Involving Students as Partners in a Course Redesign

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ABSTRACT

As a team composed of student partners, a course instructor, and an instructional designer, we share our experiences of working together on a course development project. We used a collaborative autoethnographic approach to document and reflect on our experiences. For the course instructor and instructional designer, providing effective mentorship and reconceptualizing roles, timelines, and workloads were important considerations for the effective inclusion of students as partners in the project. For the student partners, taking on a project role as an expert with a clear purpose helped them gain new skillsets and insights into how an educational experience can be constructed. Although our individual reflections reveal that our experiences of working together on the project varied, we all valued working with each other. We believe that it is important to keep in mind that we all experienced our collaboration differently when we think about inclusivity with respect to course facilitation and design. A change that we would make for future collaborations of this nature would be to invest more effort into team building at the start of the project to help ensure roles are understood and to enhance team cohesion.

Keywords: Students as partners, course redesign

"Students as partners" is a concept that situates students as co-creators of knowledge in partnership with instructors, and it reflects how students can collaborate in activities involving teaching and learning (Healey et al., 2014). Past studies have documented various ways in which students, instructors, and staff can collaborate through partnerships in the scholarship of teaching and learning (e.g., Popovic et al., 2021) and curriculum design (e.g., Hanna-Benson et al., 2020; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018). Regarding curriculum design, students have helped to adapt or refine the syllabus after the course has started (e.g., Hess, 2008; Moreno-Lopez, 2005) and contributed to creating assessments (Hudd, 2003) and assessment policies (Moreno-Lopez, 2005). Students who have already completed a course have also helped to redesign it in collaboration with instructors (Bovill, 2014; Hufford, 2011; Cordner et al., 2012) and academic developers (Bovill et al., 2011).

Positive outcomes have been documented for student-faculty collaborations on course development, including students feeling competent, as well as valued and relevant in the process of learning and teaching (Kaur et al., 2019). In addition to working on desired skills, including communication and critical thinking, collaborating on course development has also resulted in students gaining experience working outside their comfort zones and becoming more confident in their abilities (Hanna-Benson et al., 2020). Instructors have benefitted by collaborating on course development with student partners through increased understanding and knowledge of teaching practices.

Whereas past investigations on collaborative student-faculty curriculum design have focused on various design elements of the course, including learning outcomes, learning activities, assessments, due dates, and course policies, in this paper we document our experiences of making students' voices central to the content of a course through the process of redeveloping an in-person placement course for distance education (DE) delivery.

We are a project team consisting of a course instructor with 7 years of teaching and development experience, an instructional designer with 20 years of course design and development experience, and three undergraduate students, two of whom have previously completed the in-class version of the course in question. We critically reflect on our experiences of working on this course development project as student-faculty partners, and in doing so we aim to provide insight into incorporating authentic student-centred voices in course content, as well as the experience of such an undertaking and what other project team members might be thinking or expecting. We hope that sharing and unpacking our experiences will be helpful to anyone interested in engaging in a similar project in the future, including students, staff, and faculty.

We used a collaborative autoethnographic approach (Ngunjiri et al., 2010) to capture each of our first-hand experiences of working on a course development project as student-faculty partners. Autoethnography is a method used to expand our understanding of social phenomena in which the researcher's personal experiences serve as the primary data (Chang, 2013). As a research method, autoethnography "utilizes data about self and context to gain an understanding of

the connectivity between self and others within the same context" (Ngunjiri et al., 2010, p. 1). It has been used to explore personal and collaborative topics, including family relationships (Poulos, 2009), identity development within socio-cultural contexts (Alexander, 2004), and academic culture (Rodriguez, 2009). Collaborative autoethnography involves two or more participant researchers and provides a means to investigate sensitive topics with depth, openness, and vulnerability. This method helps to increase understanding of interconnectivity between self and others across socio-cultural differences and motivates the building of relationships. As with every method, however, we recognize that there are limitations to using collaborative autoethnography, which we will touch on in the Discussion section.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

As mentioned above, this investigation took place in the context of a course development project. The task was to redevelop a DE version of an already existing Psychology course, which had been previously offered as an in-person course. This new version of the course would then replace the existing in-class version going forward. Alice, the course instructor tasked with developing the DE version, had taught it previously. Alice worked on this project with Brad, who was the DE specialist.

Beyond converting the course for a DE mode of delivery, we wanted to incorporate the perspectives of students to better understand and enhance the students' experience of the course, specifically with respect to their engagement with the course material. To this aim, we invited three students who previously completed the placement course to share their placement experiences. While students were invited to provide feedback on general design features of the course's framework, their primary contribution was through a co-created podcast that prioritized students' voices and became a central piece of content within the course. Each episode was themed according to unit outcomes and focused on relevant aspects of the students' placement experiences, core unit concepts, and how these interacted. By providing future students in the course with the opportunity to hear from other students who are just a bit older and who have gone through the same experience, we thought that it would provide another perspective and another way to share and discuss course materials, as opposed to a more transmission-centred model whereby students primarily receive information from only their course instructor or placement supervisor.

METHOD

We used a collaborative autoethnographic approach to share our experiences across the research team to better understand the project processes and outputs. As a team, we came up with the following questions for each of us to reflect on:

1) What was the most engaging aspect(s) about your experience?

2) What was the most difficult or challenging aspect(s) of your experience?

3) If you could do it again, what would you do differently or change about your experience, if anything?

4) How might this experience impact future personal or career goals?

Lauren, a student partner who was not a member of the course development project, later joined the team as a research assistant. She compiled our responses for each question. She then assisted the group with analyzing and summarizing the materials. These summaries and our unedited responses are explored below in the Findings section.

FINDINGS

In this section, we present the data generated by the team based on the reflective questions listed above. For each question, we provide a summary overview of the most common and salient points, which is then followed by the personal response of each team member to the question.

1. WHAT WAS THE MOST ENGAGING ASPECT(S) ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Summary of Findings: Question 1

Everyone appreciated collaborating with individuals who are at different stages of their careers and with different educational backgrounds who could contribute various skills and perspectives. Christopher noted that the inclusion of multiple team members makes for a more inclusive and diverse experience.

Student Data

Emily: As a student partner, the most engaging aspect about my experience was having the opportunity to collaborate with other student partners to improve educational aspects for future students and learning about the different ways we experienced the same Psychology course taken at different times and with various instructors. In doing so, we created conversations through a podcast, as well as a presentation, about how we experienced coursework, our psychology-related placements, and interactions with our instructors, as well as connecting everything together as one overall experience. Most of the time, courses are not created with the influence of a student perspective, so it was engaging to provide a different viewpoint as a student who previously completed the course and improve it for future students. I was able to explain what worked for me while taking the course as well as what did not work or what I thought could be improved. Something I mentioned that worked for me was the personal and professional growth and experience I gained from my placement, and the things that I believe could be improved included the connection between coursework and placement experiences, the relevance of the course textbook, and the effectiveness of student assessment

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throughout the course. It was engaging to create this narrative with other students on the podcast.

Christopher: Working on this project and being able to learn about course design was interesting. As students, we often only see what is delivered to us once we arrive to a class and work through it accordingly. As someone who uses accommodations due to a visual disability, I found it to be most engaging when I was providing accessibility feedback and my personal experiences from the perspective of my own placement. As a person who firmly believes in first-hand experience and knowledge generation, I believe the chance to share our experiences was not only a time of reflection for what we have done throughout our program, but also an opportunity for students to hear from others who have experienced placement in different capacities. It is important to always consider that as we have had our experiences and were willing to share with others, all individual's experiences, either positive or negative, are very different, and, keeping that in mind, we must recognize that one may compare their personal experiences to ours though they may differ.

I have had past experiences with creating podcasts; however, podcasting is a different experience, and the focus of my previous project was with a very different focus and with a different theme. It was extremely interesting for me to hear other's viewpoints on the topics being discussed, and as this was the first project of this type together, it was fascinating to hear what others chose for their placements and the populations they supported.

Faculty and Staff Data

Alice: At the start of the project, I was anticipating that I would be most engaged through the work that I did with my student partners for this project, as I knew from the moment that I agreed to take on this course development project that I wanted to involve students in the design phase and incorporate their perspectives in a meaningful way. It isn't that I didn't find working with my student partners engaging; however, what I found most engaging was learning from the Distance Learning Program Development Specialist (referred to as the DE Specialist from hereon) who led me through the process of creating the DE course. In addition to learning about how I could improve the design of the course and the structure and organization of assignments, most importantly to me, I gained insights into how I can work better with student partners and how I conceptualize the role of students in student partnerships. Some of what I learned from the DE Specialist was from direct, explicit instructions and explanations that he provided, whereas other lessons were learned by observing his behaviour, specifically how he interacted with our student partners.

The DE Specialist had introduced to our team the idea that each member of a team has a specific role or purpose and that each member is at a different level of mastery in a given domain or in respect to a specific topic. For our project, as the course instructor, I was the closest to reaching mastery in the domain of psychology, and, as the course we were developing was in psychology, I was the

"content expert" on our team. The DE Specialist was the "educational expert," and our student partners were the "student experience experts." This framework has changed the way I conceptualize student partnerships, and any team composition, by using one's skill set and knowledge base with respect to the specific goals of the project, as opposed to seniority, to frame their role in a project. This seems obvious at the time this paper is being written, and though it is not contrary to how I previously conceived of student partnerships, this sentiment was not explicit in my mind before I started working on this project. The implication of adopting this framework includes the possibility that the outcomes of some projects may benefit from a student partner mentoring faculty and/or staff on specific content and/or tasks that are not necessarily constrained to the student experience domain. In all my previous experiences in student partnerships, I have always assumed—and perhaps too quickly—the role of a mentor and did not consider the possibility of being mentored by my student partners.

Brad: For me, the most engaging aspect of the project was having access to a student's perspective on what the course could be. As an instructional designer, I primarily work with faculty or other subject matter experts, in conjunction with other project team members from OpenEd who also support the development of course projects. Additionally, our projects are in part informed by a design philosophy that values providing students with access to all course materials on the first day of the course. Course materials are typically revised based on student feedback after the course has finished its first iteration. So, while we put the students at the centre of learning, it is difficult to obtain direct student perspectives during course development. Having the input of students who have already taken the course in one delivery format or another allowed us to better refine our approaches to achieve our design goals. In particular, it helped us go beyond simply creating engaging or more meaningful content and assessments. Our student partners helped us create a space in the course for a "voice of experience" that was closer in proximity to the students who would be taking the course in terms of life experience and educational attainment.

In education, we often like to talk a lot about providing "authentic" learning experiences for students. By incorporating student partners into the design team and recognizing their expertise to represent the student learning experience, I believe our project achieved a more authentic learning environment than we could have otherwise.

2. WHAT WAS THE MOST DIFFICULT OR CHALLENGING ASPECT(S) OF YOUR EXPERIENCE?

Summary of Findings: Question 2

Alice and Brad noted challenges regarding their roles in the project, feeling they had to modify their usual approach to meet the needs of this project. The communicative challenge of working remotely in the online environment was a more prominent issue for Emily and Christopher. Christopher noted that, due to his

vision loss, working remotely with the podcast technology was difficult.

Student Data

Emily: There were two challenging aspects of my experience. The first challenging aspect was coordinating time to record the podcast with everyone involved. When working with a group of individuals, each person must be flexible with scheduling and compromise to find the time to get the project done. The next challenging aspect was the technical difficulties we experienced during the recording of the podcast. Since it was everyone's first time recording a podcast, it did not go as smoothly as everyone hoped. Sometimes we had to repeat things, sometimes we had Internet connection issues, and sometimes we got off topic. However, these technical challenges minimized with each podcast we recorded. Everyone stayed calm and made the most of the experience regardless of the challenges we experienced, and, in the end, we completed the podcast within our desired time frame. In my opinion, there will be challenges to overcome with any experience, but the way everyone handles the challenges matters most, and I believe everyone handled the challenges we experienced the best they could.

Christopher: As this was a new experience, I would say generally, the challenges I identified were more along the lines of having to undertake this work remotely. It worked well through the platform we used; however, ensuring I was keeping in the correct topic line and not going off the scale was something to be aware of. In addition, as individuals can identify cues from one another, such as one being encouraged to continue through a nod of the head or other non-verbal cue, I had to keep this in mind and ensure that I did not speak over anyone, which may often result in long pauses between the person prior ending and the beginning of what I have to say. If we were in person, I would give someone I was with the permission to tap me on the hand or arm to give me a tactile cue as to when to begin; however, in a virtual environment, this is not a possibility.

Though this was an identified challenge, it was extremely helpful to have guiding prompts, such as being identified when it is my turn to speak or being directly asked a question, once again, addressing me directly. Following this format, I was able to gauge when I was being spoken to and when it was another participant's time to speak. Another factor to this is, in addition to having total vision loss, I also have hearing loss. For this reason, I must pay close attention to who is speaking and ensure I can get the sound quality to a level that will allow me to integrate into the process without challenge causing delay.

Though these challenges exist, it does not make the process impossible. In this type of process, it is best for me to prepare prior to the beginning of the sessions. This especially holds true for sessions where specific materials or questions are required for successful delivery of the session. Fortunately, this was prepared ahead of time for us, making it much easier to complete my required tasks and formulate suitable responses to the queries and topics being discussed. Having similar background and training in academia made it much easier also to continue the flow of the conversation. Though we all have endured successes and failures to some

degree, we were all able to take those, learn from them, and express them so others could learn from us.

Faculty and Staff Data

Alice: What I found most challenging about this experience was negotiating with myself how I should be working with our student partners and student partners in general. Leading up to this project, I had worked in many student partnerships that I believed were highly successful in the sense that I had developed strong and ongoing working relationships with my student partners, and through our collaborations we were productive in conducting and disseminating our research. I came into this project thinking that I knew well how student partnerships should work and how to make it happen. Throughout the course of this project, however, I observed subtle differences between how the DE Specialist and I interacted with the students that made me rethink how I engage in student partnerships. Over time, I noticed that the DE Specialist seemed a bit more empathetic and patient than I felt that I was towards our student partners. Then, during one of the recording sessions for the podcast that we created for the course, I realized that there was a fundamental difference in how we worked with our student partners. During the recording session, I had asked the student partners a question about their experiences related to the course so that they could speak about it on the podcast. During a break in the recording, one of the student partners asked if their answer was okay as they were not sure if they understood the question properly. The DE Specialist responded, saying something along the lines of "I think you should answer the question however you understood it. I think what you said is fine." That is not how I would have responded, but I think it was the better way to respond, and I followed his lead in that moment. I would have tried to gently guide the student partner's understanding of the question to be more in line with what I knew I wanted them to speak about. It is not that I think one response is categorically the "right response" in this scenario whereas the other is the "wrong response," but that one prioritizes the goals of the faculty/staff whereas the other allocates more agency and validity to the student partner. One lesson that I have taken away from working on this project is that as intentional as I strive to be in how I engage in student partnerships, I have implicit biases impacting my decisions and behaviour that I wish to continue uncovering and negotiating.

Brad: At first glance, it might seem that enlarging the design team and adding additional perspectives might pose a significant challenge. Designing a course "by committee" can be very challenging. However, this was not the case with our project. Right from the start, there was a good alignment of vision for the project, likely due to the fact that all team members were already familiar with the course's content and objectives, as well as understanding where the course fits within the broader Psychology program at the university.

From my perspective, as someone who is also responsible for the project management aspects of the work, the most challenging aspect was also one of the more mundane: coordinating team members. As with any group project, a certain

amount of time and energy needs to be invested in ensuring the group communicates well and has opportunities to come together (even if virtually on a video conference) to both complete work and strengthen team cohesion. Formally incorporating students as partners within a project requires the same level of respect for their time and schedules as any other team member and, therefore, there is a need for an additional investment of time and energy to ensure group function. This extra effort is not a negative aspect of the work, but it is something that can be underestimated at first when setting up the management process and work outputs for the team.

3. IF YOU COULD DO IT AGAIN, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY OR CHANGE ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE, IF ANYTHING?

Summary of Findings: Question 3

Emily and Christopher shared that they would shorten the time between when they completed the course and started this project, as they believed that they would have been able to remember more relevant details if they had taken the course more recently. Brad and Alice wished for a longer time frame to complete the project and for the student partners to be more involved in the early stages. Emily noted that it would have been helpful if the members of the team got to know each other a bit more before starting to work on the project together.

Student Data

Emily: If I had the opportunity to change my experience, I would have liked to rehearse my podcast answers to myself to limit some of the technical difficulties we experienced, and I would have answered the podcast questions in more depth and in a more personal way. However, since I took the course around three years ago, I believe I answered the questions as best as I could from my memory of my experience. Also, since I did not know everyone involved in the creation of the podcast initially, I believe it would have been beneficial to introduce myself prior to recording. Nevertheless, I believe this experience happened as well as it could have at the time, and everyone involved put their best effort forward.

Christopher: If I were to participate in this type of project again, I would attempt to try to locate more detailed information as I completed my placement in Winter 2019. I was working on this from the perspective of a student who undertook this project with a large gap between the completion of the PSYC 3180 placement and beginning this project, and therefore was not fully prepared to answer some of the questions in enough detail. Part of this was due to not identifying and securing required information at the time as well as some of the information not being available due to the placement-podcast gap.

Aside from the above details, I do not believe there would be any other changes I would make to completing a project such as this another time. I do think it is important and a very widely used skill to know how to design and implement

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content within the podcast you are developing and how to best communicate it to the intended audience, so perhaps identification of effective methods in knowledge and information translation is very important to be mindful of in this process. In addition, I lack the knowledge of many platforms and methods for use in podcasting, so I am unsure how to compare or if a comparison is necessary.

Faculty and Staff Data

Alice: This project was completed in the span of about five months. If I could change anything about this experience, I would increase the time frame we had to work on this project by at least twofold. I think this would have allowed our student partners to be more involved in the course development. I felt that in the time frame we had to complete this project, there was not enough time to incorporate students' perspectives to the extent that I had hoped and imagined for this course.

Brad: If I could do this project over again, the single biggest change I would make is to have the students incorporated into the project as team members from the outset. In our case, a course framework had already been developed by the time the students had joined the project team.

When the instructional designer and faculty member first kicked things off, we initiated the project based on the norms of how our work is typically executed: a full support development model based around a subject matter expert and an instructional designer, along with media, graphic design, technology, and copyright experts providing support as needed. When it came to developing a vision for the course design goals, our ideas focused on students' feedback from previous offerings when the course was offered face-to-face (including satisfaction surveys and anecdotal feedback), as well as the instructor's experiences during those offerings. It could be said that we were taking something of a retroactive approach in defining our goals for the project.

However, once we began seeking to engage former students' input for an idea about the course podcasts we hoped to create for each unit in the course, it became apparent that we could move our goals beyond improving an assignment's instructions or adding increased clarity to certain aspects of the content based on assessment results or the kinds of questions the instructor typically fielded. We could hear first-hand about what it was like to be in the course during placement hours, as well as what it meant to have to work through course content and assessments. For example, the instructional designer and faculty member gained valuable insight into how some aspects of the course might or might not be relevant in some placements or how some students might interpret the value of certain pieces of content in light of their placements. More importantly, we could better understand students' frustrations and successes and what contributed to them, as well as gain new insight for how the course might better support students during their 100 hours of work placement.

Incorporating the voice of the student experience from the outset would have

helped us refine our instructional design goals more quickly and in a more targeted manner (especially in terms of relevancy to the learner). Moreover, it would have helped us take a more proactive perspective on what might be possible for the course. Lastly, working with students as Student Experience Experts from the outset would have helped us better identify opportunities for where we could blend the faculty members' expertise with the points of view of students who have recently completed the course and know first-hand what current students would likely be experiencing. This last point is something I am particularly interested in, as it helps establish the legitimacy of the course content and objectives in the eyes of learners. Given that an explicit objective of the course is to demonstrate how theory (the course and program as a whole) and practice (the 100 workplace hours) can work together and inform one another, weaving a narrative that ties together the expertise of the faculty with the realities of the work site is especially poignant for such work-integrated courses.

4. HOW MIGHT THIS EXPERIENCE IMPACT FUTURE PERSONAL OR CAREER GOALS?

Summary of Findings: Question 4

Alice and Brad discussed how they gained more insight into working in student partnerships. Emily and Christopher discussed how they were able to develop skills they could use in future endeavours.

Student Data

Emily: Through this experience, I improved many skills that will benefit my future. For instance, I improved my collaborative, listening, and communication skills through the creation of our podcast and presenting our experiences at a conference. I improved my collaborative skills by working as part of a team, and I maintained an open mind throughout the whole process. Also, I actively listened to everyone's perspectives and communicated my unique experiences in an effective and concise way. By improving these skills, I believe it will have a positive impact on my future, both personally and professionally. In any environment I am in, I can apply what I have learned through both the creation of the podcast and the presentation of my experience and transfer these skills in a research setting or a workplace setting. Also, by having the opportunity to share my experiences from a student perspective, it has made me more confident as a student partner as my opinions are heard and valued.

Christopher: As I have a great interest in research, specifically in higher education, I believe that this collaboration gave me a good stepping stone and experience into using the concept of "podcasting" for educational purposes. As this course was delivered through distance education, podcasting adds an interesting twist to the course and provides a sample of what potentially could happen in an in-person class where a student speaker would have come in and spoken about their

experiences. I find that, frequently, podcasts can be quite short, and I often question if they have enough information. Despite my constant struggle with this, the idea of holding one's attention becomes a topic of conversation when assessing if a podcast would be an effective tool for content delivery.

Faculty and Staff Data

Alice: This experience has made me reflect on the meanings of "co-creation," "collaboration," "inclusivity," and "student partnerships," and, as a result, my understanding of these concepts has changed. My personal and career goals include aligning my decisions and behaviour with my evolved understandings of these concepts.

Brad: In terms of my instructional design practice, while it may not always be possible to have students who have previously taken the course attached to a project, I will continue to find ways to incorporate the student experience in a more proactive way to inform course developments.

Based on my experience in this project, when opportunities do arise to have students work on project teams, I will pay particular attention to ensuring project teams understand that students are on a team to make legitimate intellectual contributions to the project (i.e., they are not there to simply perform administrative tasks). They are present on the team to fulfill the role of the Student Experience Expert in the same way that I am on the team to contribute my design expertise or a faculty member is assigned to contribute their disciplinary expertise. As such, when it comes to managing the work of the project, I will help ensure that the roles and responsibilities of all team members are understood and respected, including and especially around the power dynamics on the team. In this regard, I believe it is important for all team members to internalize that the student collaborators are there to function as experts and, in that sense, are no longer students but are colleagues who share a vision for creating a lasting and meaningful impact on future course learners.

DISCUSSION

Despite experiencing this collaboration differently, everyone viewed working on this project as engaging. This highlights how we, as individuals, can experience a shared event in different ways, which seems particularly important to keep in mind when we think about inclusivity with respect to course instruction and design. Our reflections revealed to us that our current and future perspectives are shaped and impacted by our past experiences and motivations. For example, in terms of how our experiences working together might impact our future or personal goals, Brad and Alice (staff and faculty) focused on their future work with student partners and how they might do things differently, whereas Emily and Christopher (student partners) focused more on their personal and professional development.

In line with past studies that have shown positive outcomes for student partners

who collaborate on course development projects (e.g., Hanna-Benson et al., 2020; Kaur et al., 2019), the student partners in this study indicated that they gained new skill sets by collaborating on the course redesign and that they felt valued by way of contributing to the project with a clear purpose. Additionally, the instructor and instructional designer also benefited from this partnership through their reflections on effective mentorship and reconceptualization of roles to enhance the degree of inclusion of students as partners in future course redesign projects. In addition to having more time to work on this project, something that we would change for future collaborations would be to invest more effort into team building and cohesion at the start of the project. Given that most members of the team did not know each other before working on the project and that we worked on the project remotely, this did not leave much opportunity for casual conversations that typically take place between members of a team (e.g., before meetings begin, right after meetings finish, etc.).

Faculty and staff members, but not the students partners, raised the issue of power dynamics as a difficult or challenging aspect of our experience working on the project. For example, Brad mentioned that "formally incorporating students as partners within a project requires the same level of respect for their time and schedules as any other team member and, therefore, there is a need for an additional investment of time and energy to ensure group function"; and Alice shared that "it is not that I think one response is categorically the 'right response' in this scenario whereas the other is the 'wrong response,' but that one prioritizes the goals of the faculty/staff whereas the other allocates more agency and validity to the student partner."

Did challenges related to power dynamics not appear in the reflections of our student partners simply because this did not come to mind as they wrote their reflections? Was it the case that our student partners did not feel impacted by power dynamics while we worked together on this project? Or were any such challenges omitted from their reflections due to perceived and/or existing power imbalances among members of our team? We recognize and understand that it would be difficult for any of us to openly share here if we experienced any challenges working with each other, and more so for student partners given the inherent power imbalance that favours faculty and staff over students. This is a limitation to the collaborative autoethnographic approach, but we think it is balanced by the fact that this format also allows students' voices to be amplified in their own words.

SUMMARY

Our purpose in undertaking this paper was to unpack and share our experience regarding inclusivity and working as student-faculty partners on our course development project. For the course instructor and instructional designer, providing effective mentorship and reconceptualizing roles, timelines, and workloads were important considerations for the effective inclusion of students as partners in the project. For the student partners, taking on a project role as an expert with a clear

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purpose helped them gain new skill sets and provided them with an opportunity to see first-hand how an educational experience can be constructed. One thing we would change about our experience would be to prioritize an up-front investment of time for team building at the outset of the project to ensure roles are understood, as well as to help cement good group cohesion. We hope that we have illuminated a pathway to providing students with a meaningful role in course development projects, and, in doing so, incorporating authentic student-centered voices in course content. At the same time, we also hope that we have provided potential student, staff, and faculty partners with insight into the process and experience of such an undertaking, helping them to understand what potential project team members might be thinking or expecting, as well as to determine if such an experience might be a good fit for them.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

Alice S. N. Kim (alice.kim@tlraction.com) has a PhD in experimental psychology, with a specialization in human learning and memory. Alice is the founder and Managing Director of Teaching and Learning Research (TLR) in Action, a not-for-profit research organization focused on conducting and publicly disseminating research on teaching and learning.

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Christopher Schiafone (christopher.schiafone@tlraction.com) holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Psychology from the University of Guelph in addition to a General Arts and Science Diploma and Certificate in Research Skills and Analysis from the Humber College Institute of Technology. His research focuses on accessible content delivery in higher education.

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