UNIVERSITY OF
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Students as Partners in Higher Education

PERSPECTIVES & PRACTICES

EDITORS

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TEACHING ACADEMY

Students as Partners in Higher Education: Perspectives and Practices

UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY | Teaching Academy

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About the Teaching Academy

The Teaching Academy is a community of instructors who have received a University of Calgary Teaching Award in recognition of their exemplary contributions to teaching and learning. The members of the Teaching Academy form a community of teaching and learning scholars from different ranks and disciplinary backgrounds, positioned to engage in and cultivate educational leadership at the University of Calgary. The collective depth and diversity of backgrounds and experiences allows engagement with the entire breadth of the teaching and learning community on campus, encouraging the free flow of ideas in a vibrant network of educators and educational innovators. The Teaching Academy operates as a working group of professionals interested in supporting the development of teaching and learning expertise at the University of Calgary.

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Foreword

As senior director of the Taylor Institute of Teaching and Learning (TI), I am honoured to introduce readers to this TI Guide. Students are a powerful force in higher education. They are the life and heart of why we care so deeply about our work in teaching and learning. Working with students as partners and colleagues in my work as an educational developer, leader and scholar has opened my eyes to new knowledge and ways of being. I can't imagine working on a teaching and learning initiative without working with students as colleagues in this work! I would be so bold as to state that I am in my current role due to a handful of faculty members who authentically worked with me as a partner in inquiry, research, teaching and learning during my undergraduate and graduate student experiences. These relationships were bounded by collaboration, trust, reciprocity, learning, growth and genuine inquiry.

The Teaching Academy are a group of dedicated educators who have received a University of Calgary Teaching Award and who are committed to sharing back their expertise with the teaching and learning community. Through this guide, they challenge us to reconceptualize our beliefs, assumptions and practices related to partnering with students as colleagues in higher education. They've shared generously on a variety of topics related to working with students as partners, presented frameworks and calls to action for change, and thoughtfully brought research-informed practices to life.

I am grateful to work in a learning organization where I am challenged to learn and grow daily. I encourage you to explore these chapters within the context of your own wisdom of experience and practice. As you read, you may consider some of the following questions for reflection:

- What stands out most for you? What resonated? Where did you feel most inspired or challenged?
- What has shifted in your understanding(s) of working and learning with students as partners in higher education?
- What are some opportunities, barriers and tensions to working with students as partners in higher education?
- How might you further integrate the concepts of working with students as partners in your teaching, learning, research and/or leadership practices?

Wishing you a fulfilling learning journey,

Natasha Kenny, Ph.D.
Senior Director
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Introduction

The Teaching Academy aims to foster a vibrant culture of teaching and learning at the University of Calgary and to that end encourages the sharing of expertise among members of the academic community. It is in this spirit that we have developed resource guides to explore relevant and emerging topics in the field.

Following on the successes of the Teaching Academy's *Mentorship Guide for Teaching and Learning* (https://doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/dspace/40983), *Universal Design for Learning in Disciplinary Contexts in Higher Education* (https://doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/dspace/41378) and *Fostering Student Success in Online Courses* (https://doi.org/10.11575/PRISM/dspace/41403), the Teaching Academy is pleased to present this resource guide dedicated to the perspectives and practices surrounding students as partners (SaP).

To stimulate interest and generate ideas, we hosted a workshop in early 2023, featuring Teaching Academy members Sandra Abegglen and Barbara Brown, who each shared what they and their colleagues are doing and learning from their work in SaP. The call for chapter proposals went out soon afterwards, inviting submissions that would focus on how instructors, graduate teaching assistants, librarians and others in teaching and support roles incorporate SaP in their practice.

The purpose of this guide is threefold:

- To provide a practical and applied resource for instructors in higher education that focuses on SaP, drawing on Teaching Academy members' wisdom from research-informed practice
- To reflect diverse contexts, approaches and perspectives in higher education
- To offer recommendations, considerations and implications to others who may be interested in implementing SaP in their practice.

The guide has six chapters, offering the reader opportunities to explore how SaP might be implemented in so-called third spaces to enable co-creation and collaboration in an extracurricular context (Chapter 1), in the development of a pedagogical hacking workshop for an undergraduate course (Chapter 2), in the pursuit of meaningful learning through authentic relational teaching practice (Chapter 3), in graduate student–faculty partnerships to support undergraduate teaching (Chapter 4), in course development (Chapter 5), and in horizontal partnerships that challenge conventional hierarchies (Chapter 6).

We are grateful to the authors of the individual chapters for affording us a glimpse into their practice that should inspire us all – not necessarily to follow suit but to feel empowered to find our own path to exploring how we can partner with our students in teaching and learning.

This guide would not have been possible without the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning, whose guidance and support have been invaluable. I would like to

thank my co-editor, Cheryl Jeffs, whose focus and care truly nurtured this project. I believe that I can speak for both Cheryl and myself in expressing our gratitude to Brandi Dickman, whose organizational and copy-editing skills are without equal, and to the TI's communications and programming manager Gillian Edwards, who has seen to the final production of this guide.

Finally, we would like to thank you, the reader, for your curiosity and interest in this notion of recognizing and harnessing students as partners as we strive to create the best learning environments for our students that will carry them through well beyond the confines of our classrooms or our attentive tutelage to go out prepared and ready to make a difference in our world.

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Chapter 1:

Becoming Educational Together: (Re)Imagining a Students-as-Partners' Project

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Acknowledgement

Before we start, we would like to take a moment to reflect on the context we are situated within. In Canada this includes the acknowledgement of Indigenous presence and land stewardship. In the United Kingdom this means a recognition of a colonizing past. If we take these territorial acknowledgements as sites of disruption, they can be transformative acts that can bring people together. It is in this spirit that we would like to show honour and respect to those past, present and future – to move forward in a good way. Education without liberation is itself a colonizing project.

Learning Context

> *There was an explicit social justice agenda to the project overall, one where the particular experiences and voices of our students would be valued and where they would work in partnership with each other and with us*

> — Burns et al., 2019

We live in times of certain uncertainty, with higher education (HE) in constant need of reflexive adaptation (Abegglen et al, 2020a). The *Building the Ideal Higher Education* project, funded by the Association for Learning Development in Higher Education (ALDinHE), was based in the U.K. and Canada, and adopted an authentic Students as Partners (SaP) ethos to explore creatively and playfully the future of education.

We invited the academic community to participate in online workshops to reflect on the current status of HE and, at the same time, to conceptualize what form a humane and integrated classroom would look like within that HE system. These conceptualizations took the form of "found word poetry," collages and assemblages (Abegglen et al., 2020b) produced during the online sessions and shared via Padlets. Our SaP took the various contributions and used them to lead the design and production of an open-source guide of HE models, real and idealized, that potentially have the power to change perspectives, attitudes and practice.

To embrace the humane nature of our project we decided to actively integrate students into the research

To embrace the humane nature of our project we decided to actively integrate students into the research. We recruited two students, one from each university, via an open call at both institutions. We asked for "openness" and an interest in international collaboration as well as (basic) design experience. We provided the two participating students with bursaries (via the research grant), compensating them for their time and labour and acknowledging their involvement as full partners.

This chapter discusses what we learned about SaP by navigating the complexity of this funded, international, extracurricular SaP research project that provided opportunities for academics to discuss the future of HE and involved students as active research partners. We conclude with recommendations for further development of authentic SaP projects within and across the curriculum.

Focus

> [Higher education] overall is a journey that should be enjoyed, and to get to the top of the mountains it requires support from your peers, sometimes bumpy and stressful rides, but the end result is worth it with a fantastic view!
>
> — Participant, Imagination Workshop, Dec. 7, 2023

The origin of our project is the emergent asocial society (Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, 2021) – ever more individualistic and exclusionary. This anomie is replicated in education systems and processes that sideline, constrain and remove spaces and places for collaboration between service staff, faculty and

students within institutions, between institutions and with other stakeholders. Individualism and personal success are emphasized in the classroom for students – as for academics themselves. Thus, the need is to make these spaces and processes visible, to then disrupt – and decolonize – them to transform education for a humane, co-created future.

> *We argue that in an individualized, competitive academia we need to actively harness the 'in-between' opportunities of SaP projects, the cracks and fissures of teaching and learning, to enable creative co-creation and collaboration*

Partnership, and especially "being with" (Nancy, 2000), provides an opportunity to grow together and develop, creating a sense of self and identity – for students and faculty alike. We argue that in an individualized, competitive academia we need to actively harness the "in-between" opportunities of SaP projects, the cracks and fissures of teaching and learning, to enable creative co-creation and collaboration. Thus we, in our own practice, frame SaP projects as a collective "third-space" (Bhabha, 2004) opportunity for emergent thinking and action. Webster (2018) describes this as a space where boundaries are fuzzy and malleable, and hence a space that can expand and morph to accommodate the needs of those involved as well as of the broader environment. It is a space "occupied with," defined by joint goals and outcomes. It is a space where the negative striations of academic power and compliance doctrines (Rohrer, 2018) can be swept away as together participants can (re)define the space and inhabit it more powerfully.

In practice this meant putting out a call for creative design–oriented students. This was done by harnessing established networks with art and design tutors whom we had collaborated with on previous research and publishing ventures. We set up Zoom calls between the four of us, with ideas brainstormed and shared on Miro, an online whiteboard. A project management approach was taken, identifying key targets and dates. It was apparent from the start how time-poor these students were. We made clear that the students could contact us anytime and that they could manage their time themselves over the duration of the project. This was important as we wanted to scaffold their enfolding into the project and encourage them to take risks. This is where the "third space" became important: they did not want to take risks. They did not want to fail. Through encouragement we made clear that "constructive failure" was not bad but a part of a reflexive process – and, in any case, the project itself was open and developmental and responsive to their input, their ideas, their experiences. Slowly the two interns started to work independently and collaboratively, with our input being mostly encouragement.

> *In collaboration we construct, structure and restructure the stories that build the larger narratives of who we are, what we do and how we live, act and behave as people, professionals and larger communities*

We argue that these SaP in-between spaces provide opportunities to grow and develop. In collaboration we construct, structure and restructure the stories that build the larger narratives of who we are, what we do and how we live, act and behave as people, professionals and larger communities. Thus, we argue for creative third-space partnerships not just alongside the curriculum, but in and through the curriculum, to seed an ecology of collaborative practice for social justice – a more humane academia. Connecting to become!

Implications

> *As a teacher, and as a student, building a network, collaborating with others and just continuing to learn have been important for any success I've had in either setting.*

> — Participant, Imagination Workshop, Feb. 22, 2023

We designed the project as a continued, collective third-space partnership with (non-traditional) students to enable them to draw on their experiences and expertise – and, more importantly, to take them on as full (research) partners. We viewed this partnership not as performative, meeting university aims and targets, but as a creative co-creation and collaboration; a springboard or catalyst to liberate student curiosity and inquiry, helping them to drive the project/research forward in "owned" ways. We respected our student partners as academic actors who "counted" (Cook-Sather & Luz, 2014; Healey et al., 2014), who could draw on their own autobiographical and contextual specificities to contribute meaningfully and authentically to the project, its development and its tangible outcomes.

> *We respected our student partners as academic actors who 'counted' (Cook-Sather & Luz, 2014; Healey et al., 2014), who could draw on their own autobiographical and contextual specificities to contribute meaningfully and authentically to the project, its development and its tangible outcomes*

SaP projects can be critiqued as part of a neoliberal agenda – the student is performing for the management, perhaps being consulted, or involved or invited to participate, but in peripheral ways, with the danger that they are being utilized as free labour – or worse, are being weaponized by management to push a particular strategy or policy. Similarly, SaP could be critiqued as non-equitable; open to only a

few, they constitute or reconstitute new cliques within an already exclusionary space. However, when there is authentic partnership, involving joint ownership and decision-making over both processes and outcomes, then the students themselves become empowered as actors and agents within their own learning – and within the university as a whole. We argue that our funded SaP was authentic and agentic, and thus not exploitative of our SaP; however, we would not offer it as a paradigmatic model.

> *[W]hen there is authentic partnership, involving joint ownership and decision-making over both processes and outcomes, then the students themselves become empowered as actors and agents within their own learning – and within the university as a whole*

Indeed, while a success, we discovered the impact of partnership with time-poor students with complex lives, where an extracurricular project, however valuable, became additional to their own academic progress and success. The two students had to take time out to work with us and each other and make the open educational resource (OER) happen. This highlights a tension between the project goals, outcomes and personal experience. There was a strong feeling of pride, which came at a personal cost: the taking on of extra workload. In speaking with the two participating students and on reflection, we ask whether it is right to put additional extracurricular pressure on non-traditional students, especially when considering the challenging study–life situations they experience. We therefore argue for a more equitable paradigm shift in HE partnership projects – recommending that they occur within and throughout the curriculum, open to all.

The starting point for creating SaP third-space modules, which underpins the educational approach outlined, is being kind and compassionate – allowing students to make their accommodation with HE practices, codes and cultures as they inhabit the world as creative, analytical and critical citizens and professionals. The emphasis is on deploying their knowledge, skills and aptitudes to tackle real-world issues in authentic ways. At London Metropolitan University this has included running a Peer Mentoring in Practice module, where second- and third-year students were developed and accredited as they mentored first-year students. Another example is the Performing Arts "module in a week," where university students worked with further education students to put on a play in just seven days.

Recommendations

> *An ideal educational environment should feel safe (the warmth) for students to be fully themselves and HE should be a place where things that were once hidden are illuminated for the good of others (the light).*
>
> — Participant, Imagination Workshop, Dec. 7, 2023

Humans are social, interdependent beings. Working with other people provides an opportunity for both a recognition of the self, and for joint growth and development. SaP projects offer opportunities for authentic, refreshed notions of collegiality and of emergent learning, not bounded by pre-set learning outcomes. Given that the third space is the space of potentiality, of the liminal and the unmapped; given that it is the street fighting and nomadic space (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) of education, we argue that all students deserve and need an authentic SaP experience – preferably within their program/course and at every level of their university study:

- sociopolitical spaces that challenge, extend and explore the very nature of knowledge itself
- spaces that nurture those more creative and life-enhancing activities
- spaces that continue to value the people our students are as well as the academics they are becoming
- spaces that allow students to come and work together with peers and faculty
- problem-solving spaces for real world action.

It is essential that we create more third-space opportunities in HE to seed an ecology of collaborative university practice – for a more human, humane and socially just academia. To make this a reality, we recommend that arguments are posed within universities that link these module developments to core governmental or institutional policies. For example, SaP modules could be linked to Active Learning Frameworks (see Wrexham, Wales, U.K.: https://glyndwr.ac.uk/alf/) or to equity and diversity agendas, including closing awarding gaps. Exciting and challenging third-space modules, where students are acknowledged as partners in and through the curriculum, can provoke engagement and success – and be "swapped in" for modules where students might have been less engaged and received marks below their potential. This demonstrates that we respond to student needs in compassionate and useful ways: increasing student agency, engagement and self-efficacy, closing awarding gaps, and igniting that curiosity that burns long after completing such modules.

> *[A]ll students deserve and need an authentic SaP experience – preferably within their program/course and at every level of their university study*

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Student as Partner in Pedagogical Hacking using Design Thinking

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Learning Context

In this chapter we share an example of how a graduate student partnered with the course coordinator and one instructor of an undergraduate multi-section course in education to facilitate a workshop using a design-thinking process for instructional planning. The graduate student was also a sessional instructor and teaching one of the sections of the required undergraduate course in education. The graduate student used a design-thinking process to lead the development and facilitation of a workshop for members of the instructor team using five phases: empathizing, defining, ideation, prototyping and testing (Henriksen et al., 2020, p. 214). Instructors of the course were invited to a workshop to design their instructional plan for teaching the course by using a process of "pedagogical hacking." In this context, hacking refers to a generative and productive activity of starting with a small instructional change and taking action through cycles of iteration towards innovative pedagogy (Smith et al., 2018). We reflect on the affordances and limitations of this design-thinking process and present the conditions that were in place to enable the graduate student to contribute as a partner. Our experience can serve to provide a unique perspective about a collective leadership approach that can be activated through student–faculty partnerships. The student as partner (SaP) in the pedagogical hacking using a design-thinking process presented in this chapter provides readers with insights about how to democratize knowledge building and create the conditions for diverse perspectives to advance instructional planning and contribute to a more equitable university for all (Obadare et al., 2022).

The context of this chapter is situated in an undergraduate, multi-section course in education with a major inquiry-based group assignment. The course was offered to approximately 1,000 undergraduate students in the Bachelor of Education program over a two-year period. Inquiry-based learning is a signature pedagogy in education and calls on students to work in small groups ranging in size from three to six

members. Similar to many professional contexts, in education, working in collaboration is a necessary competency for students (Rios et al., 2020) and foundational for inquiry-based learning. Group learning tasks can be challenging for instructors and students (Brown et al., 2018) and this provided a catalyst for conceptualizing a research project to improve the instructional design of the course and help mitigate challenges for students working in collaboration on a course assignment.

At the time of the project, prior to the pandemic, there were 14 sections of the course in year one of our study that took place during the fall 2017 term (12 on campus and 2 online) and there were 16 sections of the course in year two of the study that took place during the fall 2018 term (12 on campus and 4 online). The first author was course coordinator and instructor for one section of the course each year, and principal investigator (PI) for the research project. The second author was a graduate student who was teaching one section of the course each year and was also hired as a research assistant for the project. He is a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, and his ancestors trace back to Métis and European settler communities. The third author was an instructor for one section of the course each year and co-PI for the research project. The research project was supported through a SoTL (scholarship of teaching and learning) grant funded by the University of Calgary, with the aim to explore how to make instructional improvements for group assignments.

Focus

The focus of this chapter is to describe how we conceptualized SaP to support instructional improvements for an inquiry-based group assignment in an undergraduate course. The larger research study involved student and instructor surveys and interviews. This chapter will concentrate on the involvement of the graduate research assistant in the development of the pedagogical hacking workshop for the instructor team that was held between year one and year two in May 2018. Preliminary data analysis from year one helped inform the creation of infographics with emerging themes that were used by the graduate student to develop the workshop for the instructor team.

In the undergraduate courses, we noticed that students struggled with negotiating ideas and effectively engaging in the work, while their instructors faced challenges assessing the individual aspect of group work. Similarly, we recognized that even though we co-developed detailed assessments and met biweekly during the term with the instructor team, there were many variations with instructional and assessment approaches. Some student groupings were not as effective as others and managing team dysfunctions provided us with an opportunity to reflect on our assessment practices and clarify how individuals can demonstrate learning in group-work situations. The graduate student suggested we develop a pedagogical hacking workshop to develop instructional strategies that could be used by instructors managing the complexities of a major inquiry-based group assignment. We were interested in examining the use of different assessment strategies and participatory

technologies to support group work, individual and group assessments, and analyzing the potential impacts on student learning.

Workshop Design

The graduate student was also a member of the instructor team for this project and suggested using a design-thinking process (Henriksen et al., 2020) for the workshop using a hacking method. Design thinking in education has been described as a collaborative, creative, problem-solving process that has the potential to (re)humanize education at the intersection of empathy, identity and community building (Quinn et al., 2018). The pedagogical hacking workshop designed and led by the graduate student provided instructors with an opportunity to use an adapted design-thinking process and engage with the infographics of preliminary findings from our research project focused on improving the group work and student collaboration. The steps used for the workshop are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1. WORKSHOP DESIGNED BY GRADUATE STUDENT FOR INSTRUCTOR TEAM

Design-thinking phases (Henriksen et al., 2020)	Workshop activity led by graduate student
Empathize	• Gallery Walk observing Infographics and using sticky notes to post items next to things they relate to from their teaching experience • Interview with a partner to discuss one or two of the items they are interested in exploring further for instructional planning
Define	• Consolidate ideas and share with a partner to define and clarify area of focus for instructional planning
Ideate	• Regroup around one of the infographics and together brainstorm "I wish . . ." statements • Gallery Walk observing "I wish" statements identified by the instructors
Prototype	• Individually develop an instructional strategy prototype for one pedagogical change that could help move towards the goal from the "I wish" statements
Test	• Reflect at the end of the workshop • Next steps: Implement prototype during the next course

The graduate student's role as co-producer in designing this workshop strengthened and advanced collaborative instructional design and planning in this course. For example, during the ideate phase, instructors were asked to develop an "I wish" statement, such as, "I wish students would manage their project and involve group members more equitably." A pedagogical hack that was developed during the prototype phase was to introduce examples of project management tools to students at the beginning of the assignment to help them manage their group work.

This was a small step or pedagogical hack that helped the instructor team iteratively explore how instructional planning can be used to improve student learning in group work. The ideas generated during this workshop were synthesized by the graduate student and informed overall updates and changes made to the course outline, learning activities and assessment for the following year, as well as small steps each instructor tested during the next course offering.

Implications

As we reflected on the design-thinking process using a pedagogical hacking method and workshop for the instructor team, we recognized key conditions that enabled the graduate student to contribute as a partner using a model of collective leadership (Hill et al, 2019). The graduate student in this case was situated as a partner and co-producer in a research project and took the lead in developing and facilitating a workshop for the instructor team. In an article about our partnership, led by the graduate student, the student reported learning about:

> *. . . conducting research through experience in all phases of a research project, learning about design-based research methodology, authoring and co-authoring multiple publications and presentations, and gaining insight into the expectations and opportunities of an academic career (Hill et al., p. 135).*

We emphasized that all ideas are improvable and diverse viewpoints are important, and we collectively took responsibility for advancing the research and instructional planning with the instructor team. This reframed the hierarchal structure of our instructor team. As opposed to a course coordinator disseminating information, we used a design-thinking process to facilitate collective knowledge building.

> *The graduate student in this case was situated as a partner and co-producer in a research project and took the lead in developing and facilitating a workshop for the instructor*

This created the conditions for the graduate student and the diverse team of faculty and contract instructors to contribute to the improvement of the course. We hope that our experience might open further possibilities for advancing equity, diversity and inclusion through collaborative student partnerships and design thinking.

Recommendations

We offer a few recommendations based on our experiences working in a student–faculty partnership:

- Consider design-based approaches to support student–faculty partnerships in research that are conducive to expanding notions of partnership involving a graduate student as researcher, as sessional instructor and as co-producer in instructional planning processes.

- Take a collective leadership approach with a graduate student as partner to support and strengthen research and collaborative instructional design and planning efforts.
- Use design-thinking processes with hacking methods to democratize knowledge building when working with teams, especially those that include students as partners.
- Embrace and contribute to teaching and learning in higher education towards innovative pedagogy through student–faculty partnerships.
- Seek to advance equity, diversity and inclusion by fostering collaborative partnerships with graduate students and using design thinking as a democratizing process for instructional planning.

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Embodying Relational Approaches to Learning with Students in Undergraduate Nursing Education

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Learning Context

Many higher education institutions promote principles of scarcity, competition, fragmentation and consumerism, which fosters a paradigm of performance, compared with a paradigm of meaning (Barnacle & Dall'Alba, 2017). In a discussion of the five propositions for genuine students as partners practice, Matthews (2017) states that "Students as Partners (SaP) offers hope for students and staff seeking relational approaches to learning, built on and through dialogue, that enable shared responsibility and joint ownership for teaching, learning, and assessment" (p. 1). This relational approach to learning supports an educational environment designed to foster meaningful learning. Engaging in genuine SaP practices provides opportunities for meaningful learning and ways of becoming in partnership, which value holistic student and faculty perspectives, knowledge and experiences within reciprocal and respectful relationships.

> *Embodying a genuine SaP approach involves commitment to relationship and attuning to learning through a process orientation*

To engage in shared humanity and bear witness to the human condition, learning in nursing requires relational teaching approaches that create space for understanding that is shaped through knowledge of self, open-mindedness and trust. In our classrooms, undergraduate nursing students need to experience learning in ways

that enable them to explore who they are becoming and their values and beliefs, and to discover how this self-knowledge informs who they are in relation to others, and how they make sense of their understanding for practice. Engaging in authentic relational teaching practice in nursing guides the nature of educator–student interactions, modelling relational approaches to care provision (Hills et al., 2021). The nature of this relational teaching practice is characterized as a partnership, where each person engaged in the partnership has and accepts responsibility for teaching and learning, personal becoming and self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2008; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). According to Matthews (2017), SaP "imagines and makes way for respectful, mutually beneficial learning partnerships, where students and staff work together on all aspects of educational endeavours" (p. 1). In this chapter, we share how we embody genuine SaP practices with undergraduate nursing students through a consideration of Matthews' (2017) five propositions for genuine SaP practices. In addition, we discuss considerations when implementing SaP practices and examine implications for student learning. Finally, we offer recommendations for others engaging in genuine SaP practices.

Focus

Considerations when Planning and Implementing Genuine SaP Practice

Engaging in authentic SaP practices enables the creation of learning environments that build a sense of community, where educators and students engage in deep, meaningful learning through fostering trust and promoting shared responsibility for learning and teaching. In an editorial, Matthews (2017) offers five guiding propositions underpinning SaP that should be aspired to in planning and implementing genuine SaP practice.

1. **Foster inclusive partnerships**: In this proposition, Matthews (2017) offers thoughts on the significance of creating space and being intentional in engaging in teaching and learning in ways where all students are made to feel "that my identity, my thoughts, my ideas are significant and valuable" (Cook-Sather & Agu, 2013, p. 277).

2. **Nurture power-sharing relationships through dialogue and reflection:** Matthews (2017) speaks about power-sharing within SaP partnerships through the lens of equitable contributions by all involved in partnership. Nurturing power-sharing relationships involves transparency around intentions and requires open dialogue surrounding the reciprocity between continuous reflection and action to support transformative learning.

3. **Accept partnerships as a process with uncertain outcomes:** Matthews (2017) suggests that SaP, as a relational process, lends itself to an orientation that values emergent learning and teaching built upon human relationships. Thus, SaP focuses on the process of learning, and accepting uncertain outcomes.

4. **Engage in ethical partnerships:** The underlying assumption that SaP is good for all involved "suggests an ethical foundation" (Matthews, 2017, p. 5).

Matthews (2017) offers that situating SaP as ethical practice involves at least three components. Firstly, care is required to ensure the process of power-sharing within SaP. Secondly, the ultimate intent of partnerships should be to foster the good for all involved. Finally, ethical partnerships should advocate for an ethic of care in SaP that recognizes the partnership's contribution to the greater societal good beyond just individualistic advancement.

5. **Enact partnership for transformation:** Matthews et al. (2018) suggest that "The extent to which we value students and staff working collaboratively informs the transformative potential of partnership" (p. 28). SaP extends beyond a "project," and instead becomes a way of life that guides learning and teaching in higher education.

Course Design and Delivery Strategies that Promote Genuine SaP

Embodying genuine SaP practices in our own work begins with our course design and delivery strategies. Our courses are designed with intentionality and a loose structure that supports flexibility in ways that encourage students to engage as active partners in their learning experience. Being flexible in how partnerships unfold aligns with Matthew's proposition of accepting partnerships as a process with uncertain outcomes. We recognize and model bringing ourselves to our relational teaching practice and nurture environments that invite students to bring their whole selves to inform their own and others' learning (Brown, 2021). For example, throughout the course we continually build a learning community that recognizes individuals as unique, while also encouraging students to value learning as a communal process. This strategy supports Matthew's propositions associated with fostering inclusive partnership. In each learning encounter, we prioritize and invite students to lead their learning through sharing personally meaningful experiences, and facilitating conversations that highlight celebrations in learning while also holding space for reflection and acknowledgement of struggle. This strategy connects with Matthew's proposition surrounding enacting partnership for transformation. We recognize and utilize each other's strengths and participate in activities that highlight our unique and shared experiences, understandings and humanness, which reflects Matthew's proposition surrounding the significance of engaging in ethical partnerships.

> *Being intentional in cultivating a sense of community and belonging in the learning environment supports inclusiveness, promotes trust and encourages students to engage as active participants in learning*

We juxtapose individual and communal learning by modelling open-mindedness and reflexivity and asking the same of students. Students are called into regular, disciplined reflection guided by frameworks such as Kim's (1999), conversations about things that matter, and thoughtful questions as they listen for their and peers'

inner voices (Baxter Magolda, 2008). We focus our attention on encouraging dialogue and reflection and facilitate exploring and mobilizing knowledge. These course delivery strategies reflect Matthew's proposition of nurturing power-sharing relationships through dialogue and reflection. For example, we work with students to identify personal learning foci, framed as driving questions based on our course learning outcomes, self-assessments of learning and collaboration with us. Students examine these questions – such as, "How are my nursing decisions and actions influenced by my values, beliefs, knowledge and previous experience?" – with peers and teachers in class and clinical settings, explore them in assignments and address them with a photo essay at course conclusion. It is our role to create opportunities for students to practice and learn, focused on their individual and communal learning goals. We also encourage students to elicit feedback on their learning, again encouraging active participation in learning and promoting responsibility for teaching and learning. We respond to elicited feedback and offer additional constructive feedback. Teaching approaches such as these support Matthew's proposition of enacting partnership for transformation.

Consistently modelling curiosity and open-mindedness, actively listening and inviting students to contribute as active partners in teaching and learning fosters trust over time. Students learn to trust their voice, and the voices of their peers. Trust is also manifest in silence and a willingness to dwell in contemplation and uncertainty. Student voice is recognized through inviting and encouraging questions, honouring perspectives and co-creating authentic assessment framed from students' identified learning goals.

Implications

Teaching is an ethical partnership built within relationship, respect and trust between students and teachers. Valuing each student's humanness fosters trusting relationships that support student learning. This work is multidimensional and evident in our intentionality as we marshal strengths, co-create learning routines, notice development opportunities, tender peer feedback and engage within student–instructor dialogue. As our trust grows, so does the depth of our conversations about what is working well and how we want to make changes. The strength of our relationships and desire to support each other sustains this challenging and potentially conflictual work. This embodiment of the genuine SaP propositions recognizes the sacredness of our relations to each other and is an essential part of learning nursing's disciplinary perspective (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Hills et al., 2021; Matthews, 2017).

While we value the essentialness of SaP approaches to teaching and learning, we also recognize the complexity involved in facilitating genuine SaP practices. We acknowledge the vulnerability that our students often feel when invited to take responsibility for their learning in ways that foster deep and personally meaningful learning. We are also aware of the tensions that arise for ourselves and our students as we navigate teaching and learning that is emergent in nature, that evolves from the co-constructed dialogue between and amongst students and ourselves as

educators. Learning through genuine SaP approaches reveals itself in moments of beauty and suffering reflective of what it means to engage with fellow human beings in the messiness of learning and life. Embodying genuine SaP practices requires commitment to bear witness to both our own and students' learning. Through engaging in genuine SaP practices, students experience deep, personally meaningful learning connected to nursing disciplinary practice and their life (Mathews, 2017). With practice over time, students find themselves mobilizing knowledge, practising open-mindedness and listening to their inner voice as they become registered nurses.

Our deep self-work as educators is central to our teaching and learning with students. Attuning to the signals we receive about ourselves, the students and our communal environment is essential to doing this work well. We do our best to remain present in our space so we can see, feel, hear and touch the environment, to decide what would be the most helpful response in the next moment. To do this we attend to our inner voice, emotions and physical responses as these are often signals to sit up and pay attention (Baxter Magolda 2008; Felten, 2017). It is learning to interpret these signals with curiosity that has guided us to the meaningful experiences students express. Through the reciprocity embodied within genuine SaP practices, we learn from our students; we notice what is capturing their attention, monitor their responses to our decisions and attune to what is being left behind. We circle back to what we should pick up and work together to judge the effectiveness of our learning. We are guided by our relationship with each student and our experiences within teaching and learning moments. This work is intense on a personal level and requires students' and instructors' trust that what we are working on together is what we should be working on. We trust we are in the right place at the right time, doing the right thing for ourselves as a group engaged in teaching and learning nursing. This is our biggest challenge in teaching and learning relationships and working with SaP. However, as these words shared by a student demonstrate, embodying SaP is mutually beneficial and offers significant opportunities for meaningful learning and ways of becoming in partnership.

> [H]er classroom felt like a safe place and the focus was to move forward rather than fall in line. For this, I am extremely grateful. Her teaching style felt more like a collaboration, in which my thoughts and ideas were valued . . . .

> — Undergraduate student nurse

Recommendations
The following recommendations have emerged from our shared lived experience of embodying genuine SaP practices.

- **Intentionally attune to teaching and learning as relationship and process:** Engaging in genuine SaP practices reflects a way of being in teaching and learning. Embodying a genuine SaP approach involves commitment to relationship and attuning to learning through a process orientation.

- **Build community:** Being intentional in cultivating a sense of community and belonging in the learning environment supports inclusiveness, promotes trust and encourages students to engage as active participants in learning.

- **Utilize the principles of genuine SaP as a lens for course design:** Mobilizing Matthews' (2017) five guiding propositions underpinning genuine SaP serves as a lens to support quality course design.

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Chapter 4:
Walking Toward Good Teaching: A Graduate Student–Faculty Partnership

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Learning Context

Graduate student instructors can enrol in teaching and learning workshops, and while many excellent, evidence-informed workshops exist, it is rare for graduate student instructors to receive ongoing support for developing their capacity to enable undergraduate learning week-over-week while teaching (Camarao & Din, 2023). Throughout this chapter, we will use first names and italics when one person from our partnership is speaking for herself; otherwise, "we" signals all three partners in our project. Cari is a faculty member, Emma is a PhD student, and Morgan is a PhD candidate. During the "walking toward good teaching partnership" we describe throughout this chapter, Cari was teaching three undergraduate courses, Morgan was teaching one first-year undergraduate course for the first time, and Emma was teaching one upper-year undergraduate course for the first time.

Although we are at different stages of teaching experience and expertise (Kenny et al., 2017), we each sought a consistent time and space to reflect meaningfully on our teaching practice. Through walking and talking about teaching each week, we engage in adaptive self-reflection (Bucknell et al., 2022) and actively improve our expertise together, in partnership. We practice openness in our partnership through intentionally engaging in metacognition and grappling with big teaching and learning questions together (Brownhill, 2023). By sharing our teaching and learning experiences with each other, supporting and challenging one another in trying new practices in our classrooms, we co-developed our scholarship of teaching and learning (Shulman, 2012).

Focus

Our weekly reflective conversations deepened our commitments to enabling undergraduate learning and feeling supported in improving our practices. In this chapter we aim to:

1. contextualize our partnership in the extant literature
2. describe what we did and what we learned
3. sketch implications of our pedagogical partnership
4. offer practical recommendations to readers interested in walking toward good teaching.

We are two graduate-student instructors (Morgan and Emma) and one faculty member (Cari) doing scholarship in the same faculty. Reflecting out loud on our teaching each week together while walking stretches our perspectives, strengthens our accountability to enabling student learning, and affords us a psychologically supportive space to do both (Rogers, 2002; Shulman, 2012). Emma feels:

> The professional relationship that I was able to develop with both Cari and Morgan provided a strong foundation for the safe space that we collectively worked to achieve. In this environment, I felt fully supported to share my triumphs and struggles and seek guidance and suggestions to support me as a first-time instructor.

Emma's comments underscore the openness and vulnerability teaching reflection can benefit from when we feel psychologically safe thinking about teaching and learning together (Camarao & Din, 2023).

Morgan writes:

> I think Emma and I appreciated the chance to reflect on what was working and what we were struggling with week over week. Cari worked on decreasing the power differential in our partnership through setting a casual tone, sharing challenges in her own classrooms, and asking us for input on her teaching.

Morgan's perspective has us thinking about positional power and partnerships. While we initially believed our weekly learning dialogue would be more supportive to Emma and Morgan as first-time undergraduate instructors, in action, our walk-reflect-talk-and-learn interludes felt more collaborative than Cari could have imagined at the outset. More specifically, Cari reflects:

> I looked forward to our 30 minutes each Thursday at 4:30 p.m. because I was actively listening, learning and feeling renewed by our conversations. My definition of partnership is: We make each other better, and I think this links quite tightly with collaboration. To me, collaboration is only possible when mutual trust, respect and dialogue skills walk together – bad pun intended!

Despite violating the norms of higher education, collaboration feeds and fuels imagination (Abegglen et al., 2023). Abegglen and colleagues (2023) suggest collaboration should be added to Bloom's taxonomy of learning. We certainly felt the three-dimensional impact of collaboration and its nourishing effects as we reflected on our teaching highlights and heartaches in partnership each week. Our collaboration intersects with bell hooks' (1994) claim that engaged pedagogy depends upon a union of mind, body and spirit for both students and instructors in the academy. hooks writes that instructors "must be actively committed to a process of self-actualization that promotes their own well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students" (p. 15). To practise wellness is to take care of mind, body and spirit without separating the three and devaluing any one at the expense of the other. Finally, framing teaching as a healing practice (hooks, 1994) further helps us understand our partnership as a scholarly and holistic wellness practice. We agree with hooks, that engaged pedagogy is healing and that in our roles as instructors on campus, we need to holistically care for and support our wellness so we can create healing spaces with our students.

The holistic wellness benefits of walking and moving with others are well-established. A body of research suggests what the peripatetic philosophers knew: walking at a low to moderate pace increases our creative and divergent thinking (Oppezzo & Schwartz, 2014). Walking is an activity that can facilitate rapport-building, positive group dynamics, a sense of well-being and a feeling of shared experience (Macpherson, 2016). Scholars document using walks outside as a generative way to help PhD students conceptualize their dissertations (Psaros, 2022). For us, an established window of 30 minutes at the same time on the same day each week during the semester creates an important, consistent and practical appointment that supports our wellness, reflection, pedagogy and partnership.

> *Support, growth and holistic wellness is embedded*
> *in our partnership practice*

What did we do?
Every Thursday afternoon during the 13-week semester, we met at 4:30 p.m. in the atrium of our building, donned our coats, and walked the same 30-minute loop outside, passing student residence buildings, through a stand of poplar trees, and a variety of naturalized spaces on the edge of our campus. Each week, a different person in our partnership began reflecting on her teaching first. We always used the same prompts, beginning with: What went well in my teaching this week? And second: What was a struggle, or what is something I would like support figuring out relative to my teaching this week? As each person reflected out loud, the listening partners posed questions or probes to develop each partner's understanding of the topic being described. Our reflective conversations flowed and moved organically from one speaker to the next. We always afforded each partner time to reflect out

loud as we walked but did not keep track of how much time each speaker used in her reflection. Some Thursday afternoons, only two of us met and this was okay; we found having the time blocked in our calendars as an official appointment was essential for making our partnership and reflection on teaching part of our weekly commitments. This was not a drop-in walk-and-talk, and we all feel this made the 30 minutes more impactful for our teaching, growth and wellness.

What did we learn?

Morgan reflects:

> *I learned different ways to navigate my new role as an instructor – I found it to be quite a big shift and step up from previous work as a teaching assistant, and having a space to talk about, and ask questions about, what I was working on was tremendously helpful for me. Specifically, I learned about practical things such as how to approach managing my own TA, how to work with students and grading, as well as strategies for creating an active and supportive classroom for students.*

Cari feels:

> *I experienced the value of carving out and protecting 30 minutes each week to look back on my teaching consistently – [that it] makes a multifaceted difference to my teaching and my undergraduates' learning. I discovered the renewing and refreshing impact of spending time with new teaching scholars and loved it! Finally, I re-learned the power of actively listening while walking and am humbled by its potency.*

Emma believes:

> *Without our weekly walks I fear I would not have carved out valuable time nor critically reflected to the extent that we did. Each week both Cari and Morgan asked thought-provoking questions and I was left with an action item to trial the following week. I believe this experience made me a better instructor, not only for the students, but also in the beliefs that I have for my own skills.*

Together we learned that keeping our reflective prompts similar week-over-week (What went well in your teaching? What was a struggle?) created a flexible structure and focused our brief walking meetings on teaching victories and puzzles we sought support from our partners in solving.

Implications

Our partnership strengthened our teaching strategies, our tactics for handling difficult discussions and our confidence in trying new teaching approaches. Exit tickets, formative feedback, student voting, timing of feedback on assignments, practical set ups for exam reviews, use of new technology and adding fun to learning

activities are a few specific teaching and learning strategies we applied individually and reflected on together over the course of our 13-week partnership. We feel these teaching strategies improved student experiences in our classrooms. We believe the undergraduate students across our courses benefitted from our partnership. Because of the care we directed toward each other and ourselves each week, we were filling our own and each other's cups intentionally and holistically.

A few implications for teaching we discovered during our weekly partnership practice include: an emboldened commitment to improving our teaching practices, an increased confidence in taking good risks and trying new strategies in our teaching, and an amplification of our teaching identities. We were more intentionally becoming the instructors we mean to be because of our partnership. Each of these implications are rooted in the honest learning dialogues we co-created as we walked and talked outside each week.

Recommendations

- We recommend carving out and protecting 30 minutes to walk in partnership and reflect on your teaching out loud each week over the course of one semester.

- While a substantive body of research indicates that moving outdoors in the natural world affords significant benefits that indoor physical activity does not (Monroy & Keltner, 2023), we understand that being outdoors in extreme weather may not be appealing or possible. Our campus has a wonderful web of indoor connections between buildings which afford creative alternatives to walking and talking outside.

- We know walking is not universally accessible. Based on our positive experiences, we recommend scouting out and trying wheelchair-accessible pathways where you work.

- Despite the extensive evidence indicating the need for reflection on teaching, we feel our collaborative conversation about teaching each week took us further faster and with more joy than reflecting on our own could. We hope readers will find colleagues who are willing to carve out and protect 30 minutes to move and reflect together in their weekly schedule.

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Students as Partners in Course Development

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Learning Context

In most nursing schools across Canada, undergraduate nursing education takes place in both university and off-site practice settings, where nursing students work one on one with a registered nurse preceptor. These student–preceptor relationships are fundamental to facilitate student learning in both university and practice environments (Jack et al., 2018). Learning in the practice setting offers opportunities for clinical skills development and is also an important part of the professional socialization process, as students learn safe and effective patient care as well as ethical practice (Ion et al., 2017). However, dissatisfaction with clinical placement experiences can negatively affect student learning and thus a supportive relationship with preceptors is essential (Hamshire et al., 2011; Jack et al., 2018). Nursing students can offer a valuable perspective to help foster these vital relationships. Further, health-care organizations can work towards supporting mentorship culture, fostering student–preceptor partnerships, and developing supportive links to the higher education institutions (Foster et al., 2015).

Together, our Faculty of Nursing and Alberta Health Services practice partners identified the need to further foster student–preceptor partnerships and turned to the literature on mentorship and student–preceptor partnerships. Hamshire and Jack (2021) developed an evidence-informed framework to facilitate students in being active collaborators within their learning. They also developed a parallel framework to support preceptors in their development as educators (Jack & Hamshire, 2019). They hypothesized that when both students and preceptors use the frameworks together, a true student–preceptor partnership could be developed. Both frameworks were based on the following four principles (Jack & Hamshire, 2019; Hamshire & Jack, 2021):

- Learning and teaching in practice is a two-way process between educator and learner and is transformative by nature.
- Learning and teaching in practice is influenced by context, which is ever-changing over time.
- Learning is never complete and is part of an ongoing journey of development.
- The principles of growth and support are inherent within the process.

We adapted these U.K.-based frameworks for the Canadian context and used the elements within each framework to build two professional development e-learning courses (one for nursing students and one for preceptors) in Articulate Storyline 360. Storyline 360 is a subscription-based e-learning authoring software that allowed us to create online courses that were narrated by students and customized with a variety of multimedia and interactive elements, including videos and workbooks to offer opportunities to reflect on and document learning. Once developed, these online courses can be imported into various online learning management systems, such as D2L. This provided a rich opportunity to engage with nursing students and preceptors as partners in our course development. Figure 1 provides screenshots from our Storyline 360 courses and companion workbooks to provide visual context for the various course components.

FIGURE 1: SCREENSHOTS FROM THE PLATO STUDENT COURSE ARTICULATE STORYLINE 360 E-LEARNING MODULE AND THE COMPANION WORKBOOK
(1) Course opening page; (2) Introduction to PLATO workbook; (3) Slide from a student-acted video; (4) Example of questions learners are asked to reflect on in workbooks; (5) Digital workbook cover; (6) Sample page from workbook. The PLATO Preceptor course followed the same format with different student-acted videos and reflective questions throughout.

5

3.2: I Began to Think, 'What am I Going to Do?'

TOM'S STORY

Thinking Point

Question 8.1: What is the influence of the environment on me as a student?

Question 8.2: What are the influences on the practice team and how can I work with them on these?

Question 8.3: How can I work in partnership with the team in the placement environment?

6

Student Workbook

PLATO

Practice Learning and Teaching Orientations

Companion Workbook for the Student PLATO e-Course
Version 1.0 | May 2022

Name: Date completed:

Part 3: Wider Factors

Activity 7: Professional Guidelines

7.1 How familiar am I with the guidelines disseminated by my professional body?

In this example, Tom assesses Sheila by himself and does not seek guidance from their preceptor or a registered staff member.

How familiar are you with the guidelines relating to your role as a registered nurse? You can revisit them by clicking on the link on the top left of the screen.

7.2 How influential are the guidelines on my everyday practice and the practice team?

Tom felt confident to work with Sheila alone and able to risk assess without any help and perhaps was not thinking about the guidelines in relation to their practice. This might have been due to pressures in the ward environment.

How have you or could you ensure that you remain familiar with the guidelines and apply them in practice? This might include reflecting on your practice regularly or discussing aspects with your practice team or preceptor.

Focus

Led by the powerful shift in the higher education literature towards including students as partners (SaPs) in teaching and learning (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapsone, 2017), we welcomed nursing SaPs to provide their perspectives and experiences as learners to better understand and improve student learning and effective teaching. One of our student partners took the lead in engaging other students in the project, collecting student stories and guiding the video content creation. We asked nursing students to write about their positive and challenging experiences working in clinical settings, and more specifically focused on their experiences working with registered nurse preceptors. These stories were then video recorded by fellow nursing students to protect the storytellers' identities. These student-generated stories and recorded vignettes, along with the elements of the U.K.-based frameworks, served as the foundation for the development of both the student and preceptor online courses.

To deepen learning, we drew upon the central tenets of appreciative inquiry (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010) to offer students and preceptors an affirmative process to elicit positive change, identify possibilities, develop a collective forward-thinking vision, and uncover and bring forth their existing strengths. Following the work of Jack and Hamshire we worked with SaP to develop and adapt positive prompt questions aligned with each element of each framework (Jack & Hamshire 2019; Hamshire & Jack, 2021). The positive prompt questions were embedded in the courses and companion workbooks to encourage students and preceptors to write proactive statements and actions to support their ongoing learning and development (Whitney & Trosten-Bloom, 2010). These co-developed companion workbooks became key components of the courses, in which students and preceptors could reflect on and document learning. The companion workbooks may also be used outside of the course to guide group discussions, focus meaningful conversations between students and preceptors, and/or provide needed documentation for annual nursing registration regarding professional learning and development.

Examples of student questions include:

- How can I make the most of this clinical placement? Describe three ways that you can make the most of your clinical placement while meeting your set learning objectives.
- How does my learning role add to the clinical team? Describe one of your personal values, related to your learning, that will support the clinical practice team.
- How can I negotiate my learning role with my preceptor? Thinking about your interpersonal communication skills, describe three ways in which you can negotiate your learning role with your preceptor.
- What is the influence of the environment on me as a student? Describe three environmental factors that might influence your learning in the clinical placement environment.

Examples of preceptor questions include:

- How do I ensure that learners feel like active participants on the team? List three ways that you can ensure learners feel part of the team.
- How do I support learners in accessing appropriate learning opportunities? Describe how you can ensure learning opportunities are appropriate for your learner's stage of learning and how you may assess what they have learned.
- How might my thoughts and feelings influence my role-modelling practice? Thinking about your own practice as an educator, think about a time when you have had to put your own feelings to one side, to act as a positive role model to a learner.
- What do I do to show that I value others' feelings and knowledge? In your leadership role, describe three ways in which you show you value another's contribution to the development of the educational environment.

Pulling it All Together

As we developed the courses, we were purposeful about including a variety of contexts and foci. Leveraging the elements of the U.K.-based frameworks (Jack & Hamshire 2019; Hamshire & Jack, 2021) and leaning into the student experiences, positive prompt questions and workbooks, we successfully created the two courses, each approximately four hours long. Once completed, our student partners helped peer review the courses to ensure student voice was present and accurate throughout.

Although the courses were developed to be taken independently of each other and the reflective questions for students were not seen by preceptors and vice versa, if both the preceptor and student are engaging in mutual growth, it will likely have a positive influence on the development of supportive relationships and the practice environment. The workbooks completed throughout the courses were designed to be utilized to facilitate reflection and discussion between students and preceptors. To foster meaningful learning in practice education settings, the courses and companion workbooks provide an opportunity for students and preceptors to learn from the relationship in a process of mutual growth, acknowledging the complexities of the practice environment and how constraints and cultures can influence their experiences.

Next Steps

Early responses from both students and preceptors indicate these courses offer a valuable learning opportunity. To further evaluate the courses, we will employ a retrospective pre- and post-test method to encourage students and preceptors to reflect on their growth and rate their level of competence, skills and knowledge both before they start and after they complete the courses. This data will allow us to explore the feasibility and acceptability of using the courses to support student and preceptor development in a practice setting. Through the evaluation process, our student partners will develop the abilities to collaborate, communicate and think critically and creatively, while gaining first-hand experience with conducting teaching and learning research and seeing how their perspectives can contribute to best practices in teaching and learning.

Implications

Implementing a SaP approach to our course development provided a unique way to learn from different students' experiences. Having a student partner take the lead in engaging other students in the project was an effective way to increase participation. We were able to draw on a variety of past student experiences to help identify key areas of focus for our courses and see many preceptor–student challenges and successes through the lens of the students. The work required an organized approach, with focused attention to demonstrating diversity and inclusivity throughout our courses. In the end, the courses we developed became a fun and interactive experience by centring student voices throughout. While we had a meaningful experience in engaging SaPs in our course development, we highly

recommend having clear roles and expectations, with strategic checkpoints along the way to ensure everyone stays on the same page.

The student partners were excited to contribute to something from outside their normal student experiences. They had a strong desire to help future students through this work and were enthusiastic about having their stories heard. Engaging in this project also helped our student partners better prepare for their clinical preceptorship experiences by identifying ways to expedite student–preceptor relationship building, set tangible goals and work with their preceptors to co-develop action plans to meet their learning objectives.

The courses we developed will support future students in developing a deeper understanding of different clinical placement contexts, and the value in being adaptable to embracing new learning experiences. For preceptors, the courses will support them in becoming more receptive to student feedback, and being mindful of the various ways in which students learn and how to engage students in meaningful conversations about their learning objectives.

Recommendations

For others looking to plan and implement a SaP approach to course development, we have a identified a few recommendations.

- Early invitations to the table and meaningful involvement of students are imperative to ensure projects begin and end with students in mind. This could be accomplished through meetings and workshops focused on developing a clear understanding of expectations and creating space for students to provide suggestions on how they could be involved. Be clear with yourself and your students about the value they bring to the project.

- Students have busy schedules with competing demands, so it is important to be aware of student timelines and set clear roles and expectations to avoid conflicts.

- Students bring a contagious energy to projects they are excited about – harness this energy! Consistently ask students for their feedback and ideas,and be prepared to be flexible enough to consider ways in which students can contribute beyond your initial plans.

- It is important to acknowledge and demonstrate appreciation for the students' contributions. Consider incentives and ways to provide students with opportunities to share the work informally with their peers or more formally through presentations or publications.

In the end, having SaPs in our course development resulted in high-quality, student-centred courses that will help continue to foster student–preceptor partnerships that are key to nursing students' learning experiences.

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Chapter 6:

Calls to Action: Co-Creating a Horizontal Teaching and Learning Environment

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Learning Context

Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage.

— Paulo Freire

It takes courage to question norms, try something new and enact change. Instead of writing this chapter from the lens of an instructor *about* students as partners (SaP) in

post-secondary education, we've written it *with* students as partners to offer insights into our process of co-creating a horizontal teaching and learning environment. The voices of four University of Calgary undergraduate scholars – Seth, Austen, Kayleigh and Madalyn – are woven with those of a Teaching Academy PhD candidate and sessional instructor, Chelsea, and an 85-year-old community member, Sara. After cycles of democratic decision-making, we now share our perspectives and practices for growing partnerships that supersede conventional student–teacher and academic–other dichotomies.

This collaborative chapter is grounded in a fall 2022 undergraduate course, Anthropology 321: Ethnographic Overview of Latin America. Originating from Wallmapu in southern Chile, Sara helped guide the course as an Indigenous Mapuche mentor through a series of knowledge-sharing sessions. While the course learning objectives focused on the social, cultural, economic and political contexts of Latin America since the 16th century, the implementation of activating strategies, class discussions, assessments and feedback was co-designed from the stance of critical pedagogy. Influenced by Paulo Freire's (2000) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, as well as international grassroots movements such as La Vía Campesina (International Forum for Agroecology, 2017) and the Zapatistas (Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, 2005), the undercurrent of this course explored the power dynamics embedded in the flows of knowledge. During and after the semester, Sara would invite members of the course to gather monthly at her home to continue conversing beyond the bounds of formal 75-minute sessions twice a week. Over cups of tea, we began reflecting on the meanings of, opportunities for and barriers to SaP in higher education. Sara's partner, Oscar, also provided mentorship throughout the term and reminds us that "without formation, education is simply information." By this, he stresses the importance of transformative collective action, paired with critical thinking, in order to supersede the current atomized state of academia. In this communal space of trust and friendship, we co-designed a series of calls to action (see Table 1) for establishing and maintaining meaningful partnerships between all learners, students and instructors alike, both within and beyond academia.

TABLE 1. CALLS TO ACTION

Orient power horizontally by encouraging student agency and multidimensional dialogue
Contextualize content and theory through positionalities and students' lived experiences
Humanize pedagogy by empowering emotions, reflection and community-building
Coordinate transdisciplinary, participatory and collaborative educational processes
Possess and project faith in students as competent, critical learners

Create and facilitate more accessibility and opportunity for student-directed research
Support faculty and sessional instructors to share lived experiences from their fields
Design pragmatically oriented curricula grounded in community needs and struggles
Promote the integration of our communities within academia
Open our understandings of education as a lifelong process

These calls to action can be adapted and implemented democratically in classroom settings by all those present and supported institutionally by university governance and leadership structures. Drawing upon examples from Anthropology 321, our chapter will focus on the call to "orient power horizontally by encouraging student agency and multidimensional dialogue." We will conclude with the impacts and implications for collective learning, our recommendations to guide those interested in tailoring the calls to action and a final reflection on our SaP practice.

> *Orient power horizontally by encouraging student agency and multidimensional dialogue*

Focus

In Western educational institutions, there is often a distinct relationship of power between students and instructors that creates individualistic, hierarchical methods for learning (Mignolo, 2002). In the "nutritive concept of education," students are viewed as undernourished, in need of platefuls of literature within the existing scientific body (Freire, 2000; Sartre, 1970). As the receivers of knowledge, students are expected to regurgitate information as opposed to applying a critical comprehension of the material. Education, no longer the telos of a student, now assumes an instrumental role towards receiving credentials, all the while leaving students feeling overwhelmed with decontextualized information. Mere verbalism impacts the ways in which students learn and neglects the fact that those very students are the agents of generating future knowledge and change. Our ambition is aligned with Freirian (2000) "problem-posing education"; that is, enacting a critical pedagogy geared towards the demystification and resolution of the issues people face.

A particular phenomenon necessitating problematization is power, which actualizes itself most in the teacher–student contradiction. This is reflective of the institution's roots in historically elitist epistemological practices and knowledge claims resulting in further reductive practices of "othering" and enculturation (Campbell, 2023). The

hyper-fixation on essentialism and objectivity has resulted in a widespread, but not exclusive, dismissal of action-oriented learning pathways that would benefit both students and their communities. Such impositions of power over students, the programming of curricula with minimal collaboration, and the physical structure of lecture halls dismiss the opportunity for horizontal relationship-building and lead to "reflexive impotence" or general disengagement (Fisher, 2009). A shift away from the bipolar system to popular power requires a transdisciplinary, collaborative and humanizing educational process (Holst, 2009). Moreover, we argue the necessity of respecting students as competent, critical learners with agency, whose learning can be profoundly deepened by opportunities for multidimensional dialogue. We believe a comprehensive understanding of the aforementioned perspectives is essential towards the realization of our call to action.

Student Agency & Multidimensional Dialogue in Action

Upon enrolling in Anthropology 321, students expected it to be like their other courses, with a western lens dominating lectures, readings and scholarly guest speakers. Case studies of Latin American ethnic groups might be tested on a multiple-choice exam and supplemented with a memorization map of countries. On the first day, those notions were disrupted. Walking in, music played over the speakers, accompanied by the smell of Sara's homemade *calzones rotos*, a Chilean pastry. Tables were rearranged in a U-shape so we could see one another, introduce ourselves and share our respective studies, backgrounds and how we have come to understand the world.

Over the following weeks, we not only learned from scholars and activists from Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador and Chile, but from one another. We were encouraged to contextualize course content and theory through our own positionalities and lived experiences; to question sources, address contradictions, uncover personal biases and hold space for multiple perspectives. This process required a humanization of pedagogy, wherein emotions were reintroduced as a healthy and essential part of learning. During lectures, we felt comfortable to express our sadness, voice our anger, share our joy and openly discuss all emotions. By establishing a space to serve us all, we recognized that the suppression of legitimate feelings could not occur. The act of sharing from a common place and "learning with" as opposed to being "taught at" allowed for horizontal relationships of respect and trust to take shape between learners. Before being told how a concept has been understood by other scholars or what solutions have been proposed to a problem, we were encouraged to think about it ourselves in dialogue with our peers through think-pair-shares and participatory activities such as musical reflections. During a lesson on "Spirituality and Healing," we were urged to stand up and walk around the classroom while music played. When the song stopped, we paired up with someone we hadn't yet spoken to and discussed the question on the screen: "What guides your understanding of the world?" When the music resumed, we walked around again and repeated the process with a new prompt. "How do your beliefs guide your actions, values and relationships?"

Index Card Capture was another mode of assessing key takeaways from required readings and previous lectures, during which we responded to an open-ended prompt on an index card. For example, "Describe two main arguments from the book *Ancestral Lands of the Ese'Eja*. How can you connect these dynamics in the Peruvian Amazon to your previous lived experiences and the situation here in Alberta?" After 10 minutes, we engaged in a Spiral Discussion, turning to the person next to us and sharing our responses for five minutes. Then, we reoriented ourselves to discuss further in a group of four. After another five minutes, students were asked to share on behalf of the group, allowing diverse perspectives to be heard. This gentle approach was helpful for reducing the anxiety of being called on. Time permitting, classes ended with a roundtable evaluation, where we considered what elements helped and did not help our learning, and how we felt leaving class that day.

This combination of approaches helped to break down the idea of students as "receptacles" to be filled by an exclusive source of knowledge (Friere, 2000). By encouraging agency and multidimensional dialogue, the unequal power relations inherent in conventional pedagogy began to reorient towards a horizontal landscape, and students became "actors as meaningful participants" in their own development.

Implications

Education is a simultaneous occurrence in dialogue between action and reflection; happening throughout life, both inside and outside of the institution. By honouring a mutual respect for student agency and multidimensional dialogue, our SaP experience has resulted in the growth of a multigenerational community beyond the fall 2022 semester. In addition to gathering outside the classroom and co-writing this paper, we have co-presented at the 2023 Conference on Postsecondary Learning and Teaching, Graduate Students' Association Peer Beyond Symposium, and the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology AnArky Talk Series. These opportunities for further collaboration have animated our curiosity and creativity, built our confidence and capacity for critical inquiry, and instilled a sense of hope for liberatory action.

Our shared thoughts are a small part of our reflection on SaP practices. The calls we put forth are not a "one size fits all" approach, as we recognize the valued subjectivity in the ongoing, experiential process of learning. They should evolve and be nuanced to the context of the community, discipline and needs of the students, instructors and wider society. Nevertheless, we hope that instructors, educational leaders and all stakeholders who support learning in higher education can draw upon our approaches to co-create horizontal teaching and learning environments.

Recommendations

For those interested in a SaP activity, initiative or research project centring student agency and multidimensional dialogue, and implementing our calls to action, we offer the following recommendations.

- **Involve students from the onset.** On the first day of class, carve out time to get to know one another and co-design expectations for building a respectful

and accessible environment. Taking a genuine interest in students' backgrounds, interests and challenges will facilitate the implementation of a pragmatically oriented curriculum that is more relevant to students' lives and needs (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

- **Encourage student voice and participation so all learners can share their lived experiences, critical understandings and the organizations they are involved with.** As humanizing pedagogy is a two-way process, instructors can supplement content with guests and reflexive stories from the field that demonstrate transparency, humility, humour and passion. Including activities like storytelling and media analysis can serve to contextualize course content, crystallize theories and thinkers through tangibility, and help students to see the real-world applications of their learning in a safe space (Henry & Thorsen, 2021).

- **Provide choice and flexibility to meet students where they are and support their interests.** Assessments can be designed to allow for problem-based research directed by the students themselves (Hmelo, Duncan & Chinn, 2007). Such academic freedom can result in a deeper understanding of the discipline, a consciousness-raising and an acquisition of professional skills that will prepare them for future pursuits (Kuh et al., 2006).

- **Enable learners to come together and reflect on content beyond the classroom and semester.** In these spaces, students can be encouraged to take further actions alongside instructors and mentors, including writing articles, presenting research and designing short plays that kindle social mobilization for change.

> *Enable learners to come together and reflect on content beyond the classroom and semester*

The co-creation of a horizontal teaching and learning environment can support all learners to better understand themselves, their communities and the needs of both. A students as partners model also facilitates a shared empowerment of meeting or overcoming those needs in creative ways. In all, this collaborative process can create more critical researchers, teachers and professionals, while building empathy, partnerships and the tools to guide a necessary analysis of power dynamics within higher education.

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Appendix

Ethnographic Overview of Latin America (Anthropology 321) is an introduction to the myriad cultural traditions south of the Río Grande. From my experiences living and conducting research in this region of the world, I was privileged to instruct the course in fall 2022.

As I am a scholar of Irish, Polish, German and Italian descent, it was essential to integrate multiple voices and perspectives into the curriculum. In addition to inviting speakers from Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Brazil and Ecuador, and curating a reading and film list that highlighted regional creators, I invited my PhD research counterpart, Sara, to guide the semester.

Sara Rodriguez Huenchullan is an Indigenous Mapuche Elder who has dedicated 85 years to political education and community organization. Both she and her partner Oscar were imprisoned during Chile's authoritarian dictatorship and were eventually brought to Calgary. We met in 2020 through mutual friends in the local agricultural scene and quickly developed a friendship. Sara and Oscar not only provided guidance during doctoral milestones but were pillars of support when I received my first sessional position.

Unlike a one-off guest lecturer, Sara established and maintained a relationship with the students of Anthropology 321 throughout the 13-week term. She expressed that her motivation for participating was to foster intergenerational learning exchanges, to uncover systems of oppression, to ignite the power of the grassroots and to connect beyond the classroom. Through a series of knowledge-sharing sessions supported by three grants, Sara connected the course material to her lived experiences with neoliberal extractivism, social revolutions and political theatre, among other topics.

Grounding our co-teaching philosophy was the importance of relationship-building, student voice and critical thought, creativity and choice, and conversation-based learning. Sara's participation in the course made a lasting impact on me and the students, many of whom continue to visit Sara and Oscar at their home.

One student said, "Sara, your passion and love for education will be something I carry with me for life," while another stated, "I will forever cherish and value the time we shared in class."

— Chelsea Rozanski

Final Thoughts

When completing significant projects, such as this guide, I am reminded that this is not the end of a project but the beginning of another. There is always something that sparks curiosity to continue or explore further. I expect others experience this as well. Throughout my academic career I have been inspired by T. S. Eliot's words, "to make an end is to make a beginning" (Eliot, 1942). I trust reading this guide will not be the end of your interest in students as partners but the beginning of moving forward with a renewed perspective and motivation in your teaching and learning practice.

We have worked closely with the Teaching Academy members and their co-authors in producing this guide – from the concept and call for papers to initial drafts, reviewing and revisions, through to the completed publication. Natasha Kenny's foreword and Mayi Arcellana-Panlilio's introduction offer additional questions to consider and a thoughtful overview of each chapter. The authors' share their experiences in "re-imagining," "using design thinking," "embodying relational approaches," "walking toward good teaching," "learning in the practice setting" and "co-creating" in exploring and developing students as partners models, for the benefit of others in intentionally considering strategies to work with students as genuine partners.

Best wishes for the beginning or continuation of your next chapter with students as partners.

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The Students as Partners in Higher Education Guide is available on the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning website.

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