**Choosing Names for Partnership Programs and Participants**

In Chapter 3 of *Student-Faculty Pedagogical Partnerships in the Classroom and Curriculum: A How-To Guide for Faculty, Students, and Academic Developers in Higher Education*, we pose the questions: What do you want to capture and convey in the name of your program? and What name should you choose for faculty and student partners? In this resource, we discuss a few choices that various programs have made in response to these questions.

***What name should you choose for your partnership program?***

The SaLT program got its name through a discussion among students, faculty, and administrators who launched the program. Each of the participants in that conversation brought a different identity, set of experiences, and perspective to the decision-making process. Each had a different take on what would feel most appropriate to students who would take on the role and students who would be enrolled in the courses of faculty working with student partners. Each had a different take on how a particular name would or would not resonate on campus—strike the right balance between affirming values and practices already in place and expanding into a new modes of practice. And each had a different sense of what might be comprehensible beyond campus—to prospective employers and others. In choosing “Students as Learners and Teachers,” this group wanted to link two roles that are typically divided and distinguished in a way that would not seem too aggressive or threatening within the institution but would also signal to the wider world that we were challenging traditional roles.

Reed College in the United States calls their program the Student Consultants for Teaching and Learning Program. They thereby name both teaching and learning as the focus of partners’ work. Trinity University, also in the United States, chose Tigers as Partners. Taking the name of their mascot, Trinity signals that any member of the university community can be a partner. At McMaster University in Canada, they call their program the Student Partners Program, and at McGill University, also in Canada, they call their program Students and Staff as Partners (to better reflect the spirit of equity, they explain). University of Exeter and University of Nottingham, both in England, call their programs Students as Change Agents, highlighting students’ role and responsibility for bringing about change. Victoria University of Wellington in Aotearoa New Zealand calls their program Ako in Action (“ako” means to learn and to teach through a process that is relational and social). This name is consistent with the university’s new Learning and Teaching Strategy, which embeds a bicultural approach to learning and teaching. Such an approach recognizes the value of “akoranga” (“collective responsibility for learning”).

Each of these names strives to capture the spirit of partnership—the respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility that constitute its underlying premises. However, even small words, such as “as,” can prove problematic. Students as Learners and Teachers, Tigers as Partners, and Students as Change Agents all have “as” in their titles. This use of “as” raises questions for some participants (Cook-Sather et al. 2019). As we discuss in the section under what you might call student partners, the “as” can make the role seem temporary or transitory in ways that feel undermining to students.

Two of the oldest programs in the United States to have invited students to observe and offer feedback on faculty members’ courses are at Carleton College and Brigham Young University. There is debate as to whether these are partnership programs, as opposed to observation programs, but we include reference to them here because they value student perspectives. Carleton College calls its program, established in the 1970s, the Student Observer program, and explains that: “The purpose of the Student Observer program is to provide faculty with trained students who will sit in on their classes and discuss observations, insights, and questions about the teaching and learning in a course” (https://apps.carleton.edu/campus/ltc/faculty-services/observers/). Brigham Young University calls its program Students Consulting on Teaching, established in the 1990s, and explains “SCOTs are trained students interested in making a contribution to the BYU learning experience. They have been taught to serve as excellent feedback resources to instructors, supplementing student evaluations and peer reviews” (<http://ctl.byu.edu/scot>). Notable to us here is the language of training. As we discuss in Chapter 5, we do not use the language of training or position student partners as only observers, although they do have support and they do observe. Again, it is important to consider what language you use for what it signals to everyone involved.

Programs at other institutions are deliberate in specifying the purpose of the program. For instance, the web page for the “Students as Change Agents” at the University of Exeter explains:

The Change Agents scheme gives you the opportunity to lead on change to the academic experience at the University of Exeter, going beyond just making suggestions to your academic reps.

Any individual or group of students can identify an idea for how to improve any part of the University experience, and then you manage the development and delivery of that idea through a self-contained project. You will receive support and training from staff, and be able to develop and demonstrate real experience in leadership, teamwork and project management.

Students as Change Agents has existed at Exeter for nearly 10 years, and in that time hundreds of projects have brought student-led change to almost every part of the University, ranging from module fairs and study blogs, to student journals and academic conferences.

[<http://www.exeter.ac.uk/academic-skills-engagement-team/student-engagement/change/> ]

For Dunne and her colleagues (2014), who founded the program at University of Exeter, the name was part of what made the initiative powerful and successful. Using the same name, the University of Nottingham website explains:

Open to all students, across all years and campuses, the Students as Change Agents programme allows you to work on a project to improve the University. You'll be an active member of a team, or work independently, to make a real impact on teaching and learning.

We’ll support you to lead a change agents project once you've found an area you'd like to improve. While working on your project, you'll also have the opportunity to gain credits for the Nottingham Advantage Award

[<https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/currentstudents/studentopportunities/students-as-change-agents/index.aspx>]

All of these names signal a shift in roles. Most of them specify in particular a shift in the student role. Whereas faculty in programs such as SaLT do not take on new positions, although they do need to rethink their roles, students take on both new positions and new roles. The language you choose both for your program and for the roles within it signals both responsibilities and relationships.

***What name should you choose for faculty and student partners?***

Some programs have names that they use for both faculty and student partners, and some focus more on the name for student partners. As with names of programs, this can be complicated and political. In “What we talk about when we talk about Students as Partners,” Cook-Sather, Matthews, Ntem and Leathwick (2018) write about the term “students as partners”: “The term aims to capture an aspiration for working together in higher education in a way that rejects traditional hierarchies and assumptions about expertise and responsibility. However, by naming only one participant in the partnership and not specifying the nature of that partnership, the term can evoke associations and feelings that undermine that aspirational aspect.” Responding in particular to concerns expressed by student partners, Cook-Sather et al. (2018) argue that, “while there are benefits to naming those who have not typically been afforded agency and recognition in higher education, naming only one participant in the term ‘students as partners’ assumes academics/faculty, or staff more broadly, do not need to be named.” This is a dilemma, they suggest, because “by mentioning only students, the term can be at odds with the principles of reciprocity that define the notion of partnership (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Cook-Sather & Felten, 2017) and are central to power sharing in partnership praxis (Matthews, 2017).”

Below are brief discussions of several names of student partners that different programs have chosen.

***Student Consultants and Students as Consultants***

        “Student Consultants” is the name that the students who co-created SaLT chose for themselves. They chose it for its associations with deliberating, conferring, and engaging in dialogue with faculty regarding classroom practices. The term was also one that students thought would be comprehensible to the outside world, including prospective employers. Ursinus College’s Student Consultant Program, Reed College’s Student Consultants for Teaching and Learning Program through their Center for Teaching and Learning, and Co-Create UVA, and also use “student consultant.” However, Smith College does not, and some faculty at Smith have spoken very strongly against the term for the commercial associations it has. Crawford (2012) uses “students as consultants,” which, again, according to some students, signals a partial and temporary quality (analogous to saying “faculty as teachers”) rather than an integrated identity. While some institutions and individual use this term, others have strong objections to it because of its association with business and commerce.

***Student Partners and Students as Partners***

The term “students as partners” appears in widely cited works, such as *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching* (Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten 2014) and *Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education* (Healey, Flint, and Harrington 2014). Matthews (2017) argues that “students as partners” is “a metaphor for university education that challenges traditional assumptions about the identities of, and relationships between, learners and teachers.” However, as with the name “students as consultants,” the name “students as partners” signals something different from “student partners.” The Tigers as Partners Program at Trinity University and the Smith College Student-Faculty Pedagogical Partnership Program use the name “student partners.”

***Students as Change Agents***

At the University of Exeter and the University of Nottingham in England, “students as change agents” signals students taking responsibility for bringing about change, based on their own research on aspects of learning and teaching, often in leadership roles. While there is still the issue with the “as,” the power of the term “change agents” offsets that to some degree, even as there are complexities with the neoliberal underpinnings of this language.

Each of these names captures and foregrounds some qualities while necessarily eclipsing others. As Anita argued in “What we talk about when we talk about Students as Partners,” “the practices of partnership will always be more complex than the words we use to describe them” (Cook-Sather, Matthews, Ntem, and Leathwick 2018).