

Pedagogical Partnerships

A HOW-TO GUIDE

for Faculty, Students, and Academic Developers
in Higher Education

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AFTERWORD

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As this volume makes eminently clear, pedagogical partnership has the potential to be both powerfully beneficial and intensely challenging. Working as partnership practitioners and researchers in our varied, international contexts (Australia, Canada, and the UK), and connecting with others interested in partnership around the world, we have heard and experienced the simultaneous enthusiasm and difficulty articulated in this book on numerous occasions. Partnership has the capacity to confer many different kinds of benefits on students, staff, and institutions. It offers an exciting antidote to the growing emphasis in postsecondary education on students as consumers and has the potential to push back against the neoliberal culture of individualism, competition, and performativity that is increasingly dominant in today's world. In its focus on building and valuing relationships, destabilizing traditional hierarchies, and recognizing a wider range of voices, knowledges, and perspectives, partnership has also been seen to contribute to making postsecondary institutions more human, equitable, and democratic spaces. At the same time, it is undeniably hard work, which can be rife with uncertainty and require considerable emotional labor, and it may well fall short of at least some of its goals on some occasions.

This complexity is an important piece of what makes this volume so timely and significant. By offering a clear and detailed view of one model of engaging students and staff as partners in classroom- and curriculum-focused pedagogical partnerships, and by drawing on extensive research and experience to name and explore some of the key challenges

that attach to this work, Alison Cook-Sather, Melanie Bahti, and Anita Ntem have developed a highly practical resource that will support others interested in engaging in partnership, particularly those looking to establish and sustain institutional partnership programs. Indeed, those of us who have been involved in developing partnership programs on our own campuses can attest to how valuable this resource would have been as we went about that work. Significantly, the three authors, an experienced member of faculty and two recent graduates, “talk the talk and walk the walk” not only in working in partnership as co-authors but also in sharing their reflections on their own experiences of working together in pedagogical partnership. Moreover, by including examples and insights drawn from a number of different partnership programs and initiatives, and by posing a series of key questions designed to help readers articulate their own goals and commitments and tailor partnership opportunities to their own contexts, the volume makes clear that there is no “one size fits all” approach to partnership work. In this respect, we see the book not only as a valuable window into the day-to-day functioning and processes of one highly successful partnership program, but also as a call to develop a wide range of partnership practices that respond to and work within diverse institutional and cultural contexts.

Building on this call, we invite readers not only to engage in applying, translating, and assessing the ideas set out in this guide, but also to extend and add to its insights by taking up its invitation to consider the variety of ways in which partnership might unfold and be supported in different cases and spaces. Most essentially in this regard, we need further consideration of how partnership plays out in a range of countries and cultural contexts, particularly given the growing recognition that much of the existing partnership literature has focused on examples from “Western,” predominantly English-speaking institutions. It would also be instructive to see similarly detailed considerations of how to establish, support, and sustain pedagogical partnerships that are not focused primarily or immediately on the classroom or curriculum, for example student-staff co-inquiry on discipline-based research or the scholarship of teaching and learning, or partnerships playing out within the realm of institutional governance. We would also benefit from additional resources taking up

and documenting strategies for effectively supporting or recognizing student-student partnerships (e.g., through peer learning and mentorship), or partnership approaches that engage a wider variety of campus and community partners. Likewise, following from the research and recommendations Alison Cook-Sather, Melanie Bahti, and Anita Ntem provide about the possibilities for partnership to contribute to equity and inclusion in postsecondary education, we need further consideration and assessment of various models for working toward this essential goal.

As even these few examples make clear, then, this volume doesn't simply provide a singular roadmap for others to follow. Instead, it offers a helpful guide to one set of (research and experience-informed) partnership practices and objectives, an invitation to consider applying, adapting, and extending these, and permission to do things differently. We look forward to seeing how readers take up these possibilities in their own partnership practice and research.

Along with Alison and Anita we are all, with a few others, co-editors of the *International Journal for Students as Partners*.