Structure of presentation

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A. Context and frameworks

Table 1: Partnership principles and values

Drawing on the literature on successful partnership and engaged student learning, core values which underpin successful partnership in learning and teaching are suggested. The relative importance of each of these values may vary in different contexts, and there may be additional values you want to include for your partnerships:

- **Authenticity**: the rationale for all parties to invest in partnership is meaningful and credible.
- **Honesty**: all parties are honest about what they can contribute to partnership and about where the boundaries of partnership lie.
- **Inclusivity**: there is equality of opportunity and any barriers (structural or cultural) that prevent engagement are challenged.
- **Reciprocity**: all parties have an interest in, and stand to benefit from working and/or learning in partnership.
- **Empowerment**: power is distributed appropriately and ways of working and learning promote healthy power dynamics.
- **Trust**: all parties take time to get to know one-another and can be confident they will be treated with respect and fairness.
- **Courage**: all parties are encouraged to critique and challenge practices, structures and approaches that undermine partnership, and are enabled to take risks to develop new ways of working and learning.
- **Plurality**: all parties recognise and value the unique talents, perspectives and experiences that individuals contribute to partnership.
- **Responsibility**: all parties share collective responsibility for the aims of the partnership, and individual responsibility for the contribution they make.

*Source: Higher Education Academy (2015)*
Fig 2: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education: An overview model

B. Students as partners in learning and teaching in HE

1. Learning, Teaching and Assessment

1.1 Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) at Bournemouth University, UK

Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) at Bournemouth University (BU) is a peer mentoring scheme that fosters cross-year support between students on the same course. It has operated at BU since 2001. It draws on many of the principles and ideas associated with the North American Supplemental Instruction (SI) Model that was originally developed at the University of Missouri Kansas City (UMKC) in the 1970s.

“Similarities between SI and PAL:
• Both schemes are run by students for students, and student empowerment is an essential part of this process
• Both schemes operate regularly scheduled PAL or SI sessions that appear in students’ timetables
• Learning is interdependent. Active learning is encouraged and participatory, collaborative group learning is facilitated by a trained, but non-subject expert, student leader
• Study skills are integrated into both PAL and SI in the sense that the subject content of a course or programme, 'what-to-learn', is fully integrated into sharing advice on 'how-to-learn-it'
• Both operate in a way that ensures they are supplemental to lectures and other teaching sessions the students should already have attended.

Differences between SI and PAL:
• In the North American model, the main purpose of the SI model is to target high risk, historically difficult courses. At BU, PAL enhances learning across all faculties and programmes rather than focussing on "difficult" courses
• PAL at BU places an additional emphasis is placed upon increasing the level of social integration within the student's normal seminar group, and in improving the first year students' experience of university life
• Peer Support and PAL in the UK appear to have many variants and have seen more organic growth, for example, the National Centre for PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) based at the University of Manchester
• SI Leaders are expected to attend all lectures and take notes for their course but this is not normally a practical option for the UK.”

Coordination of PAL, including leader training, is run centrally within Student and Academic Services by the PAL Coordination Team. Successful applicants attend two days of compulsory training in June or September with optional follow up training sessions offered throughout the autumn term. Weekly follow up training is delivered in collaboration with other support staff, providing information on various academic skills, support services and ideas for related PAL sessions. Like PAL itself, leader training has evolved gradually since it began in 2001. Changes include training on new online community areas on the University's Virtual Learning Environment. Further information: Parton and Noad (2013); https://www1.bournemouth.ac.uk/discover/library/guests-visitor-information/peer-assisted-learning-pal

1.2 Broad Vision – an UG module for art-science collaborative research and interdisciplinary learning at the University of Westminster, UK

Every year a group of undergraduate students are recruited from across the university’s arts and science courses to become student researchers on an interdisciplinary learning project. Each project takes as its starting point a set of images, a body of knowledge or a central theme, employed to initiate discussion across disciplinary divides and identify areas of common interest for collaborative research ideas. The material provides a central focus, which can be approached from a range of perspectives, allowing emergent opportunities for the observation of difference and similarity – in terms of diversity of language, interpretation and understanding. Broad Vision has the following features:
• It creates opportunities for students from different disciplines to work together and learn from each other,
broadening their perspectives and widening their knowledge bases.

- Students become teachers, researchers and producers through a three-phase educational model. Phase one focuses on disciplinary exchange through peer-teaching, phase two involves small group interdisciplinary research, and phase three engaging audiences through public outputs.
- There is no prescribed curriculum. The projects emerge from the expertise and personal interests of participants (students and staff), framed by a central focus or question.
- Participants produce a range of public outputs, enhancing graduate attributes and opportunities for professional learning. These have included publications, exhibitions, workshops and conference presentations.
- All phases of the project are highly student-centred and encourage a leveling out of established academic hierarchies between staff and students, and between students at different levels of study.

Participating courses to date include photographic arts, biotechnology, illustration, psychology, contemporary media practice, human and medical sciences, clinical photography, biological sciences, multimedia computing, interactive product design, animation, cognitive science, molecular biology and genetics, photography and digital imaging, and physiology and pharmacology.

Broad Vision was funded through a University of Westminster Interdisciplinary Pedagogic Research Fund (2010-2013) and a Wellcome Trust People Award (2013-14). In the first year of funding the project team developed a three-phase multi/interdisciplinary educational model, a framework for students to learn from each other, work together, and to produce professional outputs. In 2012, this model was accredited as an optional module for students in their second year of study, with continuation opportunities for other students. An educational research project is embedded within the learning design, observing student engagement with the project and the module. The educational model continues to be tested and developed as the programme evolves and the community of interest expands to involve more students from across the university and beyond.

Further information: http://broad-vision.info/

2. Subject-based Research and Inquiry

2.1 Curricula are organised around the concept of student as producer at the University at Lincoln, UK

'Student as producer' is central to the learning and teaching philosophy at the University of Lincoln. In this approach the emphasis is on students producing knowledge in partnership, rather than just consuming it. The focus of student as producer is the student, working in collaboration with other students and academics in real research projects, or projects which replicate the process of research either in or outside of their discipline. Students work alongside staff in the design and delivery of their learning, and in the production of work of academic content and value. Staff and students can apply for development funds to the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Scheme (UROS) and Student Engagement in Educational Development fund (SEED) to support work that further enables the principles of Student as producer to be embedded at Lincoln. This approach has made research-engaged teaching an institutional priority. As new courses are developed and existing ones undergo re-validation, staff and students are asked to consider student as producer in terms of the following key principles:

- Discovery – students learning through their own enquiry;
- Collaboration – working together to develop knowledge and understanding;
- Engagement – being part of a community of staff and students;
- Production – students as producers of knowledge rather than consumers.

These principles are enabled through assessment, citizenship, employability, pedagogy and curriculum, resources, skills, space and technology. The University of Lincoln also promotes students as active partners in in quality enhancement through working collaboratively with staff, recognising that students are experts in their student experience.

Further information: http://edeu.lincoln.ac.uk/student-as-producer; studentasproducer.lincoln.ac.uk/; Crawford et al. (2015); Neary with Winn (2009); Neary (2010); Neary et al (2014); Ryan and Tilbury (2013, p. 17)
2.2 Mainstreaming undergraduate research and inquiry in largest recruiting courses at Miami University, Ohio, US

Miami University is moving from a ‘teaching and learning paradigm’ to a ‘discovery paradigm’ supporting the development of students as scholars. The ‘Top 25’ project, begun in 2007, has introduced innovative approaches that move learning away from “too much time telling students what we think they need to know, and not enough time using their curiosity to drive their learning” (Hodge 2006, p. 3). Over a four-year period the Top 25 project involved the largest recruiting courses being rewritten as inquiry-based courses. By the end 29 courses were involved. Each course was allocated $35,000 to fund curriculum revision. Learning technologists and educationalists supported the teams of faculty involved. Together the courses account for almost a quarter of total credit hours.

“Different courses have adopted different redesign strategies. For example, the Theatre Department refocused their traditional Theatre Appreciation class to center on the creation of theatre. Other classes, e.g., Marketing, used an ‘inverted’ or ‘flipped’ classroom model. In Communication and Calculus classes, the teams created a menu of inquiry exercises from which individual faculty can select. The Psychology team, similar to the Theatre team, refocused their course from the ‘what’ of the discipline to the ‘how’; they also introduced discussion sections led by trained undergraduate leaders” (Shore and Obade 2013, p. 4). Some of the physical spaces are being redesigned to provide flexible furniture to encourage discussion.

“Responses to survey questions show that the Top 25 courses are promoting active, engaged learning. Compared to students in the traditional sections, students in the redesigned sections report:

- more frequently discussing ideas from class with others outside of the classroom;
- spending much more time working with other students on projects during class time;
- spending less time memorizing facts and ideas;
- spending more hours on their course work and working harder than they thought they would to meet faculty expectations.

Top 25 courses also have more emphasis on higher-level thinking skills. Compared to students in the traditional sections, students in the redesigned sections report more frequently:

- supporting their ideas and beliefs with data or evidence;
- making judgments about the value of information, arguments, or methods by examining how others gathered and interpreted data and assessing the soundness of their conclusions;
- synthesizing and organizing ideas, information, or experiences into new, more complex interpretations and relationships;
- working on a project or paper that requires integrating ideas from various sources” (Hodge et al. 2011, p. 32).

Many faculty not involved in the Top 25 project are also adopting similar changes. “Because the redesigned courses are creating new expectations among students they are now arriving in class expecting to be challenged and ready to take more responsibility for their own learning” (Hodge et al. 2011, p. 33). The challenges in maintaining this ‘project’ include reduced financial support because of problems in the national and thus institutional economy, in maintaining the momentum. “The visibility of the Top 25 project and its support at the highest levels of the university have encouraged the development and expansion of programs that support student engagement. For example, the First Year Research Experience (FYRE) program has been established to offer incoming students an opportunity to engage in research and to establish early contact with a faculty mentor” (Hodge et al. 2011, p. 33).

Further information: Hodge (2006); Hodge et al. (2007; 2008; 2011); Taylor et al. (2012); Shore and Obade (2013); www.units.miamioh.edu/celt/engaged_learning/top25/; www.units.muohio.edu/oars/undergrad_research/first_year_research_experience/fyre_info.php
3. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

3.1 Students are engaged as partners in shaping and leading their own educational experiences through the ‘students as change agents’ initiative at the University of Exeter, UK

The key concept is that students themselves take responsibility for bringing about change, based on their own research on aspects of learning and teaching. The approach enables students to be actively engaged with the processes of change, often taking on a leadership role. They are engaged deeply with the institution and their subject areas, and the focus and direction is, to a greater extent, decided by students. A small amount of funding was originally available from the University’s learning and teaching budget to support this initiative, but it is now largely embedded and funded within Colleges with support from a centrally-based Student Engagement Manager. There are no payments directly to students. The most important aspect is the focus on research, and building change on evidence-based foundations. Students from across the university have contributed to this initiative, carrying out a series of research projects on their learning and teaching environment, selecting concerns raised through student-staff liaison committees, and providing recommendations and solutions to improve their experience. Students work as apprentice researchers; their research methods include focus groups, informal interviews and questionnaire surveys. Outcomes have been presented at annual student-staff conferences, resulting in institutional engagement with key research findings. Around 500 projects have been undertaken since 2008 though, overall, thousands of students have been involved. Student research has driven organisational change, contributed to student engagement in shifts of policy and practice within the University, and supported students’ graduate skills in the areas of research, project management, presenting outcomes, leadership and understanding of organisational development. For example, student projects in the Business School on the benefits students have gained from implementation of technologies in the classroom have contributed significantly to streamed video being now far more widespread, and 7,000 voting handsets being distributed to undergraduate and Masters students. A project on well-being developed by Psychology students has led to changes in student support and has informed the Personal Tutor system.

Further information: Kay et al. (2010); Dunne and Zandstra (2011); Sandover et al. (2012a); Kay et al. (2012); Dunne and Owen (2013a); Annual Reports of all projects 2013/4 and 2014/5 at https://issuu.com/studentsaschangeagents/docs

3.2 Students undertake educational development projects as academic partners with staff at Birmingham City University, UK

Launched in 2009, this partnership between Birmingham City University and Birmingham City Students’ Union aims to integrate students into the teaching and pedagogic research communities of the University to enhance the learning experience. Staff and students are invited to propose educational development projects in which students can work in an academic employment setting in a paid post at the University, on a more equal footing with their staff partner. Students negotiate their own roles with staff and are paid for up to 100 hours of work. Each project is designed to develop a specific aspect of learning and teaching practice. Typically, these may result in new learning resources, developments in curriculum design or the evaluation of innovations and changes that have already been made. It is key to the scheme that students are employed as partners not assistants, co-creators not passive recipients of the learning experience. Some projects are initiated and led by students. The Students as Academic Partners (SAP) scheme is part of a wider University initiative to create a greater sense of learning community at the University in which students and staff view it as the norm, not the exception, that they are engaged in academic discussion about the nature of their courses and the way they are taught. The University supports up to 100 projects each year and this internal quality enhancement mechanism is now seen as a staple of the university with bids being received at three points across the academic year. SAP also now offers a mentoring arm through our Student Academic Mentoring (StAMP) programme.

Further information: Birmingham City Students’ Union (2010); Brand et al. (2013); Curran and Millard 2016; Freeman et al. 2014; Nygaard et al. (2013); http://www.bcu.ac.uk/about-us/celt/student-engagement
4. Curriculum Design and Pedagogic Consultancy

4.1 Students act as pedagogical consultants at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges, Pennsylvania, US

Most models of new faculty orientation and academic development assume that faculty learning is the purview of faculty colleagues or teaching and learning centre staff. Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT), the signature program of the Teaching and Learning Institute (TLI) at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges, challenges that assumption by inviting undergraduate students to work as pedagogical consultants to new and continuing faculty members. Between 2006 and 2016, 185 faculty members and 130 student consultants have participated in 265 pedagogical partnerships.

For partnerships focused on classroom practice, students are not enrolled in the courses for which they serve as consultants and often have no experience in the subject matter of the courses. Each student consultant establishes with the faculty member a focus for their collaboration; visits one class session each week and takes detailed observation notes on the pedagogical challenge(s) the faculty member has identified; surveys or interviews students in the class (if the faculty member wishes), either for mid-course feedback or at another point in the semester; meets weekly with the faculty member to discuss observation notes and other feedback and implications; and participates in weekly meetings with one another and with the director of SaLT. For partnerships focused on course redesign, faculty work with individual or groups of students who have taken the course to revise course content, assignments, and methods of assessment. For full-semester partnerships, student consultants work approximately six hours per week and receive a stipend of $700. Feedback from participants suggests that these collaborations build confidence in both partners, deepen partners’ learning experiences and meta-cognitive awareness, recast the responsibility for education as one that is shared by faculty and students, and contribute to more inclusive and responsive curricula and practices. Further information: Cook-Sather (2011; 2014; 2016); Cook-Sather & Agu (2013); Cook-Sather et al. (2014); www.brynmawr.edu/tli/

4.2 Students act as co-creators of course design at Elon University, North Carolina, US

Since 2005, faculty, students, and academic development staff at Elon University have experimented with a variety of approaches to partnering in ‘course design teams’ (CDT) that co-create, or re-create, a course syllabus. Each team’s process varies, but typically a CDT includes one or two faculty, between two and six undergraduate students, and one academic developer. Faculty members initiate the redesign process, inviting the students and developer to co-construct a team. Students usually apply to participate in a CDT, motivated by a desire to contribute to a course they have taken or that is important to the curriculum in their disciplinary home. Once the CDT is assembled, the CDT uses a ‘backward design’ approach, first developing course goals and then building pedagogical strategies and learning assessments on the foundation of those goals. Time is the most important element in the success of a CDT. Successful teams usually meet weekly for two or three months, providing ample opportunities to both accomplish the CDT’s practical purpose of redesigning the course and, perhaps more importantly, to develop a true partnership that welcomes student voices. Students often doubt that they will be taken seriously in the process, and they also need time to develop the language and the confidence to express pedagogical ideas clearly. Many CDTs experience a liminal moment when everyone present recognizes that a fundamental boundary has been crossed, either by a faculty member ceding significant authority for the course design or by students claiming power in the process. Further information: Bovill, Cook-Sather and Felten (2011); Delpish et al. (2010); Mihans, Long and Felten (2008)

5. Integrated approaches

5.1 Students are involved in research-based education and as change agents at University College London (UCL), UK

“At University College London, our top strategic priority for the next 20 years is to close the divide between teaching and research. We want to integrate research into every stage of an undergraduate degree, moving from research-led to research-based teaching” Michael Arthur, president and provost, 30 April 2014: 22
UCL are developing a ‘Connected Curriculum’ initiative, as the means by which in five years all undergraduate programmes of study will have a profile of ‘research-based’ characteristics. Research-based education is the focus of UCL’s initiative. The connected curriculum has six dimensions based around the core principle of learning through research and inquiry (Fig. 10).

**Fig. 10 UCL’s Connected Curriculum Framework**

The initiative, which is co-ordinated by the Centre for Advancing Learning and Teaching (CALT), requires changing the criteria for promotion, so that excellence in education is as significant to advancement as excellence in research and innovation. The implementation also involves reviewing all programmes and designing clear strategies for working more closely with students, who can act as partners and change agents. A guide is being developed which presents four benchmark descriptors (a-d) for each of the six Connected Curriculum dimensions: a) Beginning, b) Developing, c) Developed, and d) Outstanding. This will help departments map their progress in implementing the connected curriculum in taught programmes.

UCL students and staff also have the opportunity to engage as ‘ChangeMakers’. The initiative supports students and staff working in partnership on educational enhancement projects. Since the pilot year, when 10 groups of students proposed and led projects of importance to them, the scheme has grown rapidly. In 2015-16 more
than 50 student-led and staff-led projects were funded by CALT. Criteria for funding include “a clear strategy for working in partnership with students to address one or more of the Connected Curriculum dimensions” (Fung, 2016). All projects emphasise engagement of students as change agents to enhance the quality of education they receive. There are two strands to the initiative:

- projects, which can be initiated by anyone within the UCL community
- scholars, who are students working with their department to enhance an aspect of the educational experience decided upon by UCL (currently assessment and feedback).


5.2 Engaging students as full partners at the McMaster Institute for Innovation and Excellence in Teaching and Learning (MIIETL), Canada

MIIETL (now renamed the Paul R. MacPherson Institute for Leadership, Innovation and Excellence in Teaching) is highly unusual among centres of learning and teaching, in that it puts students explicitly at the heart of its vision, and in the number of students engaged in its activities. MIIETL identifies five main foci:

1. Pedagogy / Educational Development
2. Technology Enhanced Learning
3. Research in Teaching and Learning
4. Program Enhancement
5. Student Engagement

Student engagement is different from the other four main pillars which define MIIETL, in that it permeates the other areas with students being involved as full partners on projects across the board. Student centrality is the first of three guiding principles which characterize MIIETL’s work:

“Students are more than the beneficiaries of MIIETL’s work in advancing teaching and learning and McMaster. They are core partners who are involved not at the margins of MIIETL’s efforts, but at the heart, at a level and with expectations that surpass those of normal student engagement programs” (MIIETL, 2015 p.8)

Approximately 70 undergraduate and graduate students were engaged as student partners in the mission and work of MIIETL in 2015-16 in ways both central to the processes of the Institute and meaningful to the students. The plan is to explore increasing this to up to 100 students per year. They are employed on average for 5-10 hours a week for one, two, or three semesters, though some continue with projects for longer durations.

Four goals are identified in the Strategy for this aspect of MIIETL’s work:

1. Build capacity for the meaningful engagement of student partners in MIIETL’s work in educational development, technology, research and advocacy.
2. Identify teaching and learning projects led by student partners who are first authors, presenters, designers and educational leaders.
3. Engage student partners as active collaborators in core aspects of MIIETL operations.
4. Support student advocacy for teaching and learning issues on campus, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Early evaluation of the experience of the pilot of this initiative, involving 13 students from one interdisciplinary programme working in MIIETL as student partners, concluded that “the process of developing student-staff partnerships can be troublesome and uncertain, but ultimately transformative in some cases at least” (Marquis et al. 2016, 11). A major outcome is that a significant number of co-authored staff and student articles (5+) and conference presentations (28+) were accepted in the first 30 months since the program began. Many more are expected as the outcomes of the expanded program are written-up.

5.5 Students act as partners with staff and industry in a Creative Industries Network (CIN) at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia

CIN is a student-led initiative that promotes partnerships between Bachelor of Creative Industries (BCI) students, staff and industry. CIN began as the BCI Champions peer mentoring program that was co-designed between students and staff with the aim of building community within the first year BCI cohort. Six months in, the BCI Champions took the initiative and pitched an idea to the Program Convener and Dean of the Faculty to take on a broader remit and establish a professional organisation - CIN. They wanted to be able to engage with the practices of collaboration, career management, networked learning, transdisciplinarity, and enterprise ("21st century skills"), all of which are emphasised in the BCI curriculum. This model is highly congruent with QUT’s strategic learning and teaching objectives, which are driven by industry engagement, authentic learning experiences, and real world learning (Bridgstock, 2016; Queensland University of Technology, 2016).

Initiatives run by CIN include Co-design BCI Curriculum; Orientation Program; Coterie and Creative Enterprise Australia (CEA); People Industry and Peers (PIP) networking events; Capacity building staff / students around students as partners; Social media campaigns; and Work Integrated Learning Workshop and the Industry Q and A events. Funding for the initiatives and support for CIN is sought and obtained by students and/or staff. The funding base consists of a range of grants, subsidies and sponsorship from both the university and industry.

The CIN organisational structure, governance and workflow mirrors that of a flexible creative start up. The core team consists of 28 members who operate within a flat organisational structure, with decision making shared by both staff and students in the team. Each of the students have an area of specialty that they work on as part of the team. Historically the initiative has been sustained through staff led student recruitment each year based on leadership potential. CIN is moving towards a student-led approach to recruitment in which students are either recruited for a specific skill set through a call out for expressions of interest by the student team (e.g. a graphic designer or arts project manager), or through their involvement at Town Hall meetings and volunteering on events. This core team sits within a broader network of 450 CIN members, and over 2000 BCI students.

CIN run their meetings, creative catch ups and connect with other industry representatives from their base at the Coterie. Each month CIN run a Town Hall with Creative Industries students to talk about ideas, provide suggestions for improvement in the curriculum, and develop and foster new and existing relationships. Everyone works together (including staff) to contribute ideas, feedback and work on the planning and delivery of events, initiatives and processes. In addition to these larger meetings, the core team meet weekly to develop ideas, touch base with progress and continually re-examine their strategic planning for the year. These meetings are facilitated with an academic staff member – with some ideas being initiated by students, some by staff and some co-initiated out of the conversations and design thinking approaches that happen in these meetings.

The student’s role in CIN is voluntary, and is approached as a career building strategy. The majority of employers in the Creative Industries expect that students graduate with professional experience in their field. The roles in CIN are designed to reflect real world job positions so that a student is able to graduate with a role such as social media and communications manager for the Creative Industries Network on their CV. Their experience working in CIN sets them up for their transition into the workforce, and allows them to build contacts and connections with industry that they can then utilise later in life. The modular set up of the core team means that students are able to step in and out of key roles depending on their availabilities around work, university and life.

Further information: Bridgstock, R. (2016, in press); QUT (2016); http://www.futurecapable.com. This is a summary of a longer case study B 5.4 available in the Students as Partners and Change Agents Handout at www.mickhealeo.uk/resources