

Pedagogical Partnerships

A HOW-TO GUIDE

for Faculty, Students, and Academic Developers
in Higher Education

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WHAT APPROACHES MIGHT PROGRAM DIRECTORS TAKE TO PLAN FOR AND SUPPORT PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIPS?

Particular to the role of program director are the administrative duties of a pedagogical partnership program, in addition to the pedagogical and facilitative responsibilities shared by all participants. Typically, the program director is responsible for positioning, managing, and troubleshooting the pedagogical partnership program, communicating with those in other offices, such as student payroll and administration, and managing the overall logistics of the program. The most basic responsibilities of the program director are to:

- **Manage:** Situate and oversee the program, handle its budget and hiring procedures, and ensure that there is communication within and beyond the program.
- **Organize:** Invite and match student and faculty partners.
- **Prepare:** Provide initial guidance and structures within which student-faculty pairs embark upon their work.
- **Facilitate:** Host and engage in the regular meetings of student partners and, in some cases, faculty partners.

In this chapter, we detail approaches that program directors can take to these four sets of responsibilities in relation to classroom- and curriculum-focused pedagogical partnerships.

How can program directors invite and respond to prospective participants in pedagogical partnership?

After considering all of the larger framing issues we have discussed in chapters 1, 2, 3, and 4, program directors will want to consider the daily work of organizing and managing pedagogical partnerships. We

focus in this chapter on questions that program directors will want to address, sometimes on their own and sometimes in collaboration with others involved in the partnership program. For both classroom- and curriculum-focused partnership, program directors will want to invite or respond to prospective faculty and student partners and support them in general ways as their work unfolds. There are also specific ways that program directors may want to support these different kinds of pedagogical partnerships as they unfold.

How do you invite or respond to prospective faculty partners?

Different programs take different approaches to identifying and inviting prospective faculty members to participate in pedagogical partnership. At Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges, in exchange for a reduced teaching load in their first year, all incoming faculty members have the option of applying to participate in a semester-long pedagogy seminar that meets weekly and is linked to a semester-long pedagogical partnership with an undergraduate student (Cook-Sather 2016a). This invitation is issued by the provost when the faculty member visits campus and explained and discussed further with the provost during hiring negotiations. If faculty choose to participate in this option, they are assured a pedagogical partnership with a student. In addition, at Bryn Mawr and Haverford, any faculty member at any point in their career, no matter what the nature of their appointment (tenure track, continuing non-tenure track, visiting, full-time, part-time, etc.) may request to work with a student partner through the SaLT program. This information is posted on our website. Aside from the incoming faculty, we do not directly invite faculty members to participate in the program; they choose to participate and contact Alison.

At other institutions, program directors take different approaches. For instance, at Berea College, the program director invites experienced faculty and student partners to make a presentation at a faculty meeting and shares a one-page overview that includes comments from both faculty and student participants about their experience. At Smith College, they hold a teaching arts luncheon once a year, usually in the spring, to explain pedagogical partnership, and they feature two pairs

of student and faculty partners, who share their experiences. Each May, the director of the pedagogical partnership program at Smith runs a two-day institute for interested colleagues (see the “[Summer Institute for Faculty Participants in Pedagogical Partnership](#)” resource, and about 90% of participants go on to participate in the program. At Lewis & Clark College, faculty hear about the program through word of mouth, an announcement at a faculty meeting (by a faculty member who has already participated), email, and the teaching and learning center website. The Ursinus College program director targets faculty who are in their first year with emails sent specifically to them and by attending one or two of their dean’s colloquium meetings and talking about the benefits of working with a student partner. Staff of their Teaching and Learning Institute also talk about the program at their open house and any events that they host. At the beginning of every semester, the director sends out an advertisement with a link to a form to request a partner. Her sense is that many faculty sign up either because of positive word of mouth from their colleagues or encouragement from their department chairs if their teaching evaluations haven’t been as strong as they would like.

The “[Inviting Faculty and Students to Participate in Pedagogical Partnership](#)” resource includes examples of messages to send to prospective student and faculty participants. Examples include those messages developed by Sophia Abbot, former student partner in SaLT and subsequently fellow for collaborative programs in the Collaborative for Learning and Teaching at Trinity University; Kathy Oleson and Libby Drumm, the first two directors of Reed College’s Student Consultants for Teaching and Learning program; and Diane Skorina, staff co-director of Ursinus College’s pedagogical partnership program, and Susanna Throop, former director of Ursinus’ pedagogical partnership program.

We recommend that program directors develop an approach that is in keeping with their institution’s norms of communicating opportunities and, as the examples above suggest, that uses multiple venues and modes. As we discussed in the previous chapters of this book, the ways you conceptualize, situate, and name your pedagogical partnership work should resonate and, where appropriate, productively challenge norms in your context.

How do you identify prospective student partners or respond to their requests to participate?

In chapter 2, the “[History and Structure of the SaLT Program](#)” resource, and the “[How the SaLT Program Got Started](#)” resource, we discuss in detail the origin and development of the SaLT program. As we explain, it was piloted by a group of five faculty members from different departments who wanted to make their classrooms more welcoming and responsive to a diversity of students. At the recommendation of student focus groups, a group of student consultants who identified as people of color worked with these faculty members (Cook-Sather 2018a; 2019a). That beginning established for SaLT a reputation as a “counter space,” which Solórzano et al. (2000, 70) define as academic and social spaces on and off campus “where deficit notions of people of color can be challenged and where a positive collegiate racial climate can be established and maintained.” Because of that reputation, students of color have continued to apply to participate, and they are overrepresented as student partners (relative to their overall representation at the colleges).

Therefore, the first answer to the question of how program directors identify or respond to prospective student partners is to consider what message the advent of your program sends and to be intentional about that, since it will contribute to the reputation the program develops on campus. Relatedly, it will affect which students will hear about the program from their friends and be encouraged to apply. The explicit and implicit goals of the program, as we discussed in chapter 1, will affect which students are compelled by the program. As Matthews (2017a, 3) argues:



Fostering inclusive [pedagogical partnership work] begins with acknowledging the diversity of our student and staff populations, and then reflecting on the design of our [partnership] programs, to reveal ways in which they may unintentionally be catering to certain students and staff while excluding others.

A second answer to the question of how you identify prospective student partners is to invite current student partners to make recommendations. Clearly, this is only possible after you have run the program for a semester or more, but program directors can also invite students to participate in focus groups, as we did to conceptualize the SaLT program, prior to launching the program and get a sense from students about who among them might be well positioned to participate in the program and be interested in doing so. Student recommendation is our preferred approach in the SaLT program because student partners know best what the role requires and entails. They can convey those requirements and expectations to their peers in ways that a program director or faculty member cannot. This is another way, then, that student expertise can have a role in shaping who participates in the program and what kinds of issues will get foregrounded as a result.

A third way to identify student partners is to ask faculty for recommendations. It is important that faculty and staff understand the explicit and implicit goals of the program so that they think about a diversity of students to recommend. If faculty and staff do not have a clear understanding of the goals of the program, they might make assumptions about who the “best” student partners might be. Students designated “best” often hold leadership positions on campus, earn high grades, and fit a fairly standard profile of “the successful student.” We use all these quotation marks here to signal our perspective that such narrow definitions of success can be problematic in and of themselves, and they can also exclude students who have essential experiences and perspectives to share.

Sophia Abbot, former student partner in SaLT and subsequently fellow for collaborative programs at the Collaborative for Learning and Teaching at Trinity University in Texas, also seeks faculty recommendations for student partners in the Tigers as Partners program. Her invitation is reproduced here:

Hi All,

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in this first iteration of Tigers as Partners! My first step for getting this started is

collecting applications from students who are interested in participating. For that, I need your help!

If you have any students (sophomores and above) whom you feel would make good partners to faculty, I would appreciate you recommending they apply. Great student partners are thoughtful, empathetic, organized, and strong communicators. There is no minimum GPA required, nor do the students you recommend need be your strongest students -- indeed, often students who have had to struggle somewhat in a class before succeeding, or who don't necessarily identify as future PhDs, make the best partners to faculty. The student job posting can be found here: [link to jobs website]

Student applications are due December 5th.

I will be reviewing applications and personally interviewing all potential students, so also feel free to be liberal with your recommendations. Thanks, in advance, for your help!

Sincerely,
Sophia

It is likely that you will combine these approaches, as Floyd Cheung, founding director of the Student-Faculty Pedagogical Partnership Program at Smith College, does:



At the end of the May institute for faculty partners and before I make assignments for the coming year, I ask colleagues to suggest students that they believe will be good at being partners. Before student partners finish their stint at the end of a semester, I ask them to suggest peers that they believe can do their job. I send to all recommended students a letter of invitation to apply to serve as a pedagogical partner in the Smith College program. (Personal communication)

We mention above that numerous students of color seek out the SaLT program for the counter space it provides. Many of these students may fit the standard profile of “the successful student,” problematic as it is, but experience a wide range of challenges because of the overall unwelcoming nature of the institutions to underrepresented students. One of the research projects in which Alison and several student partners, including Anita, have been engaged focuses on the experiences of underrepresented and underserved students who participate as student partners (Cook-Sather et al. 2019), and Alison has drawn on their perspectives to argue for an expanded definition of “success” (Cook-Sather 2018b). When we recognize underrepresented and underserved students, such as students of color, for instance, as “holders and creators of knowledge” (Delgado-Bernal 2002, 106) essential to developing inclusive and responsive approaches to classroom practice (Cook-Sather and Agu 2013; Cook-Sather et al. 2017), we take steps to counter epistemic injustice by positioning these students as having expertise and value as knowers and producers of knowledge (de Bie et al. 2019; Marquis et al., under review).

A final way to invite and respond to prospective student partners is to have a public web presence or a physical display with information about the role and an open invitation to apply. We have this information on the SaLT program web page, and all students are welcome to apply. There are no GPA or other requirements, and while there is an application form, it is not intended to exclude students but rather to initiate the reflective process that will be essential to productive participation in pedagogical partnership. (See the [“SaLT Program Student Consultant Application Form”](#) resource.)

Across all of these approaches, program directors will want to keep in mind that any invitation and selection will send a message and have implications both for those involved and those not involved. We end this section with a quote taken from *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching: A Guide for Faculty*:



Think carefully about the implications of choosing, and by implication not choosing, particular groups of students, and expect to be surprised as you learn more

about your partners and yourself in this work. If you are not working with an entire class of students, you will need to consider carefully what criteria you will use to select students and be transparent about this. (Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten 2014, 150)

How can program directors support participants as their partnerships unfold?

It is essential that faculty and students see that program directors have thought about how to support them and are responsive to their experiences and suggestions. If they know they can offer real feedback and that program directors will make changes, that inspires trust and confidence.

How do you make clear to faculty and student partners that they can seek your support or mediation?

It is especially important that program directors provide support if there are differences of expectation, style, approach, etc. between student and faculty partners. Program directors may need to mediate conversations in which each participant in the partnership restates their hopes and goals and through which the program director helps to reinforce the premises established for the partnership program. Program directors may also need to support an individual faculty partner or student partner if one or the other of the participants in a partnership feels particularly vulnerable or poses particular challenges. It is helpful if program directors convey to participants their willingness to take on these roles at the outset and regularly as partnerships unfold, and if they discern any tensions or issues. Depending on the size of your program, this can be challenging, so it is helpful to think through what is manageable in terms of offering support.

For faculty partners, it can be especially helpful for program directors to clarify goals, reaffirm that this work should be driven by faculty priorities, and reiterate that it is intended to support faculty in analyzing their practice. For student partners, it can be especially helpful for program directors to emphasize that everything that happens is a learning experience—part of building insight, vocabulary, and capacity for working across differences of perspective and position/power. In general, being

transparent that the spaces program directors create to share vulnerabilities and concerns are confidential helps to build trust. Are there fears? What are participants nervous about? What are their thoughts? Letting them know that this is an emotionally intensive experience that develops in them life skills can help put tensions in perspective. (We return to this point in chapter 8.)

What kinds of informal and formal feedback mechanisms should you develop?

We discuss this question in detail in chapter 9, but here we mention several ways in which we recommend gathering feedback.

1. **Offer occasional, reflective prompts** to invite participants to gather their thoughts just for themselves about how things are going. Both student and faculty partners have indicated that such moments of stepping back have afforded them much-needed pauses in what otherwise ends up being a quickly unfolding process in which they are deeply engaged and on which they do not have the opportunity to gain perspective.
2. **Have semi-formal, midterm feedback.** As with such approaches faculty might use in their courses (described in detail in chapter 6 and in the “[Gathering Feedback](#)” resource), these can be a way not only for individuals to reflect on their experiences and offer feedback but also for everyone involved to see how others are experiencing their partnership work.
3. **Gather end-of-of-term feedback** to offer participants another opportunity to step back from the work, this time to get a long view of how it unfolded over the course of the semester.

For all feedback, we recommend that program directors frame questions in terms of what is contributing to and what is detracting from the partnership work (not what students or faculty like or don't like). We also recommend being explicit about the purposes for gathering feedback. In the SaLT program, we explain that the purposes are: to give participants the opportunity to step back and look over the semester and their experience, get some perspective on both, and capture some of their thoughts for their own ongoing learning; to consider what they

might want to continue and what they might want to revise within the partnership approach; and to gather their perspectives to share with administrators and in reports (all anonymously).

How regularly do you need to communicate with administrators?

While it is essential that pedagogical partnership work unfolds in a brave space (Cook-Sather 2016b; Arao and Clemens 2013) separate from review for reappointment or promotion, it is also important that program directors keep clear lines of communication open with provosts, deans, and other administrators. Part of this communication is reiterating that the relationship between this program and review processes needs to be explicit and transparent. The way in which the program director fits within the overall leadership of the institution likewise needs to be explicit and transparent. For instance, Alison has made clear that she can never sit on the Committee on Appointments at Bryn Mawr College, which reviews all faculty for reappointment and promotion. If these things are not clear ahead of time, when worst case scenarios arise, decisions will have to be made on the fly, and it could be complicated. There are many different ways for such programs to be fit into an institutional structure and for program directors to work with administrators; there is no one right answer. The point is that it is important for those relationships to be thought through.

What can program directors do to plan for and support classroom-focused pedagogical partnerships?

For the most part, faculty and student partners do not come as pairs or teams to participate in classroom-focused pedagogical partnership, as they often do for curriculum-focused pedagogical partnership. Typically, they express their interest separately, and then one of the roles of the director is to link them up and provide ongoing support.

For all pedagogical partnerships, program directors will want to consider how to compensate student and faculty partners. The three most common ways to compensate student time and expertise are to situate the position as a campus job, compensated with hourly pay through departmental, curriculum development, or provost's office budgets; to

enroll the student in a quarter-credit or a half-credit course; or to create a scholarship. The most common ways to compensate faculty partners, if the institution does so, is through course development grants and fellowship positions. (We discuss compensation in detail in chapter 3.)

How do you assign student and faculty pairs?

In the SaLT program, assignment of student-faculty pairs for classroom-focused pedagogical partnerships is almost entirely random, based on student and faculty schedules. This is intentional, although there are some exceptions. There are several reasons behind the intentionality: participants' busy schedules, the question of whether the student partner needs to be in the discipline of the faculty partner, and power dynamics. We address each of these below.

How might you manage participants' busy schedules?

Both student and faculty schedules are such that pairing within a cohort of participants is extremely challenging. In SaLT, the majority of student and faculty participants in any given semester apply the semester prior to participating in the program, and so the director's role is to match up pairs over the summer or during winter break. Once Alison has a list of all participating faculty, the courses they wish to focus on, and the meeting times of those courses, she sends student partners this list in the form of a table and asks all student partners to write their names next to each course time they are available. She also asks student partners to indicate if they have background experiences that might make them particularly well suited or less well suited to any given partnership, in case there is flexibility in terms of scheduling.

In the Tigers as Partners program at Trinity University, Sophia Abbot took a slightly different approach. She started by listing all the student partners whose schedules would allow them to pair with a particular faculty member, and then (because she had the privilege of getting to know faculty through new faculty orientation and other programs, and because she interviewed all the student partners), she thought about which students might pair best with a particular professor based on personality. For example, she avoided pairing a confident and vocal male student with some new and more uncertain female faculty members to

avoid reproducing problematic interactions that such female faculty have learned to be especially wary of. Alternatively, she paired some really enthusiastic and outgoing faculty with more stoic students to balance the energy in the partnerships and offer the faculty and students some alternative perspective on how to be. Finally, in one case of a white male professor who wanted to work with a student partner to think through authentically facilitating a class on diversity in the classical world, Sophia talked one-on-one with a black female student partner whom she knew was interested in these topics before pairing her to re-check whether she was willing to do this work; Sophia's intention was to avoid placing the student partner in a position of acting as a token student of color. And through all of this, Sophia paired students and faculty cross-disciplinarily.

The process Sophia used is more time-consuming than a more random one, but it helped her to facilitate some deep and fruitful relationships—several of which sustained in future semesters into deeper co-mentoring relationships. Interestingly, the more random pairing approach Alison uses has also proven successful in almost all cases and has also led to long-term, co-mentoring relationships. So, the particular approach to pairing may be less important than the support provided to participants that fosters deep and fruitful relationships.

Should student partners be in the discipline of their faculty partners?

In our experience in the classroom-focused partnerships through the SaLT program, it is typically more beneficial to faculty and student partners if the student partners do not have knowledge of the subject matter, although, as indicated above, some student partners might feel better or worse suited to a partnership based on previous experiences, and some faculty have specified that they need to work with a student partner who has some disciplinary knowledge. Almost all faculty members start out thinking it would be more helpful to have a student partner who knows the subject matter, but as the partnership unfolds, they come to see the benefits of having a student partner who does not make assumptions and can pose “naive” questions that would not likely occur to a faculty expert or a student with disciplinary knowledge. A former student

partner captures the power of having a perspective from outside the discipline in this way:

“While at first I felt out of my element, I discovered that observing teaching techniques, understanding student reactions and needs, and offering constructive feedback did not require an understanding of the discipline. In fact, my lack of familiarity with the subjects allowed me to consider the clarity of my partners’ instructional styles and highlight disciplinary norms that may have been challenging to new students. (Daviduke 2018, 156)

The exception to the typical, cross-disciplinary pairings in the classroom-focused strand of the SaLT program is when a faculty member wishes to focus on an advanced course on which they want curricular as well as pedagogical input. In this case, the student partner’s knowledge of content is necessary to achieve the goals of the partnership.

The curriculum-focused strand of the SaLT program typically has students with deep content knowledge, or at least who have taken the course, working with faculty. Because the focus of the work in this strand is how to best engage students around particular subject matter, faculty find it more productive to work with students inside the discipline. The course design/delivery consultants branch of McMaster University’s Student Partners Program started out with random pairings like SaLT, but they found that many faculty members preferred having student partners with disciplinary knowledge, so they shifted to offering faculty members a choice.

As with many aspects of pedagogical partnership, there is no one right way to do this work, but it is worth thinking through the benefits and drawbacks of, and developing a rationale for, whichever approach you decide to take.

What about power dynamics?

There are always power dynamics between faculty and students because they are structured into our institutions of higher education. It is essential to keep in mind that these are always at play, and while pedagogical

partnership aims to disrupt them, partnership work nevertheless unfolds within their influence. Numerous scholars have addressed this issue as partnership approaches have emerged, as the quotes below capture:

“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.”

—Kehler, Verwoord, and Smith 2017, 8

“Engaging with Mariah, Rhiannon, and the many students with whom I have shared learning experiences has stretched me in ways I couldn’t have predicted, challenging me to practice my politics, to engage my feminist praxis, and to be accountable for my power.”

—Vicki, faculty partner
(quoted in Cates, Madigan, and Reitenauer 2018, 39)

Within the larger realities of power dynamics, there can be particular power dynamics within departments that are established in existing relationships between faculty and students. Sometimes faculty and students who have an existing relationship have a hard time shifting into this kind of pedagogical partnership, especially if the student is or could in future be enrolled in the faculty member’s courses. Some students have felt constrained by power dynamics, departmental politics, and already established roles, and so the partnerships have not afforded either participant an opportunity to maximize the potential of this relationship. So, if faculty and students from the same department want to work in pedagogical partnership, think with them about how they will transition from the more traditional power dynamic into a dynamic of shared responsibility.

How do you achieve the best balance between offering support and affording participants flexibility and freedom?

Both faculty and students appreciate knowing program directors have thought through how to structure classroom-focused pedagogical partnership. They feel safer and more confident in what is, by definition,

a vulnerable-making experience. A faculty-student pair described the way in which the SaLT program “allowed us to ‘hold a space’ where we could develop practical wisdom about teaching and learning together while increasing effectiveness during the very semesters during which we collaborated.” They explained that the program “sustained tension between structure and freedom, providing guidelines to support our interactions but also the flexibility to experiment and learn from our mistakes and innovations” (Schlosser and Sweeney 2015, 1). This is what we aim for in the SaLT program, and while that balance will be different for different individuals and partners, having it as a goal is what allows us to both provide support structures and be responsive in changing them. We pose below some questions that we have received and that allow us to address how we strive to balance offering structured support with affording participants flexibility and freedom.

What kind of parameters or guidelines do student and faculty participants find helpful?

The majority of participants in the classroom-focused partnerships in the SaLT program have indicated that they find the set of guidelines we provide a very helpful starting point for establishing and building pedagogical partnerships. Those guidelines, scattered and elaborated upon throughout this book (and also included in short form in the “**Guidelines for Student and Faculty Partners in Classroom-focused Pedagogical Partnerships**” resource, provide recommendations, not requirements, for how to establish rapport, develop a focus for partnership, revise approaches as the partnership unfolds, and conclude partnerships. They also include advice from experienced partners and sample observation notes. Below is the table of contents:

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In the SaLT program, all student partners have the opportunity to discuss the guidelines during orientation. Faculty participants have the opportunity to discuss the guidelines if, for instance, they are enrolled in the pedagogy seminar linked to pedagogical partnerships, or if they contact Alison with any questions (although most find the guidelines sufficiently clear). We recommend that you provide an opportunity to

discuss guidelines for partnership early in the semester when partnerships begin (or in the previous semester).

Regarding curriculum-focused partnerships in the SaLT program, faculty and student partners have typically developed their own approaches (see examples in chapter 7). Many have found the template for backward design in *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins and McTighe 2005) or the guidelines offered by L. Dee Fink (2013) in *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* useful.

What are useful approaches to orienting faculty and student partners who are embarking on a classroom-focused partnership?

Because pedagogical partnership is a new experience for virtually everyone, it is helpful to create opportunities for all participants to share hopes, expectations, concerns, questions, and aspirations regarding pedagogical partnership. We recommend, if possible, creating an orientation session that includes both student and faculty partners, with part of the time devoted to each constituency and part of the time devoted to cross-constituency dialogue.

The “[Plans to Orient New Faculty and Student Partners](#)” resource includes plans for orientation that Alison has used to support multiple institutions in launching pedagogical partnership programs. It includes as well a plan that Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens, director of the Center for Teaching and Learning and director of faculty development at Berea College, uses to invite faculty partners to identify and articulate what they expect the partnership experience will be like, what the most pressing questions that they bring to this work might be, what hopes they have for the experience, and what fears they might bring.

Do you need to train student partners before they embark on classroom-focused pedagogical partnerships?

Different programs take different approaches to the question of preparation for the role of student partner, depending on philosophy, student availability, and funding options. The SaLT program and the Tigers as Partners program at Trinity University, for instance, hold orientations prior to the start of the partnerships each semester, whereas the

Student Consultant Program at Ursinus College focuses on supporting students on the job. Orientations typically include opportunities to identify strengths and capacities student partners bring to the role, share hopes and concerns about embarking on a pedagogical partnership, consider possible scenarios and practice skills (e.g., analyzing a syllabus), and identify aspirations. They might be organized like this:

Student Partner Orientation Schedule

- Introductions (10 mins)
- Carousel and discussion (25 mins)
- Sharing scenarios (25 mins)
- Break (10 mins)
- Specific questions (30 mins)
- Check in about logistics (10 mins)
- Aspirations (10 mins)

Or like this:

Student Partner Orientation Schedule

- Community building (15 mins)
- Introductions (10 mins)
- Establishment of expertise (20 mins)
- Skill building: Reading a syllabus (30 mins)
- Break (15 mins)
- Skill building: Taking observation notes (15 mins)
- Logistical organizing (10 mins)
- Written reflections (10 mins)
- Affirmations (5 mins)
- Final thoughts/questions (10 mins)

We offer detailed expansions of both of these plans in the “[Sample Outlines for Student Partners Orientations](#)” resource.

Program directors have also developed additional approaches to orienting faculty and student partners to this work in early meetings. For instance, Leslie Ortquist-Ahrens, director of the Center for Teaching

and Learning and director of faculty development at Berea College, has developed a “Gets and Gives” grid that asks participants to imagine what each will “get” from and “give” to the partnership. The grid included in the “Plans to Orient New Faculty and Student Partners” resource is an example from one semester during which faculty and student partners completed the grid separately at the outset of their partnerships at Berea, then compared them to one another’s grids in their cohort meetings. Returning these completed grids to participants at the end of the semester can be a useful form of reflection and informal assessment.

These approaches to orienting participants focus on prompting reflection, accessing and making explicit assumptions, raising awareness, and encouraging intentionality. They constitute a very different approach to preparing participants than would more formal, structured training. Each year, toward the end of the semester, Alison asks student partners in SaLT whether they would have benefited from a training prior to embarking on partnerships, beyond the orientation, and they say no. Sophia Abbot has asked the same question of the students in Tigers as Partners at Trinity University and received the same universal response. These students indicate that, as we discussed in chapter 4 regarding the primacy of building relationships, being in pedagogical partnership is about learning who their faculty partners are, what their pedagogical goals are, and how to support their faculty partners in making their particular classrooms and curriculum as inclusive and responsive as they can be. Training, the students suggest, would run the risk of seeming to impose a single approach, and what they find both most productive, if sometimes profoundly challenging, is learning how to build a generative working relationship with their individual faculty partners.

What forums for support do student partners in classroom-focused pedagogical partnerships need and how might these be structured?

In consulting with institutions about developing pedagogical partnership programs, Alison always tells potential program directors and participants that the single most important component of such programs is regular opportunities for student partners to meet and be in dialogue

with one another and with the program director. Here we discuss that forum and others to support student partners.

Should you facilitate a regular (weekly or biweekly) forum for reflection, dialogue, and support?

These meetings are the most important structural feature of a classroom-focused pedagogical partnership program because it is in these weekly meetings that student partners recognize and further their capacities, develop a language for talking about teaching and learning, build confidence, and gather insights and ideas from other student partners. How these meetings are facilitated will inform student partners' sense of their capacity and agency.

One of the most important skills student partners develop in this forum is how to speak with those in positions of greater institutional power about pedagogical issues. In SaLT, we discuss how to frame feedback and input with sentences like this:

- “If I were a student in this class and was asked to do that activity, I might feel . . .”
- “I once took a class where the professor did [X] and it really helped me understand the concept because . . .”
- “I notice that you . . . ; I am interested in what inspired you to take that approach . . .”

Such statements locate the perception with the student partner, rather than formulate assertions that might sound like critiques or judgments. These formulations require that student partners develop mindsets that are inquisitive rather than judgmental, and they make what student partners have to say more “hearable” to their faculty partners. (See discussion in chapter 4.)

These kinds of statement do not come naturally, as one student partner explains:

“ [We have] an incredible support system in our weekly meetings [where] I feel I can raise an issue I’m having and have it addressed, I feel that my opinion matters and is respected . . . [and we can] find ways to frame

ideas and concepts so we can think about them in new and deeper ways. (Student partner in the SaLT program, survey response)

What approaches to facilitation of weekly meetings with student partners have been successful?

Developing a structure that supports reflection and dialogue is among the most important roles of the director of pedagogical partnership programs in collaboration with the student partners. In the **“General Guiding Principles for Weekly Reflective Meetings of Student Partners”** resource we detail three general guiding principles for reflective meetings that Alison has developed since the first years of SaLT. These are particularly important, from Alison’s perspective, in helping student partners develop a mindset that will make them most able to support, in turn, their faculty partners’ reflections. We also offer two sets of general guidelines generated by two former student partners, Melanie and one of her contemporaries, Natasha Daviduke, who, in anticipation of our writing this book, spent one semester observing the student partner meetings in the SaLT program to identify useful practices. These lists offer student partners’ perspectives on what makes these reflective meetings productive. Below we provide an overview of these guiding principles and offer a glimpse into what an exchange in a weekly student partner meeting of SaLT looks like, drawn from Natasha’s notes.

These are the three general guiding principles for reflective meetings that Alison has developed since the first years of SaLT:

1. Focus early on what strengths and capacities student partners bring and how they are putting those to work or further developing them.
2. Regularly remind student partners that faculty partners are vulnerable and not necessarily accustomed to constant reflection and change.
3. Invite and explicitly name the links between classroom and life lessons.

Below are general guidelines generated by Melanie and Natasha, all of which are discussed in more detail in the “[General Guiding Principles for Weekly Reflective Meetings of Student Partners](#)” resource:

- Use regular introductions and check-ins to bring people into the space.
- Give students quiet writing time to consider a question or focusing idea of the session.
- Consider how you respond when student partners share from their writing.
- Bring in topics from conversations with faculty so that student partners have a better idea of what their partners might be exploring in other contexts.
- Ask student partners directly if they want to share something in order to bring the conversation back from diversions.
- Try to parse out the causality behind observations that student partners make.
- Pick up on particular experiences that student partners share and ask the group to consider if they have ever done or observed something similar.
- Suggest and invite readings on pedagogy that might be relevant to everyone’s partnerships.
- Offer concluding thoughts on a topic before switching gears to a new question.
- Give a lot of space to student partners to comment on each other’s work and ask questions.
- Make space for student partners to express their experience as students in context.
- Ask student partners to write up something about their experiences if they find them to be especially salient.
- Consistently offer affirmation.

When program directors employ techniques like those listed above, the weekly meetings can unfold in ways that both affirm and challenge student partners, nurturing their development as consultants able to listen deeply, brainstorm solutions to pedagogical challenges, and celebrate inclusive and responsive teaching.

Example of an exchange in a reflective meeting

We offer here a glimpse into a meeting of student partners and Alison in SaLT. The following is an example of an exchange in which student partners offer their perspectives on a question a faculty member in the natural sciences posed to his student partner:

Alison: Is there anything going on in your partnerships that you want to discuss? Anything that is challenging or worrying you?

Student Partner 1: My partner asked me a really interesting question during our last meeting. He asked how he can properly assess a student on material that he knows he didn't fully grasp until he had studied it for several years. He was feeling that asking his intro students to show understanding of concepts that he didn't fully understand at their level was unreasonable.

Alison: That's a great question. Does anyone have thoughts about that?

Student Partner 2: A question I think it's important to ask is, "How do you know when you've learned something?" In my organic chemistry class, my professor asked us to explain concepts by drawing out pictures and explaining them in no more than 10 words, and it wasn't until I was able to do that that I felt I had learned the concept.

Student Partner 3: When I took physics, our professor tried to understand our thought processes by asking us to write out every step when we solved problems. We had to write why we were stuck, so that even if we came to the wrong answer, our professor could see how we had arrived there.

Student Partner 4: One thing my partner and I have discussed a lot is having learning goals and making them explicit to the students. It's a helpful way of organizing what you want students to learn and helping them focus their learning.

Student Partner 5: My partner uses images for everything. He projects from his iPad and writes next to the pictures so that the concepts are always accompanied by the visual.

Student Partner 4: I would also say that it's important for him to tell students that he has also struggled with this material.

Student Partner 2: I agree. I think it's humanizing for the professor and it helps the students to be less hard on themselves if they know that the person teaching them also didn't get everything at their level.

Student Partner 6: I think it's also helpful to tell students that this may be the first time they're encountering something and it's ok if they don't understand it because they may have more time to expand their learning in that area.

The student partner who brought the question from her faculty partner to the group was able to take back to him the wide variety of insights student partners offer. All the other student partners benefited as well from this exchange by thinking of and finding language for pedagogical practices that have been successful for them and other faculty, and they also could apply the advice to their work with their respective faculty partners.

In terms of facilitation, note that Alison posed a question, affirmed a response that was offered by one student partner, turned the question back to the group, and then remained quiet as the student partners in the room shared ideas. There are times when a program director will want to share insights and recommendations, but just as often a far richer set of insights and recommendations will emerge from what student partners have to offer.

What kind of structure might weekly meetings of student partners follow?

In our experience, the processes of identifying, exploring, analyzing, celebrating, and problem-solving that the weekly meetings provide are best supported by a loose structure. Because each partnership presents its own opportunities and challenges, it is helpful to make space within the weekly meetings for both individual reflections and open dialogue. Sasha Mathrani, a former SaLT student partner, captures this experience:



Reflecting on my varied partnerships has helped me identify some of the moments of growth and explicitly

understand the impact of the SaLT program in all my ways of being. I can see how my ability to build relationships and navigate uncertainty has developed over the course of my partnerships, and I realize how learning how to navigate those unfamiliar situations has given me the confidence to speak up in situations outside my partnerships. (Mathrani 2018, 6)

We recommend that you develop a set of prompts that will afford each student partner the opportunity to capture individual experiences in informal writing. This ensures time for thoughtful reflection, as well as supplying records of experiences that can be returned to later and shared in subsequent discussions. Student partners suggest that it is helpful to keep their freewrites or reflections in one place so that toward the end of the semester they can easily return to some of the prompts from the beginning of the semester to track progress.

In the “[Sample Outline of Topics for Weekly Meetings of Student Partners](#)” resource we offer a version of the prompts we have used in SaLT and that directors of pedagogical partnership programs at other institutions have adapted for their contexts (see also the syllabus for the for-credit course in the “[Sample Student Partners Course Syllabus](#)” resource).

What kind of leadership can experienced student partners take in facilitation?

While the program director might facilitate the majority of the weekly meetings of student partners, it is in keeping with the spirit of partnership to consider ways in which these meetings can be co-facilitated by student partners. Student partners can share their experiences and offer analyses of how they make sense of and act upon the challenges and tensions they have experienced and the links between classroom and life lessons.

Beyond that, a student partner might bring a particular issue or question to the group and lead the discussion around that. This co-facilitation helps student partners deepen capacities to identify and articulate pedagogical challenges, develop language to name and analyze them, and build confidence to address them with faculty partners and others (e.g.,

other students, faculty who teach courses in which they are enrolled, current and prospective employers). As Natasha Daviduke, former SaLT student partner, argues: “Other student consultants can direct discussion and support their fellow consultants in these meetings. Their individual experiences in their partnerships can provide a trove of valuable techniques for problem-solving within this work” (personal communication). And as Beth Marquis explains: “At McMaster University, we have sometimes had staff and students co-facilitate and support program streams in partnership” (personal communication).

Once student partners have worked in several partnerships, they can assume greater responsibility for mentoring newer student partners, facilitating or co-facilitating student partner orientations, and facilitating weekly meetings when the director of the program is away from campus or on leave, as Anita and other former SaLT student partners have done. These expanded facilitation roles allow student partners to draw on the expertise they have developed and prepare for subsequent, larger leadership roles, such as in post-bac fellow positions (discussed in detail in the last section of chapter 3, in the [“Creating Post-Bac Fellow Positions to Support the Development of Pedagogical Partnership Programs”](#) resource, and in the [“Three Stages of Backward Design to Support the Development of Post-Bac Fellow Positions”](#) resource. Such increased responsibility can emerge in organic ways, or it can be structured into the program, as the directors of the program at Ursinus College have done (see chapter 3).

What can program directors do to support curriculum-focused pedagogical partnerships?

Cook-Sather, Matthews, and Bell (2019, in press) argue that academic developers are uniquely positioned to reimagine and support curriculum transformation as a relational and reciprocal process in which students have a fundamental right to have a voice and to take an active role. As we discuss in detail in chapter 7, in the SaLT program, there are typically four kinds of curriculum-focused partnerships in which faculty and student partners engage: co-planning a course before it is taught; revising while a course is unfolding; redesigning a course after it is taught; and

making explicit and challenging the hidden curriculum of a course. The program director's role is a bit different in each case. We recommend that program directors read those discussions in chapter 7, written primarily for faculty and student partners, and consider how, in any given context, such work might be best supported.

Across all forms of curriculum-focused pedagogical partnership, program directors will want to consider how to compensate the student partner. In most cases—unless the curriculum is being designed or redesigned through collaboration between the instructor and the students enrolled in the course—it will be important to confer with the faculty-student team about which approach would be best. The three most common ways to compensate student time and expertise are to situate the role as a campus job, compensated with hourly pay through departmental, curriculum development, or provost's office budgets; to enroll the student in a half-credit or a full-credit course; or to create a scholarship. (See chapter 3 for an expanded discussion of this point. Options for compensating faculty partners are also addressed there.) Here we note some general considerations for each type of curriculum-focused partnership and provide examples of publications that detail approaches different student and faculty partners have taken.

How can you support pedagogical partnerships focused on co-planning a course before it is taught?

In co-planning a course before it is taught, faculty and students may be starting from scratch or they may be bringing concepts, outlines, general or vague ideas, or clear commitments they want to enact. The program director's role in this case is to support both the impulse and the process. Because pedagogical partnership is countercultural both in the arena of pedagogical practice and in the arena of curriculum design, faculty and students appreciate the encouragement that program directors can offer as well as any support structures that might be put into place.

So, program directors might first affirm that the impulse to co-plan a course is inspiring, and perhaps offer examples of faculty at their own or other institutions who have taken this approach. Here are a few examples toward which program directors can point faculty and student partners:

- Student author Yi Wang and faculty author Younglin Jiang (2012), in the context of a pedagogy seminar in which they both enrolled, spent a full semester co-creating “Cultural History of Chinese Astronomy,” a course that they chose to design drawing on Jiang’s expertise as a professor of East Asian Studies and Wang’s knowledge from her hobby, astronomy;
- Elliott Shore (2012, 1-2) and a group of students co-designed his course on the history of women’s higher education, meeting over lunch to talk about “the readings, the assignments, the ways in which the class would operate, the speakers we would invite, the places we would visit and the students who would be invited to take the class”;
- Cherie Woolmer and her co-authors (2016) describe the development of a multidisciplinary lesson plan aimed at developing science skills for physics and astronomy, geographical and Earth sciences, and chemistry students at a research-intensive Scottish university;
- Alison Cook-Sather and Crystal Des-Ogugua (2017) spent a full semester, meeting once a week or so, to co-design all the assignments, assessments, and activities for an undergraduate education course at Bryn Mawr College;
- Tanya Michelle Lubicz-Nawrocka (2018) analyzes participants’ perceptions of co-creation of the curriculum in the Scottish higher-education sector; and
- Lori Goff and Kris Knorr (2018) describe an applied curriculum design in science course at McMaster University through which upper-level students form partnerships with faculty and educational developers and work in groups to co-create learning modules that become key components of a foundational science course offered to first-year students.

We recommend that program directors offer these as examples and inspirations, not prescriptions, for how student and faculty partners might go about co-creating a course or a module within a course.

Program directors can encourage faculty and student partners to take their time in the design process. It may be that other commitments preclude weekly meetings, but encourage partners to set up a schedule

and create forums for dialogue and idea exchange, even if those forums need to be virtual. Using a template such as Wiggins and McTighe's (2005) backward design template or L. Dee Fink's (2013) *Creating Significant Learning Experiences* can structure and capture the planning in which the student and faculty partners engage.

How can you support pedagogical partnerships focused on revising while a course is unfolding?

This form of curriculum-focused pedagogical partnership might well resemble classroom-focused partnerships through which a single student partner works for the duration of a semester to analyze and adjust the course as it unfolds. Alternatively, it might look like a faculty member and all students enrolled in a given course revising it as they go.

If faculty and student partners take the former approach, with the student partners visiting the faculty partner's classroom weekly or biweekly and meeting regularly to revise the course as it unfolds, then program directors can draw on and adapt the approaches to supporting classroom-focused pedagogical partnership work described in earlier portions of this chapter and in chapter 6.

If faculty members choose to undertake curricular co-creation and revision in collaboration with all students enrolled in their courses, then the focus of the program director's support will be more on how to help faculty balance the complicated role of being co-creator and evaluator and help students balance the complicated role of being co-creator and evaluated (unless they include co-creation of assessment, such as Susan Deeley has done in her courses at the University of Glasgow in Scotland—see Deeley and Bovill 2017; Deeley and Brown 2014).

As with supporting faculty and students in co-planning a course before it is taught, in the case of supporting faculty and students in revising while a course is unfolding, program directors may want to offer some examples, not prescriptive models to be replicated but as inspirations, such as these:

- Mary Sunderland (2013) describes how she regularly conferred with students enrolled in her engineering course at the University of California, Berkeley, and revised it according to their feedback;

- Sarah Bunnell and Dan Bernstein (2014, 1) describe how the two of them, a graduate student and a professor at the University of Kansas, also worked with an undergraduate enrolled in the course they co-taught to discuss “the goals that we had for student learning for each section of the course, what was working well (and not as well as we would like), and ways in which we could maximize student learning and engagement with the material”;
- Ulrika Bergmark and Susanne Westman (2016) describe a teacher education course that was co-designed by the instructor and the students as the course unfolded in a university in Sweden; and
- Alison Cook-Sather, Crystal Des-Ogugua, and Melanie Bahti (2018) discuss one course assignment that was not only created by the instructor and a student partner for an undergraduate education course at Bryn Mawr College (Cook-Sather and Des-Ogugua 2017) but was also co-created by the instructor and students enrolled as the course unfolded.

How can you support pedagogical partnerships focused on redesigning a course after it is taught?

In the SaLT program, most such partnerships emerge after faculty members have participated in a classroom-focused pedagogical partnership. The faculty partners are therefore familiar with pedagogical partnership principles and practices and carry those into their curriculum-focused redesign process. In these cases, faculty partners tend to be very independent and set up schedules and processes that they know will work for them. Whether faculty and student partners are independent or looking for more guidance and support, program directors may want to point them to some examples of curriculum redesign, such as:

- Richard Mihans and his faculty, staff, and student co-authors (2008) describe the process of redesigning an education course at Elon University through a course design team (CDT). At Elon, each team’s process varies, but typically a CDT includes one or two faculty members, between two and six undergraduate students, and one academic developer;

- Louise Charkoudian and her student co-authors (2015) describe how a faculty member and three undergraduate students engaged in a semester-long redesign process through which they revised course content, assignments, and methods of assessment for Charkoudian's first-semester organic chemistry course at Haverford College; and
- Gintaras Kazimieras Duda and Mary Ann Danielson (2018) describe the Collaborative Curricular (re)Construction, or C³, that was an initiative at Creighton University in Nebraska that paired faculty and students in a process of backward course design. Two cohorts (one in the 2013-14 and one in 2014-15) of faculty-student pairs worked over the span of a year to redesign a theory-, skill-, and laboratory-based course within their discipline.

Program directors might also want to develop examples of structures faculty partners could adapt. In chapter 7, we include the structure that Charkoudian et al. (2015) used.

How can you support pedagogical partnerships focused on making explicit and challenging the hidden curriculum?

This form of curriculum-focused pedagogical partnership might also closely resemble the classroom-focused partnerships discussed above and that are the focus of chapter 6. A term coined by Jackson (1968), the hidden curriculum encompasses the unintentional lesson or lessons taught that reinforce inequities. It resides in the “gaps or disconnects between what faculty intend to deliver (the formal curriculum) and what learners take away from those formal lessons” (Hafferty, Gauferg, and DiCroce 2015, 35). And, most commonly, what learners take away is a sense that they are not reflected in and may not have the capacity to master the course content.

Keeping in mind that any curriculum, including the hidden curriculum, “always represent[s] an introduction to, preparation for, and legitimation of a particular form of life” (McLaren 1989, 160), faculty and student partners who wish to make explicit and challenge the hidden curriculum need courage, clarity, and intentionality to do so. They will need moral as well as practical support in finding ways to identify, name, and address the hidden curriculum in any given course. It might be

useful to encourage them to use sets of principles that strive to counter hegemonic or discriminatory curriculum, such as the eight core feminist principles Chin and Russo (1997) identified—diversity, egalitarianism and empowerment, self-determination, connection, social action, self-reflection, and integrative perspectives—or the New Zealand government’s tertiary education strategy that has as one of its priorities to enable Māori to achieve education success as Māori (see also Berryman and Eley 2017).

Examples of faculty and students addressing the hidden curriculum in a variety of ways include:

- Kerstin Perez (2016), in “Striving Toward a Space for Equity and Inclusion in Physics Classrooms,” describes how she worked with her student partner at Haverford College to reflect on how her teaching was matching, or missing, her goals and to question the traditional boundaries of what is discussed in an undergraduate physics class, including how those traditionally underrepresented can address difficult and problematic issues in the field;
- Mary Brunson (2018, 2) explores how, through building trust and developing greater comfort with unfinishedness and the “unknowability” of many phenomena, she worked with her faculty partner at Bryn Mawr College to “create a curriculum that would make him more ‘in touch’ with” his students;
- Lillian Nave and student partners (2018) entirely shifted the focus of Nave’s course on international movements in the visual and performing arts at Appalachian State University, North Carolina, United States, to be responsive to what mattered to the students as they were setting foot on campus for the first time after several incidents involving white nationalist activity; and
- Amarachi Chukwu and Kim Jones (forthcoming) at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada, redesigned the course Inclusion in the Engineering Workplace, focusing, as the title of their chapter suggests, on “Feminist Interventions in Engineering: Co-creating across Disciplines and Identities.”

Faculty and student partners doing this work appreciate program directors sharing resources on how to develop more inclusive and responsive curriculum and offering moral support for the challenging

and wearing work of countering injustice. Student partners in particular appreciate support for the emotional labor they invest in supporting their faculty partners. We discuss this last issue in chapter 8.

Who might participate in the curriculum design or redesign process?

While faculty might typically initiate the course design or redesign process, program directors can suggest a variety of participants, including but not limited to students. For instance, Alison and some of her colleagues designed an opportunity for teams of four—a faculty member, a librarian, an instructional technologist, and a student—to redesign a course in ways that meaningfully integrated technology during a week-long summer workshop (Cook-Sather 2001).

The best way to help faculty decide whom to invite to work with them is to pose some basic questions about purpose and goals, such as:

- What do you want students to know and be able to do by the end of the course?
- What learning experiences during the course do you want students to have?
- What forms of assessment can you develop that are congruent with the goals you have and the learning experiences you aim to foster?
- In what ways are all components of your course inclusive of and responsive to a diversity of students?

Then, ask faculty to consider who can offer helpful insights on these questions, and who might become partners not only in conceptualizing but also in enacting the newly designed or redesigned course.

In the case of co-planning a course before it is taught, faculty may invite a group of students who have taken similar courses, a group of students who might be the intended population to enroll in the course, and librarians, instructional technologists, and others who could bring expertise and insight regarding how to create resources and structures. Many faculty are tempted to invite the “best” students, usually meaning those who are visible, are a fit for the norms of learning in higher education, and therefore do well. We encourage you to urge faculty to think more broadly about who might be productive student partners in

planning a course. Students who have traditionally been underserved by, felt unwelcome in, and struggled through standard curriculum might offer very different perspectives and recommendations from those who have found higher education welcoming, supportive, and easily navigable.

These same considerations hold true for faculty who decide to redesign a course after it has been taught or work to make explicit and challenge the hidden curriculum. In addition to drawing on the insights of traditionally successful students, faculty can benefit from seeking to understand and redesign in response to a wider range of notions of what might constitute success (Cook-Sather 2018b; O'Shea and Delahunty 2018). As with the case of course design, the experiences and perspectives of students who have traditionally been underserved by, felt unwelcome in, and struggled through standard curriculum can not only inform a given course but also begin to change the culture of higher education.

YOUR TURN

Inviting and responding to prospective participants in pedagogical partnership programs:

As you are planning to launch or further develop pedagogical partnership opportunities on your campus, what approaches might you take to inviting and responding to prospective participants?

Are these approaches similar to or different from the ways people are invited or responded to regarding other opportunities on campus?

What messages are you sending to prospective participants and to others on campus and beyond regarding who participates and why?

What criteria will you use to match student and faculty partners? When might it make sense for student and faculty partners to be in different disciplines and when in the same discipline?

Supporting participants as their partnerships unfold:

What structures and processes will you develop to support partners in naming and navigating power dynamics?

How will you achieve the best balance between offering support and affording participants flexibility and freedom in classroom-focused partnerships?

- What kind of parameters or guidelines for student and faculty participants will you develop?
- How will you orient faculty and student partners to classroom-focused partnership?
- With what frequency and forms of facilitation will you support reflection and dialogue among participants?

How can you as a program director support curriculum-focused pedagogical partnerships focused on:

- co-planning a course before it is taught?
- co-creating a course while it is unfolding?
- redesigning a course after it is taught?
- making explicit and challenging the hidden curriculum?