Embracing and harnessing differentials in student-staff partnership to achieve sustainable outcomes

-- from perspectives of partnership leaders

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QAA Scotland’s 5th International Enhancement Conference
Shaping the Student Experience Together: 20 Years of Enhancement
Are you currently leading or previously led an institutional scheme in relation to student partnership, co-creation, or student experience?
Student-staff partnership from leaders’ perspective

- Aiming to thrive students leads to a delegation approach to designing SSPnR

Key Question

Who Decides Purposes and Institutional Supports? 'Student&Staff Discourse' OR 'Institutional Discourse'

Support

Flexibility of collaborations between students and staff necessitates ongoing institutional support

Loyalty

Loyalty to Job Responsibility

Figure 1 Main findings and the content of presentation
Background

Research Design
(Student-staff partnership in research)
Student-staff partnership in research

- Students are supported to lead changes in learning and teaching through researching collaboratively with staff

- Examples:
  - Change Makers  *UCL, Kingston*
  - Students as Producers  *Lincoln*
  - Co-creator  *Westminster*
  - Student partners  *Herts, Edinburgh*
Aim:
Explore the student-staff partnerships in research activities conceptualised by UK universities, and the practices and perspectives of different stakeholders, including students, staff, and scheme leaders.

Why explore leaders’ perspective?
The individual capacity is determined by the extent that institutional contexts supported partnership (Isaac, 1987, p. 21, cited Symonds, 2020, p.129)
Lead staff have intricate knowledge of scheme functionality (Mercer-Mapstone & Bovil, 2020, p.2543)
## Student-staff partnership in research

Online systematic searching <selecting samples>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO.</th>
<th>Scheme</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Inclusion</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Authority/Othership</th>
<th>Info</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Nov &amp; Feb – June (Term1 training session)</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>learning and wider student experience</td>
<td>Central administration</td>
<td>Funding: £450- 850 NO.: 83/90 (2021-2022) Reporting: June</td>
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<td>Nov-July</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>enhance the student experience</td>
<td>Institution of Academic Development</td>
<td>Funding: £500 NO.: 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>October to June (end with June 23th showcase)</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>drive pedagogic innovation</td>
<td>Central administration</td>
<td>Funding: student payment No. 20 projects/ year (no limited number)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data was analysed

12 Females, 3 Male
8 Strategic, 7 Operational

165 universities --> 18 schemes (16)
--> 15 leaders, 10 uni: 8 **England**, 1 **Scotland**, 1 **Welsh**; 2 pure research, 13 mixture

Thematic Analysis, NVivo software
Online search criteria:

1. the institution claims they have been striving to achieve Student-staff partnership in research (SSPnR) through institutional ongoing initiative(s) for at least one round;
2. participants voluntarily agree to attend the research project without any compulsory requirements for obtaining their degree;
3. the participants include students in social science or using social science methodology; and
4. public information about the scheme (including websites, documents, and research papers etc.) can be found.
Student-staff partnership in research

Online systematic searching
<selecting samples>

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Interview
<October 2022 – March 2023>
12 Females, 3 Male
8 Strategic, 7 Operational

Data was analysed

Thematic Analysis, NVivo software

Three main themes

• Purpose & Design
• Institutional support
• Job loyalty
Main Findings

Keywords: Purpose, Support, Loyalty
Student-staff partnership from leaders’ perspective

Who Decides Purposes and Institutional Supports?
'Student&Staff Discourse' OR 'Institutional Discourse'

• Aiming to thrive students leads to a delegation approach to designing SSPnR
  - Purpose

• Flexibility of collaborations between students and staff necessitates ongoing institutional support
  - Support

• Loyalty to Job Responsibility
  - Loyalty

Figure 1 Main findings and the content of presentation
Your voice:

What is partnership from your perspective?
Student-staff partnership from leaders’ perspective

Who Decides Purposes and Institutional Supports?
'Student&Staff Discourse' OR 'Institutional Discourse'  
Key Question

Aiming to thrive students leads to a delegation approach to designing SSPnR

Purpose

Flexibility of collaborations between students and staff necessitates ongoing institutional support

Support

Loyalty to Job Responsibility

Loyalty

- Figure 1 Main findings and the content of presentation
Aiming to thrive students leads to a delegation approach to designing SSPnR

*the titles of three types were adopted from Heron (1992)*
Student-staff partnership from leaders’ perspective

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Loyalty to Job Responsibility

Loyalty

- Figure 1 Main findings and the content of presentation
90%

Introduction meeting

2/3

No training or workshops

Consistently reflect on partnerships

Not partnerships; not sure

? 

asymmetric power, responsibility, and engagement are dynamic

when is the timing?

Flexibility of collaborations between students and staff necessitates ongoing institutional support
Student-staff partnership from leaders’ perspective

Who Decides Purposes and Institutional Supports? 'Student&Staff Discourse' OR 'Institutional Discourse'

Key Question

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  - Loyalty

Figure 1 Main findings and the content of presentation
The mechanism of making decisions need to be addressed in partnerships ... When we choose partnership approaches at different levels, think about who decides this choice.

-- Heron, 1992
1. Leaders’ Ideal Understanding
(Out of their own interest, and possessing own understanding)

2. Leaders’ Ought-to Understanding
(Influenced/required by work position)

Who Decides Purposes and Institutional Supports?
'Student&Staff Discourse' OR 'Institutional Discourse'

Key Question

Loyalty to Job Responsibility
Applying partnership in familiar learning spaces
Student-staff partnership from leaders’ perspective

• Figure 1 Main findings and the content of presentation

Who Decides Purposes and Institutional Supports?
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Aiming to thrive students leads to a delegation approach to designing SSPnR

Flexibility of collaborations between students and staff necessitates ongoing institutional support

Loyalty to Job Responsibility
Loyalty
‘They (conventionally not-engaging students) surprised me with what they could achieve during the project, in my decades of work on student-staff research partnership.’
References


University College London. (n.d.). *Putting research and enquiry at the heart of learning: objective two of the Education Strategy*. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/education-strategy/putting-research-and-enquiry-heart-learning-objective-two-education-strategy
Thank you