the University of Winchester (UoW) is currently at a reflective plateau, reviewing four years' work in student engagement. From 2012, WSU and UoW stakeholders have pursued new opportunities where staff and students could work together. This work was influenced by literature and theory focused on working in partnership (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014; NUS, 2012). The institution sought engagement opportunities for students and staff to work collaboratively to enhance the student experience (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felton, 2014; Wait & Bols, 2015), by empowering students through models of change and representation (Dunne, 2016). A UoW and WSU staff-student delegation attended the McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning Students as Partners Summer Institute in May 2016 to revisit our practice. Earlier that year, UoW had been commended by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education regarding practices in student engagement and partnership (QAA, 2012; 2016). The team were keen to take this time to establish how practice could be developed to sustain and enhance existing initiatives. This paper outlines core practices engaging students in representation, change, feedback, and research and is authored by those stakeholders who attended the Summer Institute and have been active at various levels of all the initiatives outlined below. This paper reflects on the extent of partnership of these practices, their development, the role of relevant stakeholders, and explores challenges and potential for developing our commitment to students as partners.

REPRESENTATION

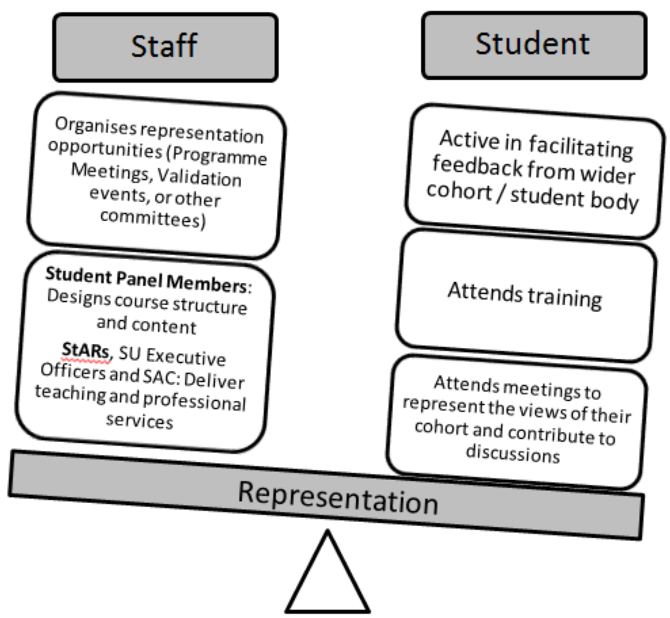
Student academic representation at Winchester follows a familiar model of student representation in UK higher education, with the understanding that its “primary aim is to represent and defend the interests of the collective student body” (Klemenčič 2012). Student Academic Representatives (StARs) are volunteers coordinated by WSU to gather feedback and represent their cohort at meetings with academics and relevant professional services. Students elect WSU officers annually to represent the student body in several portfolios (e.g., education, welfare, communications) and govern WSU. Officers sit on key university committees (although not executive committees) representing students and lobbying for enhancement to the student experience.

The strong partnership between WSU and UoW has facilitated the creation of further opportunities for innovative student representation. This includes the Student Academic Council (SAC) where UoW senior managers, WSU officers, and students from each academic department discuss and influence cross-institution initiatives focused on student experience. This committee regularly funds student-support projects and campaigns. Students are also members of the panels which ensure that new and existing courses set appropriate academic standards, deliver an appropriate curriculum, and have robust student support in place. Student panel members are external to the course assessed, predominantly adding to this process by evaluating the student experience offered by the course.

Current quality assurance processes are reviewed by UK regulatory and funding bodies, and recent quality assurance protocols place a strong emphasis on student engagement. The new mechanism, conducted through Annual Provider Reviews (APR) (BIS, 2015), is likely to involve a new focus on student representation or statements. The structure of the partnership between the university and students involved in these representation activities can be unpacked through the see-saw of partnership below (Figure 1), indicating there is an unequal balance of participation in regards to representation in these initiatives.

Challenges surrounding representation at any level of an institution include the fragility and inconsistency in a stakeholder's individual experience. Additional issues include student motivation to perform roles consistently and professionally, weighting of student voice, managing staff expectations, and logistical challenges in a wide-scale scheme with frequent turnover of students. Given the above challenges, the level of partnership in representation has potential to grow to a system where feedback is always voiced democratically and responded to effectively. However, the size of such schemes can limit the speed of development. Increasing and enhancing the practices of representation to better the student experience is an ongoing goal shared by many Higher Education Institutions. At Winchester, this includes raising staff and student awareness and reviewing the accessibility of student feedback mechanisms of the StARS scheme. The officiality of student representation needs to continue to be built so StARs are a formal part of more processes at Winchester. This is particularly pertinent in the context of the emphasis UK higher education placed on the National Student Survey (NSS, 2016).

Figure 1: Representation weighting of staff-student partnership



CHANGE

Moving beyond representation to more active roles, students participating in change are involved in actively shaping the direction of their experience. Kay and colleagues distinguish this from other forms of engagement: “They are engaged deeply with the institution and their subject areas, and the focus and direction” (Kay, Dunne, & Hutchinson, 2010). In this spirit, the Student Fellows Scheme (SFS) is a partnership initiative, annually funding 60 students with a bursary of £600 enabling them to commit time to work with staff to enhance the experience of

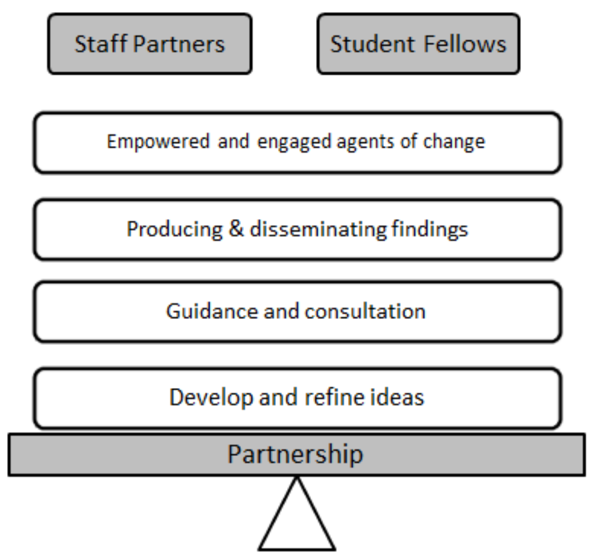
UoW students (Sims, Lowe, Hutber, & Barnes, 2014; El-Hakim, King, Lowe, & Sims, 2016). SFS runs across the academic year with ideas developed by students or staff or in partnership as depicted below (Figure 2).

Examples of projects from recent years include:

- Recognition and support for commuter students
- Interactive Law learning resources
- Redeveloping English literature online assessments
- Increasing access to performance and rehearsal spaces

The scheme is flexible, accommodating a wide range of projects to implement change. Various strategies include research, campaigns, resource development, and lobbying committees. Also, at the conclusion of SFS projects, students are asked to complete a feedback survey about their experiences. This encourages reflection on how they have developed and identifies key areas for development of the scheme.

Figure 2: SFS Weighting of balanced staff-student partnership projects



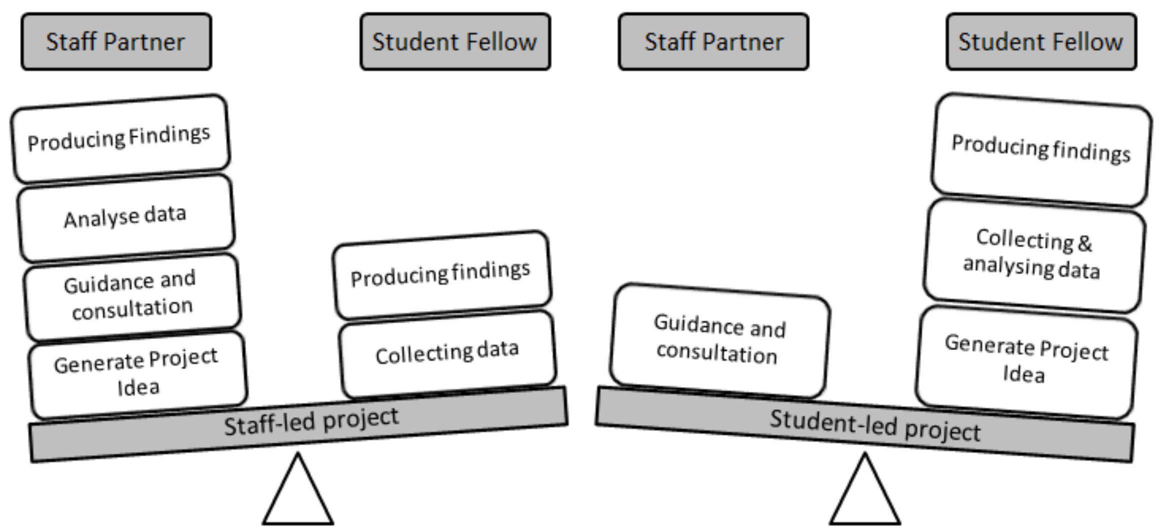
For the students themselves, the scheme offers a range of benefits including an increased sense of inclusion, pride, and support, as the following feedback quotes show:

> "[Benefits included] opportunities to present, share, and discuss with influential members of the university, as well as at other institutions."
> "Knowing that I have brought people together with a similar learning difference. Those people now know they aren't alone in how they feel."

> "The opportunity to devise and control our own research project (with supervision) was one of the most rewarding things we have ever done."

Fellows receive training and support in research methods, project management, and dissemination techniques to increase their project's effectiveness. Staff support students and contribute to change through their projects. The extent of partnership depends on how much time either party can commit but always requires a degree of mutual responsibility. While 50/50 partnership represents a minority of examples, experience has shown the occasions where partnership does not develop often is due to the idea only coming from one of the partners. For example, if a student developed the project focus and subsequently worked with a staff member to implement it, often the student takes more ownership of its direction. Projects developed and enacted in partnership often seem to have the smoothest working relationship, but this does not necessarily mean they have better outcomes. Some academic staff do not always immediately understand the importance of the partnership component of the scheme. This can lead to a range of models of practice from very student-led projects to staff being very prescriptive of student roles and behaviour. Some examples are represented below and above (Figures 2 and 3).

Figure 3: SFS weighting of unbalanced staff-student partnership projects



As a voluntary role, StARs can be restricted in directly making change. To address this and building upon the Feedback and Assessment for Students with Technology (FASTECH) where students were empowered as Fellows researching technology enhancement (Jessop et al., 2013), the SFS was developed by WSU and UoW to increase scope for students to be engaged directly in change processes. SFS has partnership embedded at every level. There is the overarching partnership of UoW and WSU, which co-funds the scheme. The scheme is managed in partnership between the WSU Vice President, Education and the UoW Research Officer, Student Engagement. Staff-student partnerships are also embedded in the committee structure of the university with reporting of changes and outcomes occurring at course, department, and cross-institutional levels.

To ensure it supports UoW's learning community, SFS is evaluated annually in partnership with a Student Fellow. This annual evaluation process resulted in the following changes in 2016/17:

- Reworking the progress review system to include a written report
- Moving training materials online to increase accessibility
- Providing more feedback about projects in different parts of the institution

A key challenge of SFS is the size and scope of the initiative. Because Student Fellows are paid roles, the SFS can be restricted in terms of growth. While students receive a bursary for participating, staff volunteer their time. With increases in academic workloads (Kyvik, 2013) the sustainability of staff time and the continuation of funding are potential threats. A motivating factor behind SFS was to normalise students working with staff. There is a danger that investing in discrete activities such as SFS can situate partnership in a particular space of the institution which potentially constrains the development of wider staff-student collaboration. Though this practice was commended by the QAA, the team at the MIIETL Summer Institute were aware this was the only initiative at the institution built around equal partnership.

FEEDBACK

The Student-Led Teaching Awards (SLTAs) was a project borne from WSU and UoW's shared agenda to expand student feedback on best practice influencing the student experience. Feeding into a wider national agenda, SLTAs offer an opportunity to explore students' unique perceptions that help identify good practice and positively influence learning (HEA, 2012). SLTAs provide students with a platform to anonymously nominate any staff for excellence in a host of categories, which can support staff professional development and boost morale (Arthur, 2009). Every member of staff nominated for an award is notified. Students nominate in categories such as Inspirational Lecturer of the Year and Best Use of Resources (see Appendix 1 for SLTAs 2015-16 Awards Full List. A student committee organises the SLTAs, discussing the nomination process, organising an annual ceremony, and selecting winners based on qualitative submissions.

As seen in this case study, UoW students have opportunities to engage in representation, research, and change, but none have the ability to directly praise and commend staff for their work and support. Laced with positivity and praise, the SLTAs bridge the gap between staff and students in a way that was previously untapped. It also shares best practices at the institution amongst staff by highlighting innovative and inspirational staff members and the reasons why students are so inspired by them. Some anonymised examples of qualitative nominations for the 2015-2016 Most Inspirational Lecturer of the Year include:

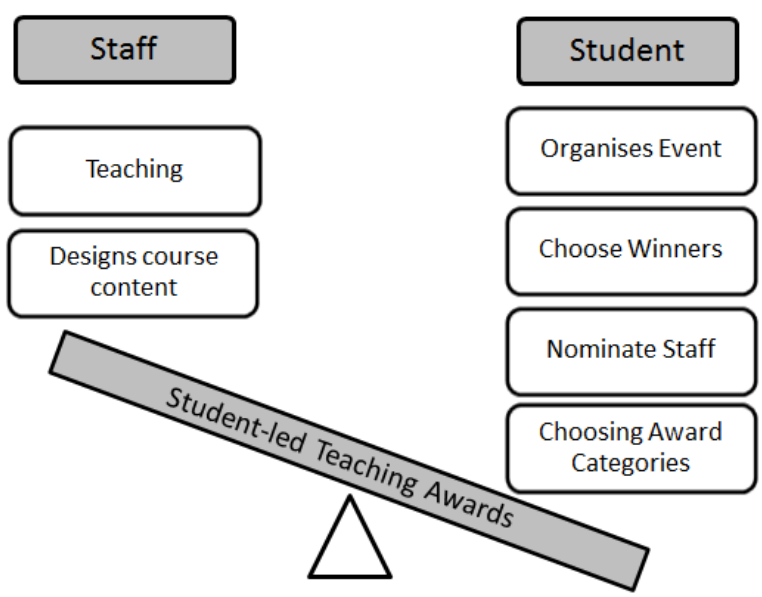
> "[The lecturer's] ability to make even the most challenging or mundane of concepts digestible and interesting is inspiring to any hopeful educator and a quality I aspire to emulate."

> "He provides continuous and incredible support for the students on his modules and prompts the development of their own ideas. I've never left a lecture by [him] without feeling like my whole perspective of the world has been shifted."
>
> "She has gone, and continues to go, above and beyond her position as a lecturer; coaching, advising and inspiring me to reach my potential."

The key aspect to the SLTAs is its commitment to being student-led. The committee includes the WSU Vice President, Education, the Student Engagement Assistant, and students from across the institution who submit applications. Whilst this Student-Led project does not align distinctly with traditional notions of partnership, it does offer a valuable contribution to the institution as a student engagement initiative. The SLTAs are supported by senior members of management and staff across the institution, hinting towards the notion of partnership through its strong support from these key stakeholders. The SLTAs' relationship with partnership is explored below (Figure 4):

Funding for promotion and ceremony costs is bid for annually through the Student Academic Council (SAC). SAC has continued to approve funding for this project as a platform for positive student feedback and sharing of best practices.

Figure 4: SLTA weighting of staff-student partnership



The sustainability of SLTAs is potentially a challenge, as WSU must bid annually to SAC in order to receive funding for the event. There is also another challenge due to the high WSU turnover of staff. The WSU Officers change annually by electoral process, so the SLTAs rest on the next Vice President Education's commitment to effectuate the SLTAs. Additionally, without a continuous source of funding, the support of the scheme will be annually problematic. The

SLTAs must stay with the Vice President, Education, in order for it to be student-led, which is key to the scheme.

There are some challenges amongst staff regarding acceptance of the SLTAs. The notion of students being given the opportunity to award staff on their performance can be controversial amongst some. This is perhaps driven by the “terrors of performativity” (Ball, 2003) where staff feel academic freedom and values are being displaced by incentivised effectivity, which dominates over educational honesty (Ball, 2003). There is a perception that the SLTAs are a popularity contest, whereby the most entertaining staff member wins, rather than those conducting educationally purposeful academic work. The controversial nature of the SLTAs means that implementing such a scheme can be contentious (Madriaga & Morley, 2016). Whilst there is opposition, the SLTAs provide a commendable accolade (in the form of both nominations and the award), which help to boost confidence and share best practices amongst staff. A review of the qualitative nominations indicates that students nominate staff for a wide range of reasons including entertainment, inspiration, and well-designed teaching and learning. The following nomination statement states that through the SLTAs students have an opportunity to recognise rigorous teaching that stretches them: “The project has aided me in taking a more analytical approach to my work and has offered me the opportunity to develop applied skills.” From a manager’s perspective, one of the interesting aspects of the SLTAs is how it provides evidence of the positive impact on students’ learning experiences of various institutional strategies, from developing research-led and research-informed teaching to internationalising the curriculum. The SLTAs are a public, university-wide occasion recognising the impact of teaching on UoW students.

The SLTAs have grown every year in the number of nominations and attendees at the ceremony with still significant room to grow, given each student's eligibility to nominate. The possible number of nominations able to be cast by students still means that the SLTAs can grow further before it reaches its maximum potential. To ensure more students know about the SLTAs, a campaign of posters, merchandise, and class talks are planned each year. The longer the SLTAs are part of the annual celebration of UoW’s staff, the more embedded the awards will become. Each year, as the quantity of award nominations grow and the number of award categories expands, more staff are contacted to congratulate them on their nomination. This means the SLTAs are reaching more members of staff to encourage their practice, which works to embed the culture of the SLTAs amongst them.

RESEARCH

Student involvement as researchers as a form of pedagogy has received increasing interest in recent years (Jenkins & Healey, 2010). This can occur within and beyond the curriculum, often in specific spaces but contributing to greater knowledge of students’ academic discipline (Hill & Walkington, 2016). Piloted in one faculty in 2009, the Winchester Research Apprenticeship Programme (WRAP) was implemented cross-institutionally to enable undergraduates to work on a placement (of up to four weeks) on a research project alongside an academic. WRAP’s origins came from a desire to provide more opportunities for students to become engaged in discipline-specific research and to encourage staff engagement with a research-informed teaching culture. Students participating in WRAP receive a weekly bursary to acknowledge the value of the work. Each faculty receives central funding with promotion and recruitment also carried out at the faculty level. WRAP has operated over 200 projects to date, engaging over 300 students since its inception.

The other initiatives outlined above prioritise engagement in the field of student experience and learning and teaching. WRAP, however, supports engagement within academic disciplines, attracting those wishing to gain experience in their field of study. WRAP can inspire undergraduate students to pursue postgraduate study. For example, in the Faculty of Arts, 34% of WRAP students have remained at Winchester as postgraduates. Participation in WRAP can be motivated by the opportunity to receive remuneration. Also, due to the importance of current staff research interests in the success of WRAP, individual staff are key to sustainability, as are suitably engaged students.

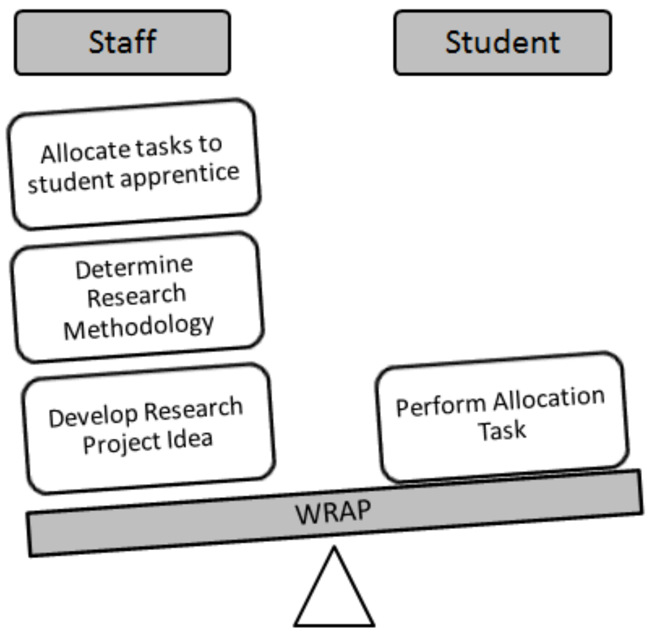
WRAP's faculty-led organisation can lead to diverse promotional campaigns, timing and length of projects. This individual nature of WRAP means the students may not experience a cohesive community of practice unlike other student engagement initiatives. This can be seen as advantageous to the scheme by reflecting the specific needs of the faculty's students and staff. There is an individuality of student experience in WRAP because the nature of the projects are different in content. This raises difficulties when attempting to ensure a baseline experience for each student involved. Another potential difficulty is that there may not always be an appropriate academic research project aligned with every course. In terms of partnership and outputs, while the quality of the student contribution to research is often worthy of publication, student co-authoring has only occurred in a small number of cases. Walkington (2008, p. 41) identified that undergraduate researchers experience a "gap" not faced by academics due to a lack of wide dissemination, and Brew (2006) claimed this means undergraduates often feel "at arms length" from the research process. Another challenge is some academic staff have difficulties in developing a project in which students are genuinely partners, rather than assistants. This initiative's interaction with partnership is visualised below (Figure 5).

That said, student interest in WRAP continues to grow, indicating this scheme's potential to accommodate large numbers of projects. Steps are being taken for greater interaction between different staff and students involved in WRAP across the university, through promotion, celebration, and awareness.

CONCLUSIONS

This case study has explored the origins and potential of four key areas of student engagement activity developed in partnership at UoW with WSU. Throughout, the challenges of the four areas (representation, change, feedback, and research), their varying levels of staff-student partnership, and their potential to be improved has been a central focus. Moving beyond individual sets of practice, new linkages between practices need to be explored where separate student engagement practices can complement one another, creating cohesion at the institution. At the MIIETL Institute, the authorial team concluded there was a need to act on these areas to further enhance student engagement practices through establishing a Centre for Student Engagement.

Figure 5: WRAP weighting of staff-student partnership



This proposal has been inspired by student-led research conducted as part of the Student Fellows Scheme that shows that students need greater clarity of purpose and knowledge of "where to go" to get more involved at UoW. Furthermore, a visible Centre would help staff struggling with aspects of the student partnership agenda (see the discussion of WRAP above) to have a stronger understanding of what engagement can look like. Some example quotes from this research included the following: "I think student engagement is very ambiguous" and "I find that the issue is that no one really knows where to go sometimes at uni" (Shaw, 2016). This corroborates wider research suggesting use of the term "student engagement" to be ambiguous and can lead to disengagement from students (Gibbs, 2014; Vuori, 2014). There is considerable partnership practice already occurring at UoW and WSU. Currently these practices all occur in discrete locations or places institutionally with a variety of structures. A place where these student engagement activities are accessible alongside each other will provide clarity of understanding and increase accessibility for students.

Such a Centre would aid in redressing the partnership balance of the university's portfolio of student engagement initiatives. As explored, not every student engagement partnership activity operates with a 50/50 equal partnership between student and staff or the Student Union and institution. However, in reviewing our own practices throughout this case study, we have become increasingly confident that 50/50 partnership is not always necessary for partnership to work more broadly. The natural inclinations of some engagement initiatives to lend themselves to a weighting in favour of students or staff works well when offered alongside schemes with the alternative weighting. In doing so, Winchester's culture of student engagement as a whole is contributing to the partnership aim, rather than one discrete activity adopting this mantle.

The team foresee a Centre for Student Engagement providing this student-facing service designed to increase participation in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities supported by research. Winchester can also continue at the forefront of developing new activities to enhance the student experience, by linking the above opportunities and expanding practice in student engagement.

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Appendix:

SLTAs 2015-16 Awards Full List:

WINCHESTER
STUDENT UNION

Student-Led Teaching Awards 2016

Thursday 24th March 2016 – The University Centre, the University of Winchester, Winchester, Hampshire, SO22 4NR

1. **Enrichment Activity of the Year:** A programme, faculty or institution run excursion, project, guest speakers or international enrichment activity run to involve students to develop their experience.
2. **Best use of resources:** Lecturer or tutor who has used an outstanding variety of physical and technological resources to engage students effectively in their learning and teaching.
3. **Best lecturer constructive and efficient feedback:** A lecturer who has given efficient, constructive, clear and timely feedback on assignments.
4. **Best delivered module of the year:** A module which was delivered in a way that offered students outstanding opportunities to achieve.
5. **Programme/Course administrator of the year:** Programme/Course administrator who has been helpful to students during the year in answering student queries, going above and beyond to help to resolve issues.
6. **Most helpful professional services staff member (careers, student services, catering, housing, academic tutoring, grounds keeping, librarian etc.):** Professional staff member who has helped or guided students to an outstanding standard, significantly improving students' university educational experience.
7. **Personal Tutor of the year:** Personal tutor who has gone above and beyond to provide pastoral care, personal support and advice to students in times of need.
8. **Programme of the Year:** The programme which students believe have demonstrated overall great learning and teaching, innovation, use of resources, feedback and tuition for students this year.
9. **Inspirational lecturer of the year:** A lecturer who has inspired students in their academic study area, going above and beyond to deliver innovative learning and teaching.
10. **Faculty of the year:** The Faculty which students believe has demonstrated overall great learning and teaching, student service, feedback and tuition for students this year.
11. **Future Focus Award:** A member of staff who has inspired future prospects through enhancing employability skills or motivating students for further study.
12. **Equality in Access award:** An individual who has gone above and beyond to ensure there is fair and equal access to education for all students.
13. **Research Supervisor of the Year:** A research supervisor who has been an incredible source for support and guidance for post-graduate research students.

BOOK REVIEW

Freedom to learn: The Threat to Student Academic Freedom and Why it Needs to be Reclaimed by Bruce Macfarlane

London: Routledge/SRHE 2016 (139 pages)
ISBN: 978-0-415-72916-1

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Macfarlane's Freedom to Learn was a fascinating read for me. It concerns itself with various aspects of academic freedom and the main pitfalls of what we understand as the modern student-centred approach. This book calls attention to problems that are commonly disregarded under the banner of student consumerism and infringements of student freedom, be they political freedom, personal freedom, or the freedom to learn. Macfarlane spends time with each freedom in turn, providing nuanced arguments for his points, supported with many representative examples. Refreshingly, the book avoids the pitfalls of generalisation by providing historical examples from Western and non-Western contexts, making the text equally relevant in any country with a massified higher education system.

The book has a very compact narrative with chapters progressing logically one after another, and maintaining a grasp of key themes throughout. Occasionally, Macfarlane darts away from the subject to comment on related issues facing higher education that enrich the reader's understanding of the background or history of the main issue at hand. Each chapter is prefaced with a short essay that sets the mood for the upcoming chapter. This brief discourse often discusses a book or historical figure, and beyond making me interested in what was to follow, also served to expand the list of books on my to-read list. The book was written by and targeted at academics, but I would argue that the narrative provided is still useful for students, and I don't think I took away any less from it by being a student. In fact, the book provided me with a certain amount of previously undiscovered self-awareness of my own learning style. For instance, one of the main arguments of the book, that student-centred education shifted from allowing the student to make their own choices about their education to meaning that "anything that gets students more involved in university is a good thing" (p. 50), spoke to me on a personal level, as it mirrored a majority of my private feelings on the topic. A large portion of what Macfarlane pointed out as an affront to student rights and academic freedom I previously perceived as a deficit in my abilities as a student. Throughout my undergraduate studies, I often felt not "good enough" simply due to my dislike of activities such as class discussions or group presentations. As such, this book challenged a lot of my innate ideals about higher education and my role as a student within it.

Some of the issues discussed in Macfarlane's book can be paralleled in the "students-as-partners" movement and thus deserve closer consideration. The book details the transformation of traditional principles of student-centred education and all the rights afforded to students and academics along with it into an entirely different beast, mostly due to the demands of mass education. Comparatively, students-as-partners programs are by definition small and individualised, making them nearly impossible to scale up without losing some of the core tenets of the initiative. As such, the student-as-partners movement stalls the same way that traditional student-centred principles do—when it finds itself at odds with massified higher education. Whilst the book doesn't offer too many practical recommendations to overcome this beyond a general "stay true to yourself" call, I feel that being aware of this shift is at least a step in the right direction and should help us develop large-scale students-as-partners initiatives in the future.

When I first received the book, I treated it like most other articles that I got to read during my undergraduate studies; that is, I took it to the outdoor café near my office building and binge-read it over the course of a couple of days whilst drinking numerous iced coffees, occasionally entertaining myself by surreptitiously watching my professors walk by. As I progressed through the chapters, immersed in the rhetoric of student academic freedom, I must admit that those glances became more and more furtive. I felt almost rebellious reading the paperback in the open on campus, which speaks more about the content of Macfarlane's book than any organised discourse that I could provide on the uniqueness of his arguments. The book made me consider the general state of higher education, as well as my own place in it. It allowed me to revisit some of my own internalised biases and let me understand them through a number of different lenses. In conclusion, I found Macfarlane's book a compelling read even though it was not written with someone like me in mind. I think that academics, especially those involved in course design and those interacting with students on a frequent basis, would benefit from the discourse offered here; similarly, students wishing to understand the more abstract notions shaping higher education today would do well to pick up a copy.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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BOOK REVIEW

Freedom to Learn: The Threat to Student Academic Freedom and Why it Needs to be Reclaimed by Bruce Macfarlane

London: Routledge/SRHE 2016 (139 pages)
ISBN: 978-0-415-72916-1

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A while back, after listening to a formal presentation on student employability, I asked whether a graduating student who decides to become a hermit should be considered a failure. By reply I was told not to be facetious. I admit that the way I posed the question might have sounded facetious, but I was trying to ask a serious question. This new book by Bruce Macfarlane might equally be considered facetious, but he is asking a very serious question: Instead of encouraging the freedom to learn are we actually undermining it?

My guess is that this book will make more than a few people in education feel a little uncomfortable. And so it should. The book challenges us to consider a number of things we seem to be taking for granted. Of course students should attend class. Of course students should engage in group work. And of course students should see their college or university as a mirror of the workplace. But why, asks Macfarlane. Who is deciding that this is “good” for students (or learners, as students are increasingly called). And just how strong is the evidence? Since the work of Stephen Ball (amongst others), we have become accustomed to talking about teachers and academics suffering from the terrors of performativity (i.e., having to shape our behaviour in inauthentic ways to fit the requirements of regulatory agencies). What Macfarlane offers us here are clear examples of the ways that students are also increasingly required to act in similar ways in order to be seen to succeed. In case the point is not clear, Macfarlane provides us with a striking example of a student who felt uncomfortable writing reflectively about her own family in her assignments (as she was asked to by the tutor) and who responded by making up stories (and getting higher marks as a result!).

Macfarlane is measured throughout in his damning critique of a lot of what now passes as evidence of good practice in higher education. This review is short so I will be pithy in support of Macfarlane’s positions. If a student is shy or reticent what business is it of ours to make them more extroverted? If students find lectures boring and would rather be elsewhere why can’t they have that choice? Why are we so obsessed with forcing students to do group presentations all the time? In essence, we are speaking here of unwarranted demands for students to engage in forms of participative performativity, bodily performativity, and emotional performativity.

Clearly, the title of the book harks back to Carl Rogers' original text with the same title, and I was worried at first that Macfarlane's critique would include Rogers himself. I've often thought that Rogers would turn in his grave if he knew what was now being done in his name, and I was quickly reassured that Macfarlane would appear to agree. To cut to the chase, students are now expected to perform and parade themselves merely in the name of student-centeredness, which at worst includes a moral marshalling of students to uncritically adopt politically correct positions, like global citizenship. And in case you're wondering, here is the answer to my employability question: yes, the hermit is a failure.

Reading this book has caused me to reflect on how the terms "student engagement" and "students as partners" might also be used simply to encourage students to participate, be active, and perform in ways which will earn them high marks and help market themselves to prospective employers in a process of self-commodification. I welcome this corrective, because it provokes us to ask what exactly we are asking students to be partners in. But, I would rather see terms like "student engagement" and "students as partners" sitting at the fulcrum of a see-saw, which at one end might encourage inauthentic forms of learning, but at the other might encourage a completely subversive critical interrogation of knowledge. The terms themselves therefore should be considered neutral, but their adoption in the name of various causes should always be questioned.

Furthermore, whereas I would agree with Macfarlane that there is an increasing tendency for related ideas, like "reflective practice" and "class contact," to be hijacked for the purposes of marshalling student behaviours in unwarranted ways (e.g., encouraging confessional forms of writing, and punishing students who don't turn up to class), this shouldn't lead us to believe that the underlying concepts of engagement and partnership are to blame. I say this in support of those who use reflective practice as the means to question the conditions of knowledge production, and in support of authors like Graham Gibbs who has been at pains to point out that there is sound research evidence that certain forms of class contact do indeed have positive effects on learning. Of course, this evidence does not include sitting passively in large lecture halls, and on that Macfarlane and Gibbs might well agree.

I used the word "passively" in the last sentence because I completely agree with Macfarlane on the hijacking of this word, particularly on the idea that somebody sitting quietly in a contemplative manner should be considered unengaged. Outwardly, perhaps yes, but they might be fully engaged in ways that cannot be easily measured, nor indeed, in ways that the person would want to be measured. This is freedom to learn, and I agree that this aspect of learning needs reclaiming.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

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