Enhancing research on the undergraduate psychology curriculum through student-teacher partnership: Reflections from an undergraduate student co-researcher and academic lecturer co-researcher

Vicki McDermott-Thompson and Phoebe Hill, University of East Anglia

ABSTRACT

This article draws on the perspectives of an undergraduate student co-researcher and a psychology lecturer who worked in partnership on a small qualitative research project. The project explored the experiences of undergraduate students on a second-year psychology research methods module at a university in the United Kingdom. Reflecting on our experience of working in partnership on this research we explore the meaning of student-teacher partnership, drawing on theory and literature around student-teacher partnerships in learning and teaching to contextualise our reflections. We reflect on the ethical and practical implications of staff-student partnership in the process and product of the research and explain how the student-teacher partnership enhanced the study design, interpretation of research findings and dissemination of the research. We explore what we perceived the benefits and challenges of the student-teacher dyad to be through reflective accounts of our own experiences during the project. We will explain how working in collaboration helped generate a more rounded perspective of student experience and provided concrete, meaningful practical implications for the curriculum and a reflective aid for future student co-researchers within the school of Psychology. The article will conclude with consideration of the broader implications of our experiences and how what we learned through this process can be applied in other contexts where educators are considering how to involve students in research which is for and about their learning.

Keywords: student co-researchers, student-teacher partnership, research methods teaching, student voice, higher education

Introduction

Teachers often want to understand what student experience of teaching and learning is like, investigating student perspectives of pedagogy and practice by asking students to participate in research. Findings can provide some useful insights into what is effective, what requires improvement and what needs to change (Fielding, 2004; Groundwater-Smith & Mockler, 2015). However, it could be argued that the outcomes of such research are based on what teachers think is worthy of study, potentially overlooking the unique insight students can bring as they view the classroom and their learning from a different perspective to the teacher (Maunder et al., 2013). To fully understand student experience of teaching and learning requires involving students directly in the research process. In this article we will present a reflective analysis of the student-teacher dyad from the teacher and student perspective, illuminating how the partnership led to new ways of understanding teaching and learning and shaped our own identities as student and teacher.

We will explain how working in student-teacher partnership on research about student perspectives of learning helped generate a more rounded perspective of student experience and produced meaningful practical implications for the curriculum.

This paper draws on the perspectives of Phoebe – an undergraduate psychology student co-researcher at the time the research was carried out, and Vicki – a psychology lecturer. In 2022, they worked in collaboration on a small qualitative research project which explored the experiences of undergraduate students who had completed a second-year psychology research methods module at a university in the United Kingdom. Over the course of one academic year, students on this module switch from a period of quantitative research methods learning, to a shorter period of qualitative research methods learning. The shorter qualitative block was an outcome of historic curriculum design informed by British Psychological Society requirements for research methods content. The project explored how students perceived and navigated this shift from quantitative to qualitative research design and analysis through a series of small focus group discussions with a sample of fourteen students who had just completed the module. The project was initially developed by Vicki in her role as module leader for the qualitative component. To assist Vicki with this work, a paid internship was advertised to psychology students. Phoebe applied for and successfully secured the role, working on the project with Vicki over a period of three months. This article is a scholarly product of their partnership, illustrating the integral role of the student as co-inquirer in this research and the meaningful partnership Vicki and Phoebe developed and continued to sustain.

We jointly wrote the proposal for the paper that you are reading. We met to discuss our approach to working on drafting the article, establishing a clear strategy for how this would work, which included meetings, commenting on the working document and email exchanges. The article is written in third person, where we each talk about our own experiences and reflections and jointly analyse and evaluate these in the context of our partnership. We have therefore made a shared and equitable contribution to the written and practical aspects of developing, researching and writing this piece of work.

The article is set out as follows; firstly, we will present the theoretical context for our reflections, outlining perspectives of co-produced research in teaching and learning and exploring the meaning of student-teacher partnership. Following this we will explore the ethical and practical implications of staff-student partnership in the process and product of the research and explain how the student-teacher partnership enhanced the study design, interpretation of research findings and dissemination of the research. We will discuss the benefits and challenges of our partnership and conclude by considering the broader implications of our experiences and how what we learned through this process can be applied in other contexts where educators are considering how to involve students in research which is for and about their learning.

Theoretical context

The higher education context

In recent years the higher education sector has seen a shift towards more marketised, consumerist agendas (Brooks et al., 2016). Alongside this shift an increasing emphasis has been placed upon engaging with students and acting upon student voice. Student involvement in the development of learning and teaching occurs formally within institutions – via mechanisms like module evaluation and student participation in staff-student committees – and externally, via teaching benchmarks and measures of student experience like the National Student Survey (NSS). The growing emphasis on student voice appears on the surface to

connect nicely to student-partnership approaches which, amongst other goals, aim to understand and enhance learning and teaching. However, the growth of an 'audit culture' reinforced by marketisation (Molesworth et al., 2010) and consumerist agendas means key drivers and indicators against which institutional outcomes and impacts are measured may influence the attitudes and behaviour of staff and students (Bishop, 2018; Healey et al., 2014). This can conversely mean that student-teacher partnership approaches – which place value on creative processes and capturing meaning in student experience – are at odds with benchmarks that seek quantifiable information to demonstrate specific outcomes and impacts (Buckley, 2018; Carey, 2013; Healey et al., 2014). It is against this backdrop of consumerism, and internal and external institutional performance indicators, benchmarks and frameworks (e.g. Teaching Excellence Framework) that student-teacher partnerships in learning and teaching, and the partnership described in this article, unfold.

What is 'student-teacher' partnership?

This paper focuses on the student-teacher partnership between Vicki and Phoebe who worked in collaboration to achieve specific research related outcomes – to understand how students experienced their research methods curriculum in year two of their psychology degree; the intention being for this information to feed into development of the structure of the overall year two psychology research methods programme. To achieve these outcomes relied in part on the nature and quality of our partnership. In order to reflect on the characteristics and qualities of our partnership, in this section we consider what 'student-teacher partnership' means in the context of academic literature before moving on to explore principles that can enhance how effectively these relationships function.

There is no singular, universally accepted definition of student-teacher partnership. In academic literature different terms are used to describe this relationship, for example, Cook-Sather (2014) has used 'student-faculty partnership' which describes a process through which teachers and students work together as peers to shape aspects of the educational experience. Healy et al. (2014) refer to these relationships as 'students as partner' where students collaboratively partner with staff on educational planning and development, whilst Seale (2010, 2015) makes reference to 'student voice work' which focuses on the participatory involvement of students as co-producers of knowledge and change-agents in shaping educational practices and policies. A central feature in papers describing student-teacher partnership is that they are fundamentally collaborative in nature and involve the active participation of both students and teachers in making meaningful contributions that shape and inform education and learning experiences (Bovill et al., 2011; Cook-Sather, 2014; Healey et al., 2014; Matthews et al., 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2018). Students can act as partners in many diverse areas of academic and institutional business (e.g. governance and quality assurance), perhaps explaining why the variation in terminology and definition exists (Buckley, 2018). As this article focuses specifically on students as partners in learning and teaching, we narrow our discussion of student-teacher partnership to this specific aspect of these collaborations whilst acknowledging this is one of multiple ways that students can act as partners in higher education.

Student-teacher partnerships which focus on learning and teaching can be understood as "a collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision-making, implementation, investigation, or analysis" (Cook-Sather et al., 2014, pp. 6-7). Student-teacher partnership in learning and teaching can therefore be conceptualised as a shared enterprise that both parties contribute to as equal partners – though contributions may vary in nature. Both student and teacher are actively involved in shaping educational experiences, and the experiences of others which may lead to more engaging and effective teaching and learning environments (Bovill et al., 2016). Student-teacher

partnerships can therefore lead to tangible outcomes, which can reach beyond the intended 'product' (such as research findings) to wider implications for the teacher in terms of informing their own understanding of their role and teacher identity and for the student in validating their role as researcher of their own reality (Reimer & McLean, 2015).

Guiding principles of student-teacher partnership in higher education

There are multiple conceptual models and explanations which describe the core features of student-teacher partnership (see Healey et al., 2014 for a detailed overview). A helpful starting point for considering principles of student-teacher partnership is Bovill and Bulley's (2011) adaptation of Arnstein's (1969) ladder which represents student involvement in decision-making processes in higher education (Varwell, 2022). Their bottom rung refers to 'dictated curriculum' where students play no role in designing or commenting upon the curriculum they are taught (Bovill & Bulley, 2011, p. 5). As we climb the rungs, each level represents increased student participation. For example, at the fourth rung of 'wide choices from prescribed choices' we see a higher level of freedom for students within prescribed parameters. At the highest rung - 'students in control' - the teacher is absent; this rung is not typically found in higher education. We would argue that our partnership is reflected in the seventh level of this adapted model - 'partnership - a negotiated curriculum' - as we worked collaboratively to explore the curriculum and negotiate change (Bovill & Bulley, 2011). Adaptations of Arnstein's (1969) model provide a useful framework for understanding the different levels and types of student participation (e.g. Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Carey, 2013) and represent an explicit ideological opposition to neoliberal approaches to higher education (Buckley, 2018). However, this model emphasises outcomes rather than processes of involvement meaning they often lack detail about the nature of involvement and what can act to facilitate or inhibit participation at the various levels (Quetzal Tritter & McCallum, 2006).

In our experience, models/approaches which describe the values, attitudes and behaviours embodied in practice provide a much more meaningful, practical guide for putting partnerships into action (Healey et al. 2014). A simple yet powerful approach which aligns with our experience is Cook-Sather et al.'s (2014) three guiding principles of student-faculty partnerships – respect, reciprocity and responsibility. Respect involves taking seriously and valuing what each partner brings to the partnership. This involves honesty, open-mindedness and to an extent an element of vulnerability – to open oneself up to new and different perspectives (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Reciprocity is connected to respect and refers to the ways in which partners interact with each other. For reciprocal exchanges to occur, equity and balance are important. Also emphasised is the benefit of diversity in exchanges and how variation in what is exchanged between student and teacher can enrich the partnership experience. Respect is a pre-condition for reciprocity, and both lead to feelings of shared responsibility for the outcomes which the partnership is seeking to achieve (Carless, 2013). Whereas respect and reciprocity are features of the partnership, responsibility refers to a transformation in roles which occurs because partnerships alter student and staff orientation towards more responsibility – students assume greater responsibility for aspects of teaching and staff take on more responsibility for learning (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). These principles are flexible and can be enacted in different ways as partnerships develop. It is their flexibility, combined with emphasis on partnership as a way of *doing* which is embedded within these three simple yet powerful elements of Cook-Sathers et al.'s (2014) principles that felt best applied to our partnership (Healey et al. 2014). This is not to say other aspects of alternative approaches are not relevant; however, we believe these principles are a good basis from which to build a solid foundation for a quality partnership, particularly for inexperienced teachers establishing their first or early partnerships (Bovill et al., 2011).

Reflections

In this section we consider our experiences from the initial conception of the project to completion and dissemination, reflecting upon the benefits and challenges of the student teacher dyad throughout. We will conclude this section by explaining and reflecting upon how we believe the partnership enhanced research on the undergraduate psychology curriculum.

Study development and design

Vicki identified over several years that many students struggled to smoothly transition from learning about and conducting quantitative research to learning about and carrying out qualitative research – she wanted to know why this was and how she could help facilitate the transition process. Vicki had some ideas for revising the research methods curriculum to help students more effectively navigate their research methods journey, but before proposing any changes wanted to explore how students *themselves* were experiencing research methods learning and practice to see how their perspectives connected to ideas she developed through the lens of 'teacher' (Brookfield, 2002). Reflecting on why she wanted to recruit an intern to assist with the study, Vicki's reasons were twofold – firstly, she wanted to gain a student perspective through each stage of the research process with the aim of making the study as meaningful to student experience as it could be by drawing on a student point of view from design to dissemination (Nystrom et al., 2018). Related to this, was an acute awareness that as teacher of the module she was asking students to provide feedback on, she was inherently in an imbalanced power position with students (Ferguson et al., 2004). By working collaboratively with a student-as-researcher (Lambert, 2009), Vicki hoped to diminish some of the perceived power inequity that may occur through holding a distinct role of teacher-as-researcher through the student intern role as an 'insider' to the group being studied (Arnstein, 1969). Secondly, the internship offered the student an opportunity to gain research related experience and training in an academic setting and receive financial compensation for this work. Vicki did consider whether Phoebe's internship being a paid role could raise a question around the authenticity of the student-teacher partnership. However, it is not uncommon to find payment of students in projects and research which takes a student partnership approach (e.g. Bengtson et al., 2017; Cook-Saher, 2014; Matthews et al., 2018).

Phoebe acknowledges that the internship being a paid position was one of several motivations for her to apply to assist with the project. Her overriding motivation, however, was to contribute to understanding student experience and ultimately to improve the second-year research methods module. Phoebe perceived a close alignment with Vicki's own motivations for the project as teacher and believes this played a vital part throughout the process – it allowed both student and teacher to become invested in the project through a shared academic curiosity and achieving shared practical goals (Williamson, 2013). As Vicki had been Phoebe's lecturer on the module as well as lead of the project, it could have been a challenge for Phoebe to be honest in the process, especially around any perceived issues with the module. However, she felt from the outset Vicki was incredibly open and honest with her, explaining how the research project was a learning opportunity for them both. This honesty and expectation setting from the start, where Vicki emphasised that this was a partnership between teacher and student, gave Phoebe the confidence to provide critical insight and suggestions through the whole research and analysis process (Gravett et al. 2020; Varwell, 2022). Framing the partnership clearly at this initial phase set the tone for our student-teacher relationship throughout the project and developed a shared sense of trust between us (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014). What we describe here reflects the guiding principles of respect, each partner valuing what the other brings to the partnership, and reciprocity, there was equity in what was exchanged and how it was exchanged. This led to a sense of shared responsibility for the outcomes we were seeking to achieve through the project (Cook-Sather et al. 2014).

In order to advertise the internship, Vicki had to design the study and provide a general idea of how she wanted the research to unfold. This meant that elements of the design process were inherently teacher led. Vicki decided on the method (focus groups) and analysis approach (thematic analysis) which she felt best suited what the study was aiming to find out (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Kitzinger, 1995). This illustrates how the teacher can draw on their own expertise to guide initial development of a student-teacher project, whilst recognising where the student can bring in their expertise and insights within a framework that they can concretely pin ideas to (Cook-Sather, 2014). One of several areas of the project where Phoebe's contribution exemplifies this was in developing the content and structure of how focus groups would run. A loose set of questions were created by Vicki, identifying common issues students had experienced during the qualitative chunk of the module. In discussion of these questions with Phoebe it became evident that important aspects of the student experience, not identified through the lens of 'teacher' (Brookfield, 2002), were missing. For example, many of the questions focused on how students experienced the transition from quantitative to qualitative research methods learning; Phoebe suggested including more focus on asking students to consider their own skills and competencies and how and in what ways students related these to their experience of the transition. Phoebe also suggested that Vicki leave the discussion for the final 30 minutes as she felt this could reduce the potential impact of the power dynamic of Vicki, as participants' lecturer, and facilitate more authentic student feedback that would help improve the course (Ferguson et al. 2004). Without drawing on Phoebe's frame of reference as a student (Morgan & Spanish, 1984), meaningful elements of student experience could therefore have been missed (Cook-Sather et al., 2014).

Data gathering and analysis

To explore how students experienced their second-year research methods curriculum a series of small focus groups were arranged with students who had recently completed the module. Phoebe took responsibility for organising the discussions, contacting participants and sending out invitations to those willing to take part. The idea of responsibility in partnerships could therefore be expanded to include elements of projects where each partner takes responsibility for specific tasks which contribute to helping reach the overall outcomes a project is aiming to achieve (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Phoebe's ownership/leadership over the data gathering in the research was a reflection in part of Phoebe's character. She is a conscientious student who took guidance and asked questions but was also able to work incredibly well independently to organise a core aspect of the research (Carey, 2013). For Vicki, the way Phoebe took ownership over the data gathering process reflected the sense of empowerment she felt Phoebe had gained through initial discussions about the meaning of the partnership (Ryan & Tilbury, 2013). The principles of respect and reciprocity are once again evident as is the responsibility we shared in working in slightly different ways to contribute towards the project (Cook-Sather et al., 2014).

When running focus group discussions, Vicki and Phoebe allocated the questions between themselves in advance so that each asked about specific issues and then Phoebe led on focused topics once Vicki left the discussion. Phoebe valued the opportunity to learn from Vicki how to effectively run group discussions, and this helped build her confidence in leading the conversations once Vicki had left (Gravett et al. 2020). Vicki placed her trust in Phoebe in terms of handing over control of the data gathering to her – we think this is a nice example of reciprocity. Phoebe's input was taken on board with respect and given value by the adaptations to the focus groups as a result of her suggestion, and Vicki relinquished some of her control as teacher-partner to Phoebe (Bovill et al. 2011). As a result, students were given a space to provide their views and feedback to an 'insider' rather than to a teacher, which could have helped diminish power imbalances, build rapport and facilitate conversation with participants (Mercer, 2007).

Following data analysis, we were able to conclude that what we had found did not answer our research question – the focus on transition between one type of research to another was not how students in the research viewed this shift. Perhaps this point illustrates how it may have been more beneficial to engage in partnership work in this research from the early planning stages so that Phoebe could have provided a student perspective on the study focus including the research question (Carey, 2013), which may have enhanced the overall quality of the research and its outcomes. Related to data analysis, Vicki was grappling with an aspect of the data that she felt could be conceptualised into a model that explained how students described their experience of working in groups to conduct their research methods work. Vicki described the process she was trying to encapsulate in a diagrammatic representation to Phoebe, who helped to interrogate what the issue was and how elements of the model interacted to explain the experiences (both positive and negative) that students described. This example really stands out for us both in illustrating the trust between us as partners as well as respect and reciprocity (Carless, 2013; Healey et al., 2014) – we worked together to untangle this issue through shared respect of each other's perspective and what that brought to interpreting the data.

One regret from Vicki's point of view was that Phoebe was not able to finish everything within the timeframe of the internship. For example, she was only able to contribute to the initial phase of data analysis and the later phase, with the bulk of analytical work being undertaken by Vicki. Time could therefore be argued as a weakness or inhibitor to our partnership (Nystrom et al., 2018). Vicki was perhaps over-ambitious about what could realistically be achieved within the timeframe of the internship and this had the potential to make Phoebe feel she had not met the expectations set at the start of the project. It is fortunate that Phoebe was flexible in this regard and understood that research can be unpredictable, and take longer than anticipated, providing her with a realistic experience of research that not all students are exposed to. As far as Vicki is aware this did not impact upon her positive experience of the partnership or the research. Upon reflection, Vicki would likely pare down the activities and expectations in future partnerships, being more realistic about the tasks and outcomes that are achievable within the time available.

Dissemination and wider implications

Plans for disseminating the findings of the research were factored into the project by Vicki in the initial stages of planning the project. Vicki wanted Phoebe to have the opportunity to present the study findings to the Psychology Head of School and Teaching Director; this was partly skills focused but also provided an opportunity for Phoebe to present our findings to a specific audience who had a shared interest in curriculum development. At the end of the internship (August 2022), Phoebe created and delivered a presentation to these staff members.

Although the paid internship ended, Vicki and Phoebe continued their partnership voluntarily to disseminate the findings of the research. It is worth highlighting that the end of a paid partnership could act as a barrier if the student partner is not interested or invested in continuing the partnership. Whilst an important outcome of the partnership was the presentation to key staff members in the School of Psychology, Vicki felt it was in the dissemination of findings to *students*, that Phoebe's contribution resonated more than if Vicki presented findings as teacher-as-researcher. Phoebe attended a lecture being given to the next cohort of students undertaking the research methods module to talk to them about our findings and her role in the project. She spoke confidently and candidly about what she had learnt through doing the internship. For Vicki this was a really rewarding experience, seeing Phoebe describe the collaborative nature of our partnership and her earnest belief that her perspectives were meaningful and valued.

In November 2022 Vicki and Phoebe presented the study at the Division of Academics, Researchers and Teachers in Psychology Annual Conference (McDermott-Thompson & Hill, 2022). A more general issue arose around participation in conferences as an undergraduate student since attendance typically comes at a financial cost. This can be seen as a practical challenge to authentically enabling students' full participation in dissemination activity – where the monetary costs of academic outlets to disseminate findings more widely could act to obscure the role of the student in the work (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Fortunately, Phoebe was able to participate in and present at the conference because Vicki drew on funding available to academic staff to cover the cost of Phoebe's ticket. However, we acknowledge this highlights a practical issue around funding for dissemination activity and how academic hierarchies may undermine the ethos of partnership working (Marquis et al., 2017).

The nature of our partnership led us to co-authoring this paper together, enabling us to share with a wider audience how student-teacher partnerships can work in practice and how the nature of such partnerships led to development of the curriculum. How Vicki and Phoebe experienced their partnership gives some insight into how and why staff extend co-inquiry into co-authorship (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Without Phoebe's input, Vicki believes she would only have gained a partial understanding of student experience of the research methods curriculum. In writing this article in partnership, we exemplify the qualities we claim have made the partnership successful.

Benefits and challenges of the student-teacher dyad

Throughout this section we have explored many of the benefits and challenges experienced during our partnership. In this section, Phoebe draws out some final reflections from her unique perspective as student within the partnership, highlighting both individual benefits and potential challenges. Vicki concludes this section with a final reflection about how she will take this learning forward in the future.

Phoebe has always been interested in going into the field of higher education with aspirations to teach psychology after she graduated. She felt this project would allow her to learn from Vicki not just about how to contribute to research to improve teaching but also about the general responsibilities of academics. Vicki was very supportive throughout this process, always considering Phoebe's personal aspirations and ways in which her experience on the project could support her with her career progression in the future. Independently facilitating focus groups meant Phoebe learnt how to manage groups of individuals and develop a deeper understanding of the importance of rapport (Mercer, 2007). Through constant reflection during the project and in writing this piece, she has enhanced many skills required to become a reflective practitioner in an educational setting. As a student it was valuable to know that staff want to improve and are open to ideas from those that they teach (Martens et al., 2019). Phoebe helped to project the voices of students from her cohort, with the intention to support those that would take the module in the future (Little & Williams, 2010; Nystrom et al., 2018).

A further perceived benefit for Phoebe was her growth in confidence as a researcher. Phoebe had just completed her second year as an undergraduate so was preparing to complete her dissertation research project in her third and final year. Taking part in the research alongside Vicki meant that Phoebe was supported in a hands-on approach in learning more about the research process and her personal researcher identity, a common experience within staff-student partnerships within higher education (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Throughout the duration of the project Vicki provided verbal guidance on how to conduct a literature review and write a professional introduction through to supporting the publication of their partnership together. The supported practice that this allowed Phoebe to have helped to mould her dissertation project as it gave her a realistic experience of how professional research is conducted. The project allowed her to develop skills in a safe, supported environment while learning from a

professional within the field. Within this project, Phoebe felt her student researcher identity and confidence was increased; however this is not always the case with partnerships of this nature. A systematic review from Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) found that if a student lacks comfort within the project it can negatively impact academic achievement as well as negatively shifting their identity not just as a researcher but as a learner within higher education. This underscores the importance of the values of respect, reciprocity and responsibility in our partnership which helped foster how comfortable Phoebe felt about her role in the project and had a positive impact more broadly on her student researcher identity (Cook-Sather et al. 2014).

Through working in partnership with Phoebe, Vicki has learnt a great deal about herself as a teacher and developed a stronger sense of the importance of engaging students in conversations about their academic life and experience (Healey et al. 2014). The benefits that Phoebe describes from her position as a student reinforce for Vicki the importance of partnership work for the individuals participating in the partnership (e.g. skills development), for the stakeholders likely to be impacted by the outcomes of the partnership and for the wider educational context in which the student-teacher relationship unfolds. From Vicki's perspective, Phoebe's academic curiosity and genuine interest in education undoubtedly played a key role in the success and quality of the partnership. This led to an awareness that the characteristics of the student-partner are important. Reflecting on this also presented a challenge around how partnerships can be expanded and evaluated to assess whether opportunities to participate in collaboration are inclusive and accessible to all students (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). It is likely that partnering with students across diverse cohorts of undergraduates is needed to truly capture and respond to student views and experiences of learning and teaching.

How did the partnership enhance research on the undergraduate psychology curriculum?

This section summarises what we perceive the partnership contributed to researching the undergraduate psychology curriculum. Firstly, the partnership brought valuable student-centred insight into the research process through Phoebe's perspective as an undergraduate student who had recently completed the research methods module. In her role as student-as-researcher Phoebe drew on a student frame of reference, offering insight from a different perspective of the classroom to the teacher (Brookfield, 2002). We have highlighted the ways in which her student perspective improved elements of the research design and subsequently, we believe, enhanced data gathering. This is a good illustration of how both partners can contribute in different, but equally valuable ways – for example, Vicki made overarching methodological and analytical choices and Phoebe provided critical insight upon the mechanics of the overall approach, developing methods materials and aspects of the research process. We would argue that Phoebe's participation as student partner has helped to maximise the relevance of the findings to the 'end user' – future students and their research methods curriculum (Nystrom et al., 2018, p. 2).

Secondly, we used the research findings to inform and implement change. The partnership contributed to both short and long-term changes to the year 2 research methods curriculum. Short term, in the academic year following the research, Vicki made some minor alterations directly linked to the research findings. For example, students raised concerns around the impact of poor group relations so Vicki created a formal submission process for checking data gathering in groups to alleviate issues of conflict that had been creating issues for some groups. Long term, our findings fed into a more radical change to the research methods curriculum where quantitative and qualitative methods were moved into three distinct reimagined modules which partnered research methods with conceptual psychological topics. The qualitative component, for example, was paired with conceptual and historical issues in psychology which fits well with the nature of qualitative approaches which place research in their social and psychological

contexts. A further significant change was a lengthening of the previously shorter qualitative block from 9 weeks to 12 (a full semester). These changes were partially informed by the outcomes of the research we undertook in student-teacher partnership.

Thirdly, we created a feedback loop to key stakeholders, including academic staff and students (Seale, 2015). Disseminating the findings, and short and long-term changes, created a feedback loop to students about how information gathered from them, about them and for them has been used. Closing the feedback loop can signal to students that their voice is being heard and valued in decisions about their learning and the curriculum (Carey, 2013). This in turn may encourage student participation in future because they have evidence of active student engagement in curriculum design and development (Carey, 2013) through the closing of the feedback loop. These curriculum related outcomes align with Bovill and Bulley's (2011) seventh rung ('partnership - a negotiated curriculum') in their ladder of student participation in curriculum design. Changes to the curriculum were informed through collaboration with a student partner in research with students about and for the curriculum.

Involving students in research that is for and about their learning – applying our experience to other contexts

This final section sets out four action points derived from our reflections and experiences. The actions identify how what we learned can be applied to other contexts that may be considering adopting a student-partnership approach. Our perspectives could be applied with a wider scope to activities that move beyond the learning and teaching experience, however we can only speak to that context as it is where our reflections are drawn from.

1. Identify contextual factors and challenges that could impact the partnership

If you are considering involving students in research for and about their learning it is important to identify the contextual factors and challenges which may impact the nature, quality and dynamic of student-teacher partnerships (Matthews et al., 2018). We recognise that our partnership was facilitated within our context (a psychology department) because of the way that student experience and student consultation are already embedded into learning, teaching, governance and decision-making activities. The internship programme being a good example of this – the scheme provided Vicki with a formal mechanism, time and space to build and facilitate a student-teacher partnership, and it offered Phoebe the opportunity to participate as co-enquirer, to contribute to educational life and build important transferable skills. When considering a partnership approach, reflecting critically on the educational context will help identify what might facilitate and what might inhibit the effectiveness of the partnership. These could be institutional such as resistance to the idea of partnership, or individual such as the confidence of staff to establish and foster a partnership (Matthews, 2019). One issue we encountered was financial in terms of Phoebe contributing to dissemination of findings at a conference. Knowing this now means this can be factored in or considered in future partnerships. Understanding constraints of your context and how partnership work 'fits' could therefore potentially help in addressing any issues early on and to pinpoint and draw on beneficial aspects and resources that could facilitate partnership working.

2. Consider where partnership work is best placed within your context

Think pragmatically about where partnerships could feature in activities that are for and about student experience and views of learning. From what was learnt through this student-teacher partnership work,

Vicki would suggest that creativity is an important consideration and may be more achievable as the teacher develops a sense of how partnerships can unfold and builds confidence in their role as teacher-partner. Creating a feedback loop by asking for feedback from the student partner can feed into identifying where creativity in partnership work could feature, for example Phoebe wrote a reflection of her experience during the internship which she shared with Vicki. Writing this article has also helped Vicki (and Phoebe) evaluate the partnership, informing how Vicki in particular intends to develop student-teacher partnership work in the future.

3. Be realistic about the goals and outcomes of partnership work

It is important to be realistic about what can be achieved in the timescale available. In our particular study (like a lot of research) the timescale of the internship was fairly constrained and meant that when delays in the research process occurred, Phoebe was not able to see through to completion certain aspects of the research (e.g. data analysis). Key objectives for the partnership, which are clearly defined for each partner, are therefore important. Linked to this, is the idea that the student and teacher (and the partnership) benefit from establishing the meaning of the partnership from the outset. Phoebe and Vicki both agree that the strength in their partnership was built from clear expectation setting from the start, this fostered both implicitly and explicitly respect and reciprocity (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). If you are a teacher you need to be able to relinquish some of the control to the student, and it is important to think about how and in what ways this can be achieved, acknowledging the student's position, identity and expertise (Healey et al. 2014). Fostering an environment that enables students to contribute as an authentic partner, and expert by experience is the foundation from which a good partnership can develop (Williamson, 2013).

4. Factor in opportunities for dissemination that include the student partner

Finally, if you are undertaking partnership work we strongly recommend building in opportunities for student co-researchers to participate in meaningful dissemination activity *with* the teacher-partner. This could be within your own educational context with other educators, fellow students and stakeholders who may have an interest in the work you have been conducting and its outcomes. We believe this is important for several reasons. Firstly, it provides the student with an opportunity to further develop their communication skills, presenting the work in different formats for a wider audience which can reinforce the skills-based benefits of the student partnership work. Disseminating findings to a wider audience beyond the immediate partnership context also extends the reach of the partnership work, providing a platform for the broader research community to gain a deeper understanding of the topic in question and valuable insights into how partnerships operate in practice. Secondly, a partnered approach to dissemination acts to evidence the depth and authenticity of the student-teacher partnership – it implicitly acknowledges and validates the students role, contribution and expertise in the project and student-teacher dyad. The teacher-partner also benefits through this wider activity in terms of their own professional development, learning about the topic of the partnership project in more depth (informed by the student frame of reference) as well as gaining a deeper understanding of themselves, their skills and limitations as teacher-partner. Both teacher and student benefit from feelings of satisfaction that come from success related to the partnership.

Biographies

Vicki McDermott-Thompson is a Lecturer in Psychology at the University of East Anglia. Her interests orient around student experience of learning and teaching, with a focus on research methods learning and the use of technology in learning. Vicki is also interested in issues of equality, diversity and inclusion and the psychology of gender and holds roles and teaching responsibilities focused on these areas. Email: v.mcdermott@uea.ac.uk, Twitter/X: @VickiMcDermott

Phoebe Hill graduated from the University of East Anglia in 2023 with a First-Class Honours BSc in Psychology. She is a member of the Active Learning Network, which promotes and shares active approaches to learning. She has a passion for education and learning and a particular interest in the use of games and gamification within the classroom. Email: phoebehill04@gmail.com

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