Pedagogical Partnerships

A HOW-TO GUIDE

for Faculty, Students, and Academic Developers
in Higher Education

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INTRODUCTION

> If we all engaged in partnerships through which we . . .
> discuss how teaching and learning experiences can
> include and value everyone, our campuses would become
> places of belonging. (Ana Colón García 2017, 5)

As if to realize the vision that former student partner Ana Colón García describes in the quote above, the last decade has seen a proliferation of student-faculty partnerships in teaching, learning, research, and reform. Institutions of higher education and individuals around the world have developed programs and projects through which students, faculty, and staff participate in various forms of co-creation: of teaching and learning approaches; of scholarly analysis, presentations, and publications; and of individual, programmatic, and institutional transformation. These programs and projects not only link student engagement and faculty development through partnership's capacity to foster belonging (Cook-Sather and Felten 2017b), they invite an understanding of student engagement *as* partnership (Matthews 2016) and a reimagining of the place of students in academic development (Felten et al. 2019). The three of us have learned through our own partnership experiences and have seen at a wide range of institutions—from small, liberal arts colleges like our own to large, public universities and from across the world in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Canada, England, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, Scotland, Sweden, and the United States—that partnership work has great potential to make our campuses places of belonging in which a diversity of learners and teachers can thrive. Participating in pedagogical partnership can enhance disciplinary and process learning for students, inform faculty learning about teaching and about students, and shape conversations

about and approaches to developing institutions of higher education, particularly—and pressingly—in relation to fostering more equitable and inclusive teaching and learning environments.

We focus in this book on sharing our experiences of and advice for developing pedagogical partnerships in the classroom and in the curriculum. While every institution will have its own hopes, constraints, and goals and, consequently, need to develop its own approach to designing and supporting its pedagogical partnership program, we suggest that there are some basic questions to consider across contexts for those planning to support pedagogical partnerships focused on classroom teaching and on curriculum design and redesign. This how-to guide offers our responses to those questions not as prescriptions but rather as recommendations informed by over ten years of experience and by research on a variety of programs in a range of contexts. We hope our recommendations can, in turn, inform the ongoing process of dialogue and revision necessary for starting and sustaining such pedagogical partnership work in all kinds of higher education institutions.

As we explain in detail in the section below called "How is this how-to guide organized?" we offer this main text with overarching questions and our basic responses, and we include a set of thirty-four resources that you can access separately if you want to dig into greater detail. We refer you to those resources by name (e.g., Steps in Launching Pedagogical Partnership Programs) at relevant points throughout this main text.

What does pedagogical partnership have to offer?

Research across institutional and national contexts (Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten 2014; Healey, Flint, and Harrington 2014) and systematic reviews of the growing body of literature on partnership work (e.g., Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2017) have argued that pedagogical partnership can achieve a wide range of benefits.

In chapter 1 we argue that, for us, the most persuasive reason to develop a pedagogical partnership program is the potential of participation in such programs to affirm and empower all those involved and to support their development into versions of the selves they want to be. In particular, pedagogical partnership can foster in students a sense

of belonging, support faculty in generative reflection, and contribute to the evolution of an institution into a place where members of the community feel a meaningful connection. What is the range of what pedagogical partnership has to offer in relation to these overall benefits? Below we provide a list of benefits—to faculty partners, student partners, academic developers, and the institutions at which they work—that we have experienced ourselves or heard about from people in other institutions. These are not exhaustive lists, and we invite you to think about what else you might add, either as benefits you have experienced or know about or as possibilities you could imagine.

Participating in pedagogical partnership can support faculty in:
- Acclimating more quickly to campus culture and unfamiliar students
- Developing confidence and clarity about their pedagogical commitments
- Finding the courage to follow through on their pedagogical convictions and responsibilities
- Gaining a perspective that they cannot achieve on their own
- Receiving formative feedback on teaching
- Recognizing good pedagogical practices and making them intentional
- Sharing power—and responsibility—with students
- Turning pedagogical learnings into publishing opportunities
- Developing greater empathy, understanding, and appreciation for students
- Building resilience through navigating difficult and ambiguous institutional situations

Participating in pedagogical partnership can support students in:
- Gaining confidence in and capacity to articulate their perspectives
- Developing deeper understanding of learning and themselves as learners
- Developing deeper understanding of teaching

- Developing greater empathy for faculty and other students
- Sharing power—and responsibility—with faculty
- Experiencing more agency and taking more leadership
- Feeling stronger connections to departments and institutions
- Getting to "take" as well as observe a course they otherwise might never experience
- Turning pedagogical learnings into opportunities to host workshops, lead panels, publish, and more
- Developing creative and innovative ways to troubleshoot pedagogical challenges
- Building resilience through navigating difficult and ambiguous institutional situations

Facilitating pedagogical partnership can support program directors in:
- Expanding and deepening their own pedagogical explorations
- Shifting focus from their own to others' pedagogical explorations
- Connecting with students
- Addressing larger campus issues
- Clarifying what counts as meaningful work
- Building meaningful relationships with faculty and staff
- Developing creative and innovative ways to troubleshoot pedagogical challenges
- Addressing cultural and institutional assumptions about students and faculty

Supporting pedagogical partnership programs can help institutions in:
- Nurturing faculty who are more settled, satisfied, and engaged
- Nurturing students who are more confident, engaged, and connected to their departments and institution
- Fostering belonging and retention of students and faculty

- Supporting distribution/rhizomatic spread of understanding of teaching and learning
- Contributing to individual empowerment, which in turn leads to new projects/initiatives that enhance the whole institution
- Distinguishing themselves to prospective students and faculty and in the wider world of higher education

These benefits are not achieved automatically or easily. To support program directors, faculty, and students in achieving them, we offer in this how-to guide responses to questions about:

- the reasons for developing pedagogical partnership programs and what might get in the way;
- the main problematic assumptions people make about this work;
- how to situate and structure a pedagogical partnership program, including how the program might fit into the larger institution, what relationship the program might have to other programs, and how to develop a plan for getting started and for sustainability;
- what the shared and respective responsibilities of facilitating pedagogical partnerships might be;
- the particular responsibilities of participants;
- approaches that student and faculty partners might use;
- how to manage the challenges of partnership; and
- approaches to evaluating partnership work.

We bookend these how-to discussions with reference to what research has shown to be the benefits of pedagogical partnership in chapter 1 and glimpses into the range of positive and negative outcomes of pedagogical partnership, as articulated by faculty, student, and program directors, in the "Outcomes of Pedagogical Partnership Work" resource. Throughout the book we refer to other sources of insight and examples of experience for digging deeper into the questions raised and the literature published on this work.

Is this how-to guide for you?

This guide is written for all those who aim to develop pedagogical partnership programs focused on classroom teaching and on curriculum

construction and revision or who plan to include those forms among a range of partnership program options. It addresses directly the three main constituencies who have typically been involved in such pedagogical partnerships—student partners, faculty partners, and program directors—but librarians, instructional technologists, directors of offices on campus such as access services, and deans can adapt the guidelines for their purposes, as colleagues at our own and other institutions have done. So, while their titles are not listed in the title of the book, please invite colleagues in a wide range of institutional roles to think with you about how they too could be part of developing pedagogical partnership projects and programs.

We acknowledge that each of the constituencies we address is in a different institutional position, but the roles and responsibilities of pedagogical partnership do not fall so neatly within the parameters of these positions. Indeed, that's one of the premises of pedagogical partnership: that traditional roles blur, and all participants share some of the same as well as some different responsibilities. So, while some guidelines are role specific, and chapters designate those responsibilities as such, all guidelines might be of interest and use to people across roles and positions. We offer a few words of advice to each of the main constituencies we aim to address:

Tips for undergraduate student readers:
As you read, consider how your experiences as a student and the intersections of the various dimensions of your identity give you a unique perspective on what it means to be a learner at your institution. How do you see your experiences as a student reflected in the perspectives shared in this text? What experiences and skills might you draw on if you participated in partnership work?

Who among the students, faculty, staff, and institutional leaders that you know might be interested in this kind of work, and how can you invite them into conversation about it?

Tips for faculty and staff readers:

As you read, think about where in your practice you already engage in work that might be considered—but not, perhaps, named—"partnership" with students. How might you use this guide to build on those existing relationships?

Where on your campus is this work already being done, or where could it be undertaken? Might you invite colleagues in other departments or offices on campus to consider how to integrate such partnership work into their approaches?

Tips for program directors:

Many of the institutional and structural responsibilities for partnership work will fall within your realm, so as you read, consider how to use and perhaps revise the questions offered to most effectively frame, introduce, and pilot partnership work on your campus. Are there particular campus norms to which you should attend or respond?

Faculty, students, and staff on different campuses have varied reactions to lived experiences and research evidence. What might be the most effective use in your context of the stories of experience and the research evidence we present here?

Who are we as authors?

In keeping with the cross-role collaboration that defines pedagogical partnership work, this how-to guide is co-authored by three differently positioned participants in pedagogical partnership with extensive input from other program directors, student partners, and faculty partners.

Alison is a professor of education at Bryn Mawr College and director of Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT), the signature program of the Teaching and Learning Institute (TLI) at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges. She co-created SaLT with students and other colleagues in 2006 and has facilitated the program since then. In addition, she has designed and taught courses in collaboration with students and has served as a

consultant at institutions across the United States and around the world as others develop pedagogical partnership programs. Finally, Alison has engaged in extensive research on pedagogical partnership (cited throughout this book), and she is founding editor and founding co-editor, respectively, of two journals focused on pedagogical partnership: *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education* and *International Journal for Students as Partners.*

Melanie is a former student partner in SaLT, and she graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 2016 with a degree in linguistics. As an undergraduate she worked in partnership with faculty members in two different departments. In addition to co-authoring an article on partnership with Alison and another former student partner (Cook-Sather, Des-Ogugua, and Bahti 2018), she has presented at conferences and consulted on partnership, and she serves as a reviewer for *International Journal for Students as Partners.* After she graduated from Bryn Mawr, she worked for two years as a staff member in the Library & Information Technology Services Department at Bryn Mawr College, where she put her partnership skills into practice daily. In this role she also spent two semesters as an observer and co-researcher of SaLT program forums. She recently completed a master's degree in higher education at the University of Pennsylvania and now works in the Center for Teaching & Learning at Thomas Jefferson University.

Anita graduated from Bryn Mawr College in 2018 with a degree in psychology. As an undergraduate student partner in SaLT she worked in partnership with faculty in four different departments, and she served as the convener of weekly student partner meetings when Alison was on sabbatical. In addition to her experience as a student partner, she has engaged in research, both as a fellow of the Teaching and Learning Institute in the summer of 2017 and during the academic year. Anita has presented her work on partnership at conferences (Ntem 2017), co-authored articles on pedagogical partnership (Cook-Sather, Ntem, and Felten in preparation; Ntem and Cook-Sather 2018), served as a facilitator of the International Summer Institute on Students as Partners at McMaster University in Canada, and is co-editor for *International Journal for Students as Partners.*

The three of us drafted pieces of the book separately and also met regularly to help one another dig into the details of what we have come to take for granted about partnership work in the SaLT program. Sitting together around a round table, naming principles and practices, complicating and deepening one another's thinking, and arranging and rearranging structures, sections, and chapters of this book to create the most useful organization for others, we enacted another form of partnership. Honoring and drawing on one another's perspectives, insights, and commitments, we worked together to decide how best to share those with others.

This guide is also informed by the perspectives of numerous other academic developers, faculty, staff, and student colleagues who have developed, facilitated, and participated in pedagogical partnerships at a range of colleges and universities around the world. These colleagues are quoted throughout the text both in acknowledgement of their experiences and expertise and to offer readers additional resources for developing and supporting pedagogical partnerships.

What approaches to pedagogical partnership does this guide focus on?

As the idea of pedagogical partnership spreads around the world, an increasing variety of approaches to enacting this idea has emerged (see Healey, Flint, and Harrington 2014, for one mapping of this variety). This guide focuses on the approach we have developed through the SaLT program, which invites undergraduate students to take up the paid position of pedagogical consultant to faculty who teach at Bryn Mawr or Haverford College. We offer in the "History and Structure of the SaLT Program" resource a narrative of how the program came into being, but here we offer just a quick overview of the two particular forms of pedagogical partnership the program supports:

Classroom-Focused Pedagogical Partnership
- Faculty and student pairs work together in long-term (typically semester-long or sometimes yearlong) partnerships to analyze,

affirm, and, where appropriate, revise pedagogical approaches as the faculty member teaches the focal course.

- Student partners do some or all of the following:
    » convene for weekly one-hour meetings with the program director and other student partners to brainstorm, exchange, and troubleshoot ideas to inform their partnership work;
    » conduct weekly visits to their faculty partners' classrooms and take detailed observation notes focused on pedagogical issues their faculty partners—and subsequently both partners—identify;
    » expand upon and deliver their observation notes to their partners each week;
    » meet weekly with their faculty partners to discuss the observation notes, what is working well and why in their faculty partners' teaching, and what might be revised in relation to classroom practice, assignments, and assessment;
    » conduct mid-semester or other forms of feedback;
    » research pedagogical approaches in the faculty partners' disciplines to inform current or future teaching; and
    » work with their faculty partners to apply all of what they have explored during their partnerships to future pedagogical practice.

Curriculum-Focused Pedagogical Partnership

- Faculty members work with individual students or teams of students to design or redesign a course.
- Faculty partners invite students—either those who may be interested in taking the course and have an important perspective or those who have recently completed the course—to work with them to conceptualize, reconceptualize, or otherwise develop or revise the course.
- Student and faculty partners
    » decide on the approach they will take, what dimensions of the course they want to focus on, and how they will divide up the work;

» identify needs to be addressed (e.g., how to engage students in answering questions at the interface of chemistry and biology that do not simply have a "right" and "wrong" answer; how to make courses in STEM fields, which are traditionally unwelcoming to underrepresented students, more welcoming to a diversity of students);

» identify actions to address the needs (e.g., create a set of qualitative open-ended "key concept" questions that can be included in the weekly problem set assignments; redesign assignments and activities to value and affirm a wider range of learning approaches);

» meet weekly or biweekly to discuss progress; and

» generate plans for new courses or revisions of components of existing courses.

The particular approach the SaLT program enacts has been developed and expanded at other institutions. We offer in the "Five Stories of Developing Pedagogical Partnership Programs" resource descriptions of five other partnership programs or initiatives: the Student Partners Program at McMaster University in Canada; Co-create UVA at the University of Virginia in the United States; a nationally funded Learning and Teaching Fellowship in Australia; a partnership program at Kaye Academic College of Education, Be'er Sheva, Israel; and a program focused on curriculum co-creation at Victoria University of Wellington in Aotearoa New Zealand.

How is this how-to guide organized?

We have organized this guide around the kinds of questions program director, faculty, and student colleagues pose regarding how to develop classroom-focused and curriculum-focused pedagogical partnerships and around the key insights we have gained through our years of engaging in and supporting pedagogical partnership work. These include:

• Why might you develop a pedagogical partnership program and what might get in the way? (Chapter 1)

- How do you know what kind of partnership program is right for your context, and why might faculty and students want to participate? (Chapter 2)
- How can you situate and structure the program, how do you get started, and how might you plan for sustainability? (Chapter 3)
- What are the shared responsibilities of facilitating pedagogical partnerships? (Chapter 4)
- What approaches might program directors take to plan for and support pedagogical partnerships? (Chapter 5)
- What approaches might student and faculty partners use in classroom-focused partnerships? (Chapter 6)
- What approaches might student and faculty partners take to curriculum-focused partnerships? (Chapter 7)
- How might you manage the challenges of partnership? (Chapter 8)
- How might you assess pedagogical partnership work? (Chapter 9)

We offer both a core text (in pdf format) with basic responses to these questions and a set of resources (posted online at https://www.CenterForEngagedLearning.org/books/pedagogical-partnerships) that offer much greater detail. The online resources are linked throughout the pdf chapters and are signaled by name (e.g., the "Templates and Activities to Explore Hopes, Concerns, and Strategies for Developing Pedagogical Partnership Programs" resource).

To highlight insights from experienced student and faculty partners and program directors who have launched pedagogical partnership programs, we weave these participants' perspectives into the main narrative across all the chapters and include extensive quotes. Some of these follow directly on and substantiate a point of discussion that precedes them, and some of them are drawn from different contexts to illustrate or corroborate a point being made. In both cases, these quotations are intended to offer glimpses into the lived experiences of partnership and the insights participants have gained, and thereby bring pedagogical partnership alive for you as readers.

Pronouns present a particular challenge in a guide written for this range of participants in pedagogical partnership by a collective of three people. Throughout we use "we" to refer to ourselves as authors and

participants in SaLT. We use "you" to frame the questions that organize the chapters. Within the chapters, we write sometimes to a general audience (an implied and inclusive "you") and at other times to a particular constituency (e.g., "you as a student"). Our goal is to signal that there are some questions that might best be considered collectively, as a team (e.g., "How might you conceptualize facilitation of pedagogical partnership?") and others that will be the primary concern of one or another of the participants. Regardless of which pronoun might frame a question, we encourage you to be in dialogue with others involved in the development of your pedagogical partnership program as much as possible. As Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten (2014, 2) have argued, "Partnership is built on and through communication."

With this how-to guide, we offer an invitation to and a set of recommendations for individuals and institutions that aspire to realize the benefits of pedagogical partnership that we listed in the opening pages of this chapter. These include fostering the development of confidence, capacity, and empathy in faculty and students alike, thereby making them better able to work together to create productively challenging, equitable, and inclusive pedagogical and curricular approaches. The benefits include as well nurturing dialogue and deeper understanding across differences of position, identity, and perspective not only of faculty and students but also among others in institutions of higher education. These benefits, realized in the "as-if" spaces of pedagogical partnership (Cook-Sather and Felten 2017a), hold promise for the ways we can work together in higher education beyond pedagogical partnership programs—through the co-creation of pedagogical and curricular approaches that, as Ana Colón García (2017) notes in the quote that opens this introduction, develop capacity and foster a sense of belonging for all.

Over the years that we have worked to refine these guidelines for faculty, students, and academic developers, Alison has been invited to share versions of what we include in these pages at over sixty institutions in thirteen countries. All three of us have found that this growing interest intersects with increasing calls to create more equitable and inclusive practices in institutions of higher education, both to support the thriving of all members of the academic community and to redress

the harms institutions of higher education can cause to underrepresented students in particular (de Bie et al. 2019; Marquis et al., under review). We welcome you to use these resources to create your own version of this work firmly grounded in principles of respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility (Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten 2014)—to join the growing number of individuals and institutions seeking to realize the potential of pedagogical partnership.