**History and Structure of Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT)**

**at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges**

In our introduction to *Student-Faculty Pedagogical Partnerships in the Classroom and Curriculum: A How-To Guide for Faculty, Students, and Academic Developers in Higher Education*, we offer a brief overview of the kinds of partnership we focus on in Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT). Here we describe the context of our institutions, the emergence of SaLT in this context, and how the SaLT program came to assume the structure it has.

Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges are two selective, liberal arts colleges located in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Established in 1885 and 1833, respectively, each has Quaker roots, enrolls approximately 1,500 undergraduate students from diverse socio-economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds, and offers a rigorous curriculum. Both have high teaching and research expectations for faculty and strive to foster a sense of independence and social responsibility in their students. These colleges offer multiple opportunities for students to collaborate with faculty members in research and other arenas. Each school has a strong system of student self-governance, and students self-regulate on both an academic and a social level through their respective honor codes. The ideals of each institution rest on a system of mutual trust and respect among all members.

SaLT emerged in this context from a pilot project conceptualized in 2006 and launched in 2007. In response to a group of five faculty members from different departments at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges, each of whom expressed a desire to make their classrooms more inclusive of and responsive to the increasing diversity of students enrolled in their courses, we used a start-up grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop a pedagogical partnership program focused on addressing the challenges these faculty members had articulated. Starting at the micro level and growing to encompass forums at the meso and macro levels as well (Kaplan, Takayama, and Cook-Sather 2017), the SaLT program has implicitly and explicitly endeavored to support the development of more inclusive and responsive classrooms and campuses (Cook-Sather 2018a, 2019).

Aiming to support the five faculty members who expressed a desire to make their classrooms more inclusive and responsive, Alison met in the Fall-2006 semester with several focus groups consisting of students who identified as people of color, members of groups underrepresented on campus, or allies. She sought their advice on how to structure and launch the pilot partnership program, and they recommended hiring students of color as the first cohort of student consultants to work with the five faculty members. Following their advice, Alison paired each of the faculty members with a student of color who expressed interest in participating or was recommended by a faculty member.

The students visited one session of their faculty partners’ courses each week, took detailed observation notes, and met with their partners weekly to analyze, affirm, and, where appropriate, make suggestions for revising pedagogical approaches. They also met with Alison once a week to discuss the insights generated through their particular positions and perspectives, to develop language for naming what they know and wanted to say about teaching and learning practices, and to identify strategies to support the efforts of the faculty partners.

In response to faculty feedback on this experience and with support from a second grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the pilot expanded in 2008 to include optional seminars to which all faculty could apply, each seminar linked with a one-on-one, semester-long partnership with an undergraduate student partner. Again Alison met with a group of students, this time a mix of students who had piloted the program and others who expressed interest, to decide what the evolving program should look like and what is should be called. The planning group decided to keep the basic structure of the pilot, with the weekly observations and meetings, and they chose “Students as Learners and Teachers” for the name of the program. The students chose “student consultant” for the name of their role for the dialogic emphasis and because they thought the outside world would recognize the term “consultant.” (See O’Hara 2015 for a student partner’s perspective on this experience.)

After seeing the benefits faculty members experienced through these seminars and pedagogical partnerships, the Provosts at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges decided that all incoming faculty members on both campuses should have the opportunity to participate in a seminar and pedagogical partnership during their first year if they chose to do so. Therefore, starting in 2010, during their hiring negotiations with the Provosts, all new faculty on both campuses have been invited to participate in a seminar and pedagogical partnership with a student partner in exchange for a reduced teaching load during their first year. During these negotiations, the Provosts share a basic overview of the SaLT program so that the incoming faculty members can make a decision about whether or not they want to participate. Any faculty member at any point in their career at Bryn Mawr and Haverford, and whether part time, full time, on a tenure track or on a long-term, continuing, non-tenure-track appointment, or visiting can work in a pedagogical partnership with a student partner through SaLT.

Once Alison has a list of faculty partners who plan to participate in SaLT during any given semester, she sends them an email message explaining the premises, structures, and components of the program—a very short version of what is explained in detail in this book. Faculty partners receive a set of guidelines. We discuss the guidelines in Chapter 6, and a version of them is included in full in [“Guidelines for Student and Faculty Partners” resource]. These guidelines provide the basic structure and support for faculty partners, and the incoming faculty are supported in the seminar as well.

Students consultants are second- through fourth-year undergraduates who major in a variety of subjects and range from having no formal education course work to pursuing a minor in educational studies or certification to teach at the secondary level. These students seek out the role of student partner or are recommended by faculty or other students, and they are compensated for their work through stipends, work-study, or academic credit. If they are working in a pedagogy-focused partnership, they are not enrolled in the course their faculty partner is teaching at the time of their partnership, and often they have no experience in or knowledge of the subject matter. As we discuss in Chapter 1 and [“Threshold Concepts to Partnership” resource] in relation to threshold concepts in classroom-focused pedagogical partnerships, the focus of the partnership work is pedagogy, not content. If, however, students are participating in a curriculum-focused partnership, they typically have subject matter knowledge.

If student partners in the SaLT program are working in pedagogy-focused partnerships, they participate in a two-hour orientation and receive the same set of guidelines for developing a pedagogical partnership as their faculty partners. We discuss the orientation along with the guidelines in Chapter 6, [“Sample Orientations for Student Partners” resource], and [“Guidelines for Student and Faculty Partners” resource]. Student partners also meet weekly with Alison and other student partners to discuss how best to nurture faculty growth and development. Their main “training,” therefore, is on the job—an approach each group of student consultants has affirmed because each partnership is unique and needs to be responsive to the particular faculty partner with whom they are working, not prescribed in some way. As one student consultant put it, “every partnership will look different and every focus will be approached in a way that is unique to the collaboration dynamic” (Brunson 2018). If student partners in the SaLT program are working in curriculum-focused partnerships, they are their faculty partners tend to work much more independently.

SaLT remains the signature program of the Bryn Mawr and Haverford College Teaching and Learning Institute. At this point in the program’s history, all faculty members who join the colleges are invited to participate in the program in exchange for a reduced teaching load (Cook-Sather 2016a), and faculty at any stage of their careers can participate in stand-alone pedagogical partnerships with student consultants focused on pedagogical practice or curriculum design and redesign. As of this writing in 2018, 280 faculty members have participated in over 350 partnerships with 185 student consultants. As Schlosser and Sweeney (2015) argue, these partnerships allow partners “‘to hold a space’” within which they can “develop practical wisdom about teaching and learning together while increasing effectiveness” during the time they collaborate.

While the explicit goal of the program remains to support faculty and students in engaging in reflection on and dialogue about teaching and learning to affirm and revise pedagogical and curricular approaches, SaLT also always aims to affirm and honor the experiences and knowledge of all students, including and especially those traditionally underrepresented in and underserved by higher education (de Bie, Marquis, Cook-Sather, and Luqueño 2019; Cook-Sather 2018b), to develop more inclusive and responsive classrooms (Cook-Sather and Agu, 2013; Cook-Sather and Des-Ogugua 2018), and to support students in developing citizenship and leadership skills (Cook-Sather and Luz 2015; Cook-Sather, Marquis, Ntem, and Prasad 2019). One student partner captures the power of this work in the box below:

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| “It is empowering to see strong, passionate, intelligent and active women of color on campus be able to be in prestigious academic positions…[and]...important for other students of color or underrepresented groups to have seen … that their perspective was welcomed, would be treated well and was valued as a driving force to change classroom dynamics.” - Student partners quoted in Cook-Sather and Agu, 2013, 277. |