VOICES FROM THE FIELD

THE FRAMEWORKS PARTNERS BRING TO STUDENTS-AS-PARTNERS WORK

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The frameworks we use to approach students-as-partners work help us make sense of the work, both in our engagement and in our analyses. Whether implicit or explicit, these frameworks shape what we offer and experience, what we perceive and convey within the partnership work, and the sense we make of the work for ourselves and for others. Sustaining *IJSaP*'s commitment to offering a venue for a wide range of contributors to address important questions regarding students-as-partners practices without going through the intensive submission, peer-review, and revision processes, this iteration of Voices from the Field offers glimpses into a range of frameworks that partners bring to partnership work and what we can learn when we make those frameworks explicit.

The invitation we extended for this iteration of Voices from the Field was to address this question: What frameworks do you bring to your partnership work, and how do they inform your partnership experience? We indicated that these could be theoretical or conceptual frameworks, such as Keogh, Hepworth, Orrnert, and Parkes' (2025) reflections on a pedagogy of hope or Dean and Timmermans' (2022) discussion of Jindaola. We also suggested that they could be applications or extensions of disciplinary frameworks, such as one student partner's discussion of the phenomenon of dynamic kinetic stability in relation to the pursuit of social justice through pedagogical partnership (Nguyen, 2025). Finally, we noted that they could be personal frameworks, as in another student partner's reflections on coming from a particular geographical location and how that experience informed his conceptions and practices of partnership work (Gordon, 2025).

We received 31 submissions from 49 contributors. These included 13 faculty members, 17 staff members or administrators, and 19 students. Contributors wrote from Australia, Canada, Japan, Lebanon, Scotland, South Africa, numerous universities in England, and several states in

the United States, including Alaska, California, Georgia, Indiana, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Washington, and Wyoming. These contributors hold a range of roles in higher education: undergraduate and graduate students; faculty in different disciplines; staff in various campus offices; and administrative leaders.

Across the contributions, we found that different kinds of frameworks informed one another, even if one framework or another was foregrounded. We divided the contributions into three loose categories, but as with many contributions to Voices from the Field, this collection crosses and blurs categories. Contributions foregrounded three basic kinds of frameworks for pedagogical partnership work:

1. **Theoretical frameworks for pedagogical partnership work**. These frameworks draw on established theories, including Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), Ubuntu (Ewuoso & Hall, 2019), pedagogical partnership (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014), and the United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education Good Supervisory Practice framework (Taylor, 2019). They also include standpoint epistemology, Gergen's (1999) applications of social constructionist thinking to therapy and education, adaptations of Gilbert's (2010) compassionate mind model, and Freire's (2021) pedagogy of hope. Finally, these frameworks include the Thinking Environment framework developed by Kline (2006) and the research-informed teaching nexus developed by Jenkins et al. (2007) and Healey (2025). Each of the 9 contributions to this section brings one or more of these theoretical frameworks to bear on pedagogical partnership work.

2. **Conceptual frameworks for pedagogical partnership work**. These frameworks are developed by the contributor(s) to name and analyze particular variables, their expected relationships, and their impacts, guided by a certain set of values or commitments. Some are developed by the contributors themselves, such as "reciprocal narrative co-creation" (El Moustaine, this collection) and "constructive disalignment" and "authentic alignment" (Henri, this collection). Others are borrowed from other entities' conceptualizations, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (Ashraf, this collection) or the GROW mentoring framework developed by Sir John Whitmore (Myint, this collection). Other conceptual frameworks are based in Aboriginal knowledges, such as the Jindoala perspective of reciprocity that draws on the principle of "ngapartji ngapartji"—"give and take" (Nahar et al., this collection), or in cultural conceptions, such as "ibasho"—a "place of belonging" in Japanese (Mori, this collection). Each of the 10 contributions to this section describes the conceptual framework and how it informs pedagogical partnership conceptions and practices.

3. **Individual frameworks for pedagogical partnership work**. These frameworks inform approaches that draw on individuals' cultural identities, disciplinary preparation, lived experiences, and/or aspirations to particular ways of being. Individuals have developed these frameworks to guide engagement that is personally meaningful and also links to

larger cultural, disciplinary, or other influences. The contributions in this section highlight the identities participants bring as partners (Arm et al., this collection; Guo, this collection). They point to the challenges of navigating (hierarchical) systems (Holder, this collection), or managing tension in context (McSweeney & Small, this collection), and of striving to engage in partnership in particular places at particular times in history (Milaras, this collection; Al-sayyed, this collection). They emphasize relational qualities such as trust (Salim, this collection), honesty and transparency (Satia, this collection), and recognition (Hope, this collection), as well as specific partner skills and capacities that inform the work (Yusko & O'Connor, this collection). Each of the 12 contributions to this section offers a unique intersection of these dimensions of experience and perspective.

As always, we invite readers to make additional connections within and across contributions, in this case in relation to the frameworks these contributors offer, which might intersect with, clarify, or offer new ways of framing and approaching partnership work.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORK

In partnership work, I ground my practice in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) to foster a collaborative environment for adult learners. By prioritising autonomy, competence, and relatedness, the partnership shifts from a hierarchy to a co-created journey. I facilitate autonomy by involving students in decision-making, ensuring they feel ownership. We build competence through transparent feedback that validates their professional identities, while relatedness fosters a sense of belonging. This approach nurtures intrinsic motivation, with learners engaging deeply because the work is inherently meaningful and aligned with their goals.

—Kashmira Dave, Senior Lecturer in Academic Development, University of New England, Australia, kdave3@une.edu.au

Student success depends on staff-student partnerships that cultivate belonging within a university. As a senior manager at a research-intensive university in South Africa, I frame my staff-student partnerships through the Southern African indigenous ethical and relational philosophical practice of Ubuntu, "I am because we are" (Ewuoso & Hall, 2019: p. 96). Ubuntu is rooted in collective responsibility, mutual care, and shared humanity (Ewuoso & Hall, 2019). In the learning ecosystem, Ubuntu allows me to reconceptualise partnerships as a co-becoming process, negotiated through reciprocal mutual recognition and an active commitment to communal flourishing, collective decision-making, and the co-construction of knowledge, support, and scholarship. Ethical use of data informs initiatives based on dignity, care, and social justice, enabling students' lived experiences to be recognised as valid epistemic contributions. Using this culturally resonant framework, I often question exclusionary academic cultures and continually reimagine

partnerships as a collective commitment to shared learning and institutional transformation.

—Raazia Moosa, Head of Academic Support, University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, Raazia.Moosa@wits.ac.za

We ground our work in Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten's (2014) pedagogical partnership framework, which defines partnership as "a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways" (pp. 6-7). This framework shapes how we structure our AI Fellows program, in which five graduate students partner with faculty to explore the responsible integration of AI in teaching. We introduced the concept of partnership, emphasizing the phrase "equally, although not necessarily in the same ways." We map what each group contributes: faculty developers (us) bring mentorship structures and learning science expertise; faculty contribute disciplinary pedagogy and knowledge of college culture; and students offer technical knowledge, creativity, and crucial student perspectives. Rather than positioning students as recipients of faculty expertise or as service providers, we create conditions where all partners' distinct forms of knowledge are recognized as essential to investigating AI's role in teaching and learning.

—Klaudja Caushi, Associate Director at Northeastern University's Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research, k.caushi@northeastern.edu; Laurie Poklop, Senior Associate Director at Northeastern University's Center for Advancing Teaching and Learning Through Research, Northeastern University, USA, l.poklop@northeastern.edu

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I support the postgraduate research students (PGRs) and their supervisors across all our faculties. This provision includes training new and experienced supervisors to ensure that our PGRs receive a consistent level of supervision. The relationship between PGRs and supervisors is a great example of staff and students working in partnership towards the shared goal of research degree completion, but I have also found that taking a students-as-partners approach is constructive in managing the process. By listening to PGRs' voices expressed in our Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, I can establish areas of supervision that require development. The framework that I use is the UK Council for Graduate Education's Good Supervisory Practice framework (Taylor, 2019), which includes recruiting PGRs, managing ongoing relationships, disseminating findings, and considering their development needs. Using this framework has made a key difference to our supervisory standards and also to our understanding of good practice.

—Julia Taylor, Head of the Doctoral College, Bournemouth University, UK, jetaylor@bournemouth.ac.uk

I facilitate a program in which our student partners regularly observe their faculty partners' teaching and then meet to debrief. Through these conversations, the student

partners learn about how their faculty partners think about teaching, and the faculty partners learn about their students' experiences. I used to teach philosophy, and one framework I bring from that background is standpoint epistemology—the subfield that explores how power and social categories shape what we know. Social facts influence what we notice, what we pay attention to, and what concepts we use to make sense of our experience. These differences in our identities give rise to "situated knowledge" that we have distinctive access to because of our identities. Thinking about the situated knowledge students bring to partnership helps me to be clear with students about the value they bring to the program and with faculty about how their students can help them.

—Cory Davia, educational developer, University of the Pacific, USA
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Strong commitment to student-staff partnership has underpinned my higher-education career, including fostering nationally-recognised peer support programmes and long-standing championing of the influential student mental health charity, Student Minds. Inspired by Gergen's (1999) applications of social constructionist thinking to therapy and education, I have led participatory action research and authentic co-production with students aiming to foster 'generative' and psychologically literate—rather than deficit-based, pathologising—interventions and curricula. This approach has supported the iterative development of an emotion regulation for learning & life framework, with accompanying digital learning resources, by adapting Gilbert's (2010) Compassionate Mind model to empower students with critically reflective mindsets that support practical collaboration and inclusive leadership skills. Embedding this approach in the curriculum supports a universal partnership approach aiming to engage all students as active partners and co-researchers, co-producing mutually supportive learning communities, iteratively improving teaching quality, and graduating with a clear sense of purpose for facing global challenges.

—Denise Meyer, senior assessor for the Student Minds University Mental Health Charter Award Scheme, former Director of Student Wellbeing, Community & Belonging at Canterbury Christ Church University, UK,
denise.meyer1@canterbury.ac.uk

Students-as-partners work provides a framework for developing resilience under complexity, uncertainty, and precarity (Cook-Sather, 2025; Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Kane et al., 2025). Student success thrives when universities cultivate authentic staff–student partnerships that foster belonging, relational trust, meaningful participation, and shared ownership of learning. In my partnership work, I draw on principles of deep education and the self-organization model (Tochon, 2010, Karaman, C., Okten, C., & Tochon, 2012; Khasilova, 2024) to create spaces where students and collaborators feel respected, empowered, and engaged. Deep education emphasizes reflection, trust, and learner autonomy, prioritizing co-construction over top-down

instruction. This approach allows me to build rapport and foster collaborative learning experiences that value students' expertise and support their development as self-directed learners. Programs that emphasize co-design and collaborative inquiry demonstrate how flexible partnerships foster adaptability, ethical responsibility, and productive engagement with ambiguity. When students are positioned as active participants, they gain the skills to navigate uncertainty and transform challenges into opportunities for meaningful learning.

—Dilnoza Khasilova, Director of Adult Education Center, North Idaho College, USA dfkhasilova@nic.edu

Components of the Thinking Environment framework, developed by Kline (2006), are: attention, equality, ease, appreciation, encouragement, feelings, information, difference, incisive questions, and place. This framework promotes independent thought. We used this as a conceptual framework for our compassionate pedagogy project with students as co-researchers. The component of ease—an internal state free from rush/urgency—enabled us to be vulnerable, gentle, and self-compassionate and to appreciate the value of the framework. Appreciation is about noticing what's good and saying it.

Despoina: Vulnerability was met with compassion, allowing every voice to be heard, every thought to be explored, and every perspective to be celebrated.

Bryan: I appreciate the component of difference and its commitment to freedom from the misguided assumptions that drive prejudice experienced by minoritised groups.

Kathryn: The framework brings a coaching approach into students-as-partners work to support self-compassion and resilience in uncertain times.

—Kathryn Waddington, former Reader and now Emerita Fellow in Psychology, and Chartered Coaching Psychologist, k.waddington@westminster.ac.uk; Bryan Bonaparte, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, b.bonaparte1@westminster.ac.uk; Despoina Messinezi, BSc Psychology and Criminology graduate and former student co-researcher, University of Westminster, UK despoina.messinezi@yahoo.co.uk

I started teaching in Higher Education in 1990. My teaching has evolved since then, but the most impactful change was adopting a student-as-partner approach. The best example is my teaching of research methods to final-year undergraduate business students, for whom I used Jenkins et al.'s (2007) *research-informed teaching nexus* as a framework. This framework considers both 1) "students as the audience", i.e., being *research led* (teaching students about research methods illustrated with my personal experiences) and *research oriented* (supporting students to construct their own knowledge and understanding of the topic); and 2) "students as participants", i.e., being *research tutored* (supporting students to discuss and evaluate the work of others) and research based (providing a safe space for students to undertake inquiry based learning).

This approach has engaged students, improved their understanding, and better prepared them for their future professional careers.

—Martyn Polkinghorne, Visiting Academic, Bournemouth University, UK, polkinghornem@bournemouth.ac.uk

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORK

In my partnership work, I bring a framework of *reciprocal narrative co-creation* that shifts the student's role from a subject of research to an active co-author of the institutional story. Influenced by McMaster University's *2021–2026 Teaching and Learning Strategy*, this approach frames partnership as a virtuous cycle in which student voices are not only heard but also integral to the scholarship of teaching and learning. By humanizing data through storytelling, we navigate the complexity and uncertainty of higher education, such as the rise of generative AI and post-pandemic adaptation, by leaning into collective reflection rather than uniform institutional voices. This framework informs my experience by transforming complex real-world challenges into opportunities for shared discovery, ensuring that our pedagogical culture is defined by dialogue, resilience, and a mutual willingness to experiment and learn from failure.

—Nadia El Moustaine, student partner, McMaster University, Canada, elmoustn@mcmaster.ca

As I discovered when I was a student, traditional degrees are not inherently designed to meet their students' expectations; in my case, it was that passing the course would help me attain my aspirational future (a fairly common expectation). A disconnect between student expectations and the curriculum's intended purpose is described in the conceptual framework of *constructive disalignment* (Holmes & Henri, 2025). The opposite phenomenon, *authentic alignment,* requires a deep understanding of student aspirations, expectations, and past experiences—a frequent outcome of the students-as-partners work. One approach I have found particularly effective is the development of teaching partnerships with alumni. Alumni can act as credible role models, offering realistic narratives and pathways that resonate with current students. Co-taught activities with alumni help students bridge the gap between their degree and their aspirational future, re-aligning the curriculum around student needs rather than educator opinion.

—Dominic Henri, Senior Lecturer in Conservation, School of Environmental & Life Sciences, University of Hull, UK, d.henri@hull.ac.uk

Reciprocity from a Jindoala perspective offers a way of understanding partnership as more than participation, drawing on the principle of Ngapartji Ngapartji—"give and take." As Strategic Lead for Students as Partners (SaP) at the University of Greater Manchester, my role involves designing practical resources to embed SaP across the curriculum and professional services. To pilot and co-evaluate the Enabling Students as Partners

Framework (Nahar, 2025) within the Greater Manchester Way block curriculum model, this work began in the Business School. Student partners and I experienced reciprocity and navigated power dynamics to co-design academic development initiatives focused on assessment and feedback. By establishing a students-as-partners panel, we led from a deliberately student-first position and co-designed a set of "pillars of partnership" to govern our work. This partnership work suggests that reciprocity is not just a value—it is a practice that reshapes how we lead, listen, and learn together.

—Nurun Nahar, Assistant Professor and the Student as Partners Strategic Lead at the Greater Manchester Business School, n.nahar@greatermanchester.ac.uk; Nykia Chance, a first year Business Management student at the Greater Manchester Business School and is a Students as Partners Panel member, nnc2bbs@greatermanchester.ac.uk; Power Bright, 2nd year Marketing student at the University of Greater Manchester and a Student Partner at the Greater Manchester Business School, University of Greater Manchester, UK, pbe1crt@bolton.ac.uk

Scotland's Tertiary Enhancement Programme (STEP) is a new national enhancement initiative, consisting of projects involving student and staff representatives from every Scottish institution. We used Scotland's ambition for student partnership as a framework to ensure students co-designed and co-own every element of STEP. Within this structure, we emphasised strategic student involvement at each level of decision-making, including project proposals, working groups, and governance structures. We designed STEP structures to reward and recognise students by paying them for their work and crediting them as co-creators on publications and presentations. The high level of student involvement has necessitated targeted training, particularly for representatives who lack project management experience. However, as STEP coordinators within two sector agencies, sparqs and QAA, we recognise that students are experts in their learning experiences and are essential partners who help build our new programme and shape our work within the shifting tertiary education landscape.

—Rachel Horrocks-Birss, Quality Enhancement Specialist, QAA (Quality Assurance Agency), r.horrocks-birss@qaa.ac.uk; Chase Greenfield, Development Consultant, sparqs (Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland), Scotland, chase.greenfield@sparqs.ac.uk

I am a final-year sociology undergraduate at the University of Manchester and have worked as a student research assistant for the Students' Union on projects focused on student experience and feedback. The framework I bring to partnership work is an awareness of power and perspective: students and institutions do not occupy equal positions, but students hold situated knowledge that institutions often lack. In my role, this meant acting as a "mystery shopper" to evaluate services from a student perspective, and pre-testing and revising student surveys before they were distributed. These

moments of early intervention mattered, as they allowed student insight to shape research design rather than merely respond to it. For me, partnership is not about erasing hierarchy, but about intentionally creating spaces where student perspectives can meaningfully influence institutional understanding and decision-making.

—Yufan Zhu, undergraduate student, University of Manchester, UK, katniss.zhu-2004@outlook.com

We are two staff members at a historically women's college engaged in an iterative and collaborative journey building a social justice/facilitation-based leadership program with student partners. We have seen the power and impact of collaboration between students and staff as they create and establish a peer facilitation/consulting and training program rooted in the principles of liberatory consciousness, holding change, and social justice education. Our academic class to work-study program emphasizes the benefits of classes and cohorts built on dialogic practices, identity exploration, and intentional community. The curriculum was created by the staff members, but the work-study position was developed and refined in direct partnership with students, highlighting ways we can address hierarchies and power dynamics within a college setting that allow staff to both teach and learn with/from their students.

—Tobias K. "Toby" Davis, Inclusion Education Trainer and Facilitator in the Office for Equity and Inclusion and Co-Director of the LEAD Program, tdavis@smith.edu; Annie DelBusto Cohen, Co-Curricular Leadership Development Manager and founding Co-Director of the LEAD Program at the Wurtele Center for Collaborative Leadership, Smith College, USA, atcohen@smith.edu

I am Associate Head of my university's Business School and teach large cohorts in business-focused degree programmes. My teaching uses frameworks as collaborative tools rather than as fixed models. Through a students-as-partners approach, I encourage learners to interrogate, adapt, and challenge established frameworks so they become meaningful within their cultural, educational, and professional contexts. Integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals into the curriculum provides a shared, values-driven lens for students to explore complexity, uncertainty, and ethical responsibility in business and management. Students work with me to map the Goals onto real organisational challenges, co-design assessment tasks, and reflect on tensions between global ambitions and local realities. This partnership approach positions frameworks as sense-making devices co-created in the classroom, leading to deeper engagement, stronger critical thinking, and greater student ownership of learning, alongside the confidence to apply structured thinking to complex real-world problems.

—Samreen Ashraf, Associate Head of Bournemouth University Business School, Bournemouth University, UK, sashraf@bournemouth.ac.uk

I am a Senior Lecturer in Enterprise and Innovation, working with mature women from Pakistani, Arabic, and Romanian communities. Many of these women arrive quietly, hesitant to speak, unsure of their abilities, and juggling work, family, and life challenges due to cultural fears and dependencies. My partnership isn't just about teaching business; it's about building a bridge to confidence. Using the GROW mentoring framework developed by Sir John Whitmore, I mentor and support them to see if they establish real-world businesses, even if tiny. I've seen a beautiful identity shift happen. They support one another and find their voices; that initial fear turns into a quiet, steady strength. For me, students-as-partners means creating a space where these women can shed their reluctance and see themselves as they truly are capable. It is about growing together, building confidence, and learning to navigate uncertainty with curiosity and courage.

—Ei Thu Thu Myint, Senior Lecturer, Scholars School System, UK, eimyint@scholarsschool.ac.uk

In my partnership with medical students, I introduce the framework of *ibasho*—a "place of belonging" in Japanese—by cultivating trust and shared ownership. I position students as collaborators whose lived experiences and medical knowledge work in synergy with my expertise in English communication. Through open dialogue and a co-created understanding that making mistakes is a necessary part of the process toward English competency, not an embarrassment, the classroom becomes a space where students embrace the vulnerability essential to growth. This equitable environment is vital to students' professional identity development. By experiencing *ibasho*, they learn to build similar safe spaces for future patients. Ultimately, I hope they carry this "students as partners" mindset into their careers, recognizing that these same principles apply to treating patients as partners in clinical settings. Centering belonging makes the learning experience more humane, relational, and transformative for all involved.

—Yoko Mori, Institute of Science Tokyo, Japan, yoko.m.2e1f@m.isct.ac.jp

At Smith College, Jandon Center for Community Engagement, partnering is not viewed as a thing but as a process within a defined framework with three overlapping practices: Getting grounded, finding community, and taking informed action.

- Grounding: If we are overcome by strong emotions or depleted physically or mentally, our worried minds may lead to ineffective actions. Therefore, we co-create programs—Campus Calm and Happiness Lab—to nurture embodied, joyful presence.
- Community: Each of our dozen faculty-staff-student partnerships tends to the care of its members as they jointly plan the difference they want to make with local community partners—STEAM Outreach, Tutoring, Activist Action Afternoons, Food Rescue Network, Fellowships, Teaching Arts and more.

- Informed action: From a place of mutual care, partners conduct research and co-design strategies that inform action. As classmates, interns, or volunteers, students engage with community partners in Health Care, Human Services, K-12 Education, Policy and Advocacy and Community-Based Arts.

—Denys Candy, Director of the Jandon Center for Community Engagement, dcandy@smith.edu; Nancy Zigler, Director of Programs and Partnerships at the Jandon Center for Community Engagement, Smith College, USA, nzigler@smith.edu

INDIVIDUAL FRAMEWORKS FOR PARTNERSHIP WORK

Confronting the hierarchical systems that partnership seeks to dismantle is hard. Engaging as a partner while holding many identities that those systems seek to suppress complicates matters further. This friction has shaped what I call a *translational framework*, one that is simultaneously disciplinary, embodied, and methodological. Partnership does not end with finding common disciplinary ground but requires developing fluency and voice across multiple meaning-making systems. Biology teaches me to see feedback loops; creative writing trains me to honor narrative emergence; research demands systematic observation; holding marginalized identities requires acknowledging intersectionality, positionality, and privilege. When I bring these ways of knowing into dialogue rather than softening them for comfort, partnership becomes a space where uncertainty yields creative friction, sparking new understanding. This is how we build capacity for precarity, not by eliminating uncertainty, but by co-developing translational fluency to navigate complex contexts.

—Kal Holder, PhD candidate in Biological Sciences at Purdue University, USA, holder9@purdue.edu

We, a PhD student and a faculty member, work at the Center for Teaching and Learning at a southeastern university in the United States, where we design workshops, programs, and resources for faculty. Drawing on our shared cultural roots, we make sense of our work collaboratively and informally, often through discussions over hot tea. Our shared backgrounds lay the foundation for a trusting relationship that guides our problem-solving and allows our partnership to grow beyond the formal roles. Our collaboration began with practical exchanges such as testing technologies and sharing feedback on presentations, which evolved into co-leading a workshop. Over time, these task-driven interactions built trust and prompted reflection on design choices, such as shifting the first book club meeting from debate to discussion to build community, before engaging in critique. This

shared cultural alignment enables us to practice partnership as a way of thinking together in our daily work, deepening instructional dialogue and mutual learning.

—Zeenar Salim, Assistant Director for Instructional Development at the Center for Teaching and Learning, zeenar.salim@uga.edu; Shereen Sayed, Graduate Assistant at the Center for Teaching and Learning, School of Education, University of Georgia, USA, shereen.sayed@uga.edu

The Solent Student Partners at Southampton Solent University are a kaleidoscope of colour. We are mothers and mature learners; we are neurodivergent minds; we are international students carrying stories across seas; we are creatives who have painted faces for the stage and even brought magic to life at Walt Disney. Some of us have stood at the front of classrooms. We all bring unique perspectives to partnership work, and more importantly, we recognise this. Understanding our individual selves is the strength of our collective. We take time to reflect on how diverse identities frame our work, and we approach partnership with a willingness to understand the positionality of the staff we partner with. Because we know that every partnership project can reveal a new, beautiful pattern of colour—created from the same shared pieces when gently turned in a different light.

—Karen Arm, karen.arm@solent.ac.uk; Zipporah Akello, Solent Student Partner studying MRes Psychology, 5akelz69@solent.ac.uk; Omar Al Hajaj, Solent Student Partner studying MSc AI and Data Science, 5alhao71@solent.ac.uk; Melissa Goss, Solent Student Partner studying PhD Psychology, 0gossm23@solent.ac.uk; Darcey Large, Solent Student Partner studying LLB Law, 0largd04@solent.ac.uk; Gina Roland, Solent Student Partner studying MA Make-Up and Hair Design Futures, Southampton Solent University, UK, 0rolag36@solent.ac.uk

I stand at a crossroads as a PhD graduate. Twelve years ago, I transitioned from industry to pursue the connection, flow, and satisfaction discovered in facilitating students' (and my) deep learning. My PhD journey unearthed pathways to advance my curriculum's decolonial transformation. I brim with ideas for student-centred, experiential learning to affectively nurture critical-thinking ecologists. However, South African underfunding, class-massification, and high-throughput targets undermine thoughtful pedagogic interventions, favouring rote learning and quantitative outputs. After years of teaching and study, I endure precarious underemployment in a corporatized tertiary landscape. Seemingly, little space exists for constructivist student dialogue, slow academia, indigeneity, and surfeit thinking—frameworks I long to experiment with and develop practically. I believe such care-filled approaches can nurture high-quality professionals who advance sustainable, socially just solutions that are desperately needed in the

modern poly-crisis. Instead, I find myself asking: Is there a way to turn so that the meaningful student partnerships I aspire to cultivate remain valued?

—Milton Milaras, recent PhD graduate, University of South Africa, milton.milaras@hotmail.com

As a projects administrator in Teaching and Learning, I am currently engaged in a student-staff partnership project. The framework I bring to partnership work draws on an ethic of care, relational accountability, and reciprocal notions of refusal and consent. I think of these ideas as patches I sew together into a quilt, held by threads that centre anti-oppressive and decolonial ways of thinking and being. By this, I mean centring partnerships that do not take more than they give, are grounded in collegiality, and are deeply intentional about each person's hopes and ambitions—defined on their own terms. In practice, this means embedding honesty and transparency from day one and working at a pace that is respectful and attainable for both myself and my student partner. This includes flexible timelines that allow for change and naming our partnership as one that actively resists hierarchy within the traditional power dynamics of higher education.

—Aasiya Satia, McMaster University, Projects Administrator in Teaching and Learning within the Office of the Vice Provost Teaching and Learning at McMaster University, Canada, satiaa@mcmaster.ca

The Evergreen State College is known as an experimental public liberal arts college that places a strong emphasis on student ownership of their learning. Our Learning and Teaching Commons frames the students-as-partners program, emphasizing student autonomy and innovation. As a small, new program with a limited budget, we have one student partner each academic year. Student partners collaborate with the assistant director to design a project that will connect student voice with faculty in meaningful ways. Our current student partner has a background in education and the arts. Her work is focused on developing zines, card decks, and other creative materials to engage faculty in developing inclusive and culturally sustaining teaching practices. Partners contribute to our monthly newsletter, offering reflections on their work with faculty around their area of interest. Following this approach, we maximize outreach for a small program and offer benefits that build on students' unique interests and career goals.

—Jess Yusko, student, jess.n.yusko@evergreen.edu; Jaime O'Connor, Assistant Director of the Washington Center for Improving Undergraduate Education at The Evergreen State College, USA, Jaime.O_Connor@evergreen.edu

Coming from an institution that supports over 50,000 students, I focus my students-as-partners work on balancing student and faculty needs. How can I encourage discourse and help more students understand that their voices are vital, while also affirming students who engage more quietly? How can I collaborate with faculty to support their pedagogical

aspirations while meeting students' diverse personal learning goals? I adapt my partnership practices by continually examining both student and partner perspectives, bringing calm to the complexity of larger learning environments. Whether it's encouraging a professor that students really do value the coffee chats they offer, or observing that aspects of a presentation are less accessible from the back of the room and need reworking, a balanced approach to partnership can foster an environment where everyone can flourish and grow, even when it's hard to stay on their feet.

—Akhil Pinnapareddy, student partner, Purdue University, USA, apinnapa@purdue.edu

I'm a Reader in Higher Education and Academic Practice at the University of Kent, and my partnership work is mainly with professional and academic staff, grounded in a partnership approach to learning and teaching. By "recognition," I mean something simple: people are only real partners if their expertise is taken seriously and if it changes what happens next. I design partnership work to make influence visible. Partners help frame the problem, agree on what evidence matters (including lived and frontline experience), and confirm how recommendations will be used and reported back. I name constraints early, protect time and workload, and build in ways to disagree safely, because complexity, uncertainty, and precarity can make participation feel risky. I build in feedback loops that show where ideas travelled, what shifted, and why. Recognition keeps the partnership from becoming "consultation with nice manners" and makes it shared decision-making, with contributions traced to outcomes.

—Julia Hope, Reader in Higher Education, University of Kent, UK, j.r.hope@kent.ac.uk

UCL ChangeMakers is a long-running student partnerships programme comprising multiple elements, including project funds, training & development, and a students-as-consultants system known as Student Fellows. The 2025 expansion of the Student Fellows programme, with a focus on Learning Development and Careers, has given Fellows a more rounded and personalised experience. From consulting on career development frameworks to serving as theme co-leads for the UCL Education Conference, students have gained a broader range of opportunities that strengthen their sense of belonging and equip them with skills they can confidently communicate to future employers. This semi-structured model allows students to engage in activities that interest them, shaping their own development while increasing overall capacity. Their enthusiasm and constructive challenge have enriched the work, making the wider HEDS team more motivated to collaborate with students and more confident in the value of their skills and insights.

—Ashley Storer-Smith, Student Partnerships Manager at University College London, UK, a.storer-smith@ucl.ac.uk

My writing situates my work as lecturer of composition within the realities of teaching during the genocide in Palestine and the war in Beirut (2024 and 2026). It places experiential teaching at the center of composition studies, arguing for the exploratory essay as an ethical and pedagogical response to crisis. In this context, the question of what counts as evidence becomes urgent: lived and frontline experience, moments of standing at historical crossroads, and testimonies emerging from communities under fire must be recognized alongside traditional academic sources. Yet these sources of knowledge often confront hierarchical systems that do not easily allow frontline stories to breathe within a pedagogical framework, where they risk being reduced to representations that lack the power to influence assessment practices or institutional policy. By foregrounding exploratory writing, my work calls for pedagogies that acknowledge crisis as lived reality and that hold space for ethical engagement in the composition classroom.

—Amany Al-sayyed, American University of Beirut, Lebanon, aa139@aub.edu.lb

Over 17 weeks, we've worked to foster relationships to guide our partnership with 30 undergraduate students to ensure a successful 3-week trip abroad. We know this requires trust to facilitate deep learning, which asks students to have the courage to embrace productive discomfort, challenge their world views, and bravely share their experiences. During the trip, we've had many conversations about the joys of this partnership, such as their ability to guide activity choices, integrating their conversations with locals into after-dinner classes, and how they excitedly invite us to their student-planned outings. However, at times our partnership is in tension with SaP values, particularly when pedagogical decisions are guided by logistical constraints or when we must remind them of our relational boundaries. We explain why SaP is critical to the success of study abroad while appreciating the tensions this type of learning experience imposes on partnership dynamics.

—Jill McSweeney, Assistant Professor of Wellness and the Assistant Director of the Center for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning at Elon University, jmcsweeney@elon.edu; Evan Small, Assistant Teaching Professor, Education and Wellness, Elon University, USA, esmall@elon.edu

As a cross-cultural educator and practitioner, I have come to see students-as-partners work as a way of preparing learners for uncertainty rather than shielding them from it. In my practice, partnership emerges when students are invited to contribute not only answers but also identities, experiences, and questions shaped by unstable educational and social contexts. This shift, from participation to contribution, helps students develop confidence to navigate complexity, especially when learning takes place across languages, cultures, and institutional expectations. I am particularly drawn to partnership approaches that foreground identity and agency, allowing students to rehearse adaptation rather than compliance. In conditions of precarity, students-as-partners work does not promise certainty; instead, it cultivates the capacity to remain engaged,

reflective, and responsive when certainty is unavailable. Taken together, these practices suggest an identity-based partnership framework that supports learner engagement and adaptive participation across diverse educational contexts.

—Yujian Guo, Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools, Canada, gyujian628@gmail.com

CONCLUSION

A framework is an essential supporting structure. Therefore, to make frameworks explicit is to name what we rely on for support in our work. This iteration of Voices, which focused on frameworks, was inspired in part by a collection of reflective essays published in *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education* (Reyes et al., 2025) that addressed the question of what supports pedagogical partnership work. A sociology major in the Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT) program at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges posed the question to her cohort of student consultants: What framing perspectives do you bring to your partnership work? The prompt yielded such an interesting variety of responses—from conceptual frames such as the "sociological imagination" and disability justice to borrowing pedagogical approaches from political science courses in literary studies and applying psychological data on memory and cognition in computer science—that the editors decided to feature this theme in Voices from the Field.

The range of frameworks offered by contributors to this collection also usefully illuminates how theoretical, conceptual, and individual frameworks inform partnership work in complex, implicit, and explicit ways. As noted in the introduction, frameworks can draw on established theories that bring students-as-partners work into conversation with other arenas of theory and practice. Frameworks can also draw on established and newly created concepts to name and analyze particular variables, their expected relationships, and their impacts, guided by a set of values or commitments. Finally, frameworks can reflect the unique intersections of individuals' cultural identities, disciplinary preparation, lived experiences, and/or aspirations to particular ways of being. In all cases, they support what partners experience and the meaning partners make of the work for themselves and for others.

Frameworks make particular kinds of meaning-making possible, and, as contributor Dom Henri notes, the contributions to this collection make clear how partnership can make education more meaningful overall. In his words: "When students have the opportunity to take shared responsibility for the curriculum, learning becomes transformational (whether that is in terms of equality, social mobility, preparedness for polycrisis, etc.)." These points apply beyond the curriculum, such as in program development. As Henri continues: "Without that partnership, learning becomes rote, contractual busy-work. I think a fair few of the responses speak to that idea of learning becoming more than 'just' learning." We invite you to consider which frameworks support your partnership work, what meaning those frameworks invite, and what broader sense of meaning they foster.

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