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Using Scenarios to Explore the Complexity of Student-Faculty Partnership

ABSTRACT

In this paper, we present and reflect on using scenarios and role-plays as an effective approach to engaging in the often complicated conversations about student-faculty/staff partnerships, particularly those involving the scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL). Students as co-developers of pedagogical processes, as well as co-researchers in SoTL, has become an increasingly valued practice in higher education institutions around the world, one that promises to be transformative in its pursuit to break down the traditional hierarchies and establish more democratic and equitable relationships between faculty/staff and students. While there is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates the value of creating spaces and processes to enhance teaching and learning, it can be challenging to know how to develop and implement partnership in SoTL. How do we actually do it? Many of us need guidance for where and how to get started, how to build effective partnerships, how to work through difficulties, how to share our experiences, and how to invite others into this practice. Informed by our own experiences of engaging in pedagogical SoTL partnerships and drawing upon materials developed for a conference workshop we delivered at the 2019 International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) conference, we argue that scenarios and role-plays, when informed by the principles of Scenario Based Learning (SBL), are effective tools that help explore partnership experiences of faculty/staff and students. We offer considerations for how readers can adopt and adapt scenarios in their contexts and invite further research on the ways SBL contributes to SoTL and partnership.

KEYWORDS

scenario-based learning, scholarship of teaching and learning, language, partnership pedagogy, students as partners

INTRODUCTION

The growing international research literature focused on student-staff partnerships demonstrates the benefits of more collegial forms of working in higher education (Cook-Sather and Alter 2011; Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten 2014; Cook-Sather and Luz 2015; Manor et al. 2010). “But, how do we actually do this?” is a question often asked by newcomers to this practice. Whether we are faculty, administrators, or students, many of us need guidance on

where and how to get started, how to build effective and genuine partnerships, how to share our experiences, and how to invite others into partnership practice. A number of “how to” guides and practical guidance texts aim to support those new to partnership or those wishing to extend the partnerships they have established (see for example Cook-Sather, Bahti, and Ntem 2019; Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten 2014). However, bringing these complex dimensions to life is often challenging.

In this paper, we (a mix of faculty and student partners from universities in the UK, US, Canada, and Australia) critically reflect on our experience of using scenario-based learning (SBL) to bring the complex dimensions of partnership to life. We used partnership scenarios focused on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) for a workshop we facilitated at the 2019 International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) conference in Atlanta, USA. Informed by this experience, we argue there is an opportunity to use SBL and create spaces to test out role relationships, negotiations of power, and positive dialogue between partners, with the aim of exploring, possibly failing, and thus improving future partnership work.

We begin this paper by discussing our conference workshop and the way in which partnership scenarios were well received by participants. Then, we offer critical reflections, informed by relevant literature, on the utility of using scenarios as a tool to practice partnerships. To conclude, we draw out the potential of authentic scenarios for enabling difficult and powerful conversations about partnership. This is particularly important as partnership becomes a more established pedagogical practice and scholars call for a deeper, more critical analysis of it (Marquis, Black, and Healey 2017). Accordingly, studies about partnership should reflect its nuanced and relational practices where power and identity are always at play (Matthews et al. 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2017). Alongside our reflection, we provide practical resources from our workshop for scholars and practitioners to use and adapt in their own practice and/or within development workshops with others new to partnership (see Appendix). We believe that these resources can assist individuals in exploring and practicing the complex processes of beginning, negotiating, and risk-taking in partnership work. As such, we call for others to use and reflect on the implications of SBL and continue to expand partnership practices in universities.

USING SCENARIO-BASED LEARNING TO EXPLORE PARTNERSHIP

Participants take active, integrated, and inquiry-based approaches to learning through SBL. In these experiences, a scenario drives learning by providing realistic environments in which to interact and contextualise a learning experience (Errington 2010). Using scenarios enables learners to practice and validate their proficiency in an immersive environment, provide an opportunity to embody a different identity within learning, and feel what experiences are like from another point of view (Hickey and Taylor 2010). The focus of this type of pedagogy can be summarised as learning-centered, where the learners learn by doing, which promotes critical reflection (Naidu et al. 2007).

Dawson and Burgoyne (2018) argue that the application of scenarios and performance learning (often associated with performance and theatre) can increase feelings of belonging and self-understanding in professional contexts. A prime example of the use of scenarios in

university teaching outside of performance is Weston's (2019) "Teaching as the Art of Staging: A Scenario-Based College Pedagogy in Action." Weston promotes self-unfolding learning challenges between teachers and students in a range of classes such as ethics, environment, and astrophysics. Importantly, Weston argues for the application of this action-based pedagogy in more areas of the university, due to its ability to foster meaningful learning and relationships between students and faculty.

SBL is an experiential technique that utilises scenarios to support active learning activities such as role-play (Jaques and Salmon 2007). SBL is engaging and authentic for learners as it is founded in situated learning theory (Lave and Wenger 1991). SBL simulates real-world practice, providing safe opportunities to engage in situations that may be otherwise difficult for students to experience in their studies. In this way, it resonated with us and our knowledge of the values that underpin partnership work within universities (Dawson and Burgoyne 2018; Hickey and Taylor 2010).

Partnership "is fundamentally about meaningful relationships between students and staff members at a university" (Matthews et al. 2018). But, many partnership practices and relationships take time and effort to establish; engaging in these practices is not straightforward. It can be an iterative road of trial, error, and reflection on interactions between partners. Certainly, developing pedagogical relationships involves reflecting on how we interact, or seek to interact, in partnerships (Matthews et al. 2018). When creating our workshop, we felt scenarios could enable individuals to feel, explore, and practice the complex and radical nature of relational partnership work in universities (Matthews et al. 2018). As we delivered our workshop, we saw benefits in connecting SBL to enacting partnership, including a shift from "telling" faculty and students about best partnership practices towards "environments" and experiences that created active, rather than passive, learning. In addition to providing opportunities for individuals to read and discuss the text of the scenarios we, as facilitators, also role-played some of the scenarios. This allowed us to examine what partnership looks and feels like, and we discovered that situations can arise that are complex (Weston 2019). In this way, scenarios in our workshop afforded opportunities for faculty and students to each take turns as "learners of partnership."

Our intention for using scenarios was to enable participants to reflect on aspects of SoTL-focused partnerships generated from lived, "real-life" experiences, drawn from our own experiences as facilitators. The scenarios we developed and used were structured and content-rich, focusing on interaction and the partnership process. In line with the Students as Partners ethos of shared responsibility in learning (Bovill et al. 2016), the scenarios allowed participants to actively imagine, practice, and step into novel and problematic spaces, offering new ways for partnerships to be explored collaboratively prior to, or parallel with, its enactment.

ISSOTL WORKSHOP 2019

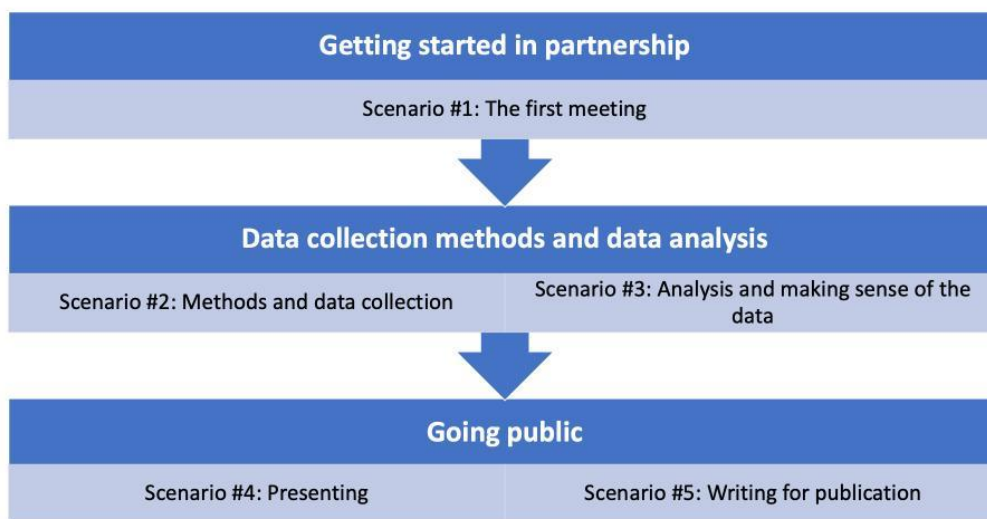
When we were approached to facilitate a pre-conference workshop at the ISSOTL conference in 2019, we saw an opportunity to provide space for scholars interested in SoTL partnerships to come together and examine the "how do we do this?" questions often asked by new practitioners. In our early planning, one of the team members (McCray) shared from a previous experience that they had found role-plays of scenarios to be a powerful learning tool

and that they might lend themselves well to exploring the nature of partnerships in our workshop. Inspired by this idea, we explored the literature on SBL and developed scenarios, drawn from our own SoTL partnership experiences. Our experiences have shown us that student-faculty partnerships in SoTL can be complex in various ways; they are constantly evolving, unfolding, and coming into being as the SoTL research progresses. Therefore, partners are contending with practical, emotional, and logistical factors within their partnership experiences in real time. These scenarios became our tool to enable workshop participants. We used a combination of textual readings, group discussions, and performed role-plays to explore the complex and evolving nature of partnerships in an interactive and collaborative way.

HOW WE USED SCENARIOS

We created five scenarios focused on three stages of partnership in SoTL: getting started, data collection and analysis, and going public. Each of the scenarios was written from our lived experience in real SoTL partnership experiences. However, we did make some changes to protect the identities of those involved. In this way, our intention was to reveal progression from the initial stages of SoTL partnerships to completion. The progression of scenarios is summarised in Figure 1, and the full scenarios can be found in Appendix.

Figure 1. Getting started in partnership: the three stages of SoTL partnerships and corresponding scenarios



As facilitators we enacted scenario 1, reading the student and the staff dialogue from *Getting Started in SoTL* (see Appendix). After an initial “performance” of the script, participants were invited to ask readers to pause at any point during a second reading of the script. These pauses were powerful because they exposed “pinch points” where something was said or done in the partnership that did not sit well with a participant. This pause allowed participants and workshop facilitators to explore alternative responses or solutions in the scenario dialogue. Sometimes, lots of people suggested pausing at the same point, raising a common concern. At other times, only one person suggested a pause, having picked up something of interest or

concern from their perspective that had perhaps not been noticed by others (and sometimes, not noticed by us as writers of the script). This generated useful discussion about the nuance or complexity within the scenarios – and within partnership relationships in real life.

Following this whole group discussion, participants were invited to work in small groups and choose which scenarios they wanted to explore together based on their current partnership experiences. We felt it was important for participants to be actively involved in the process of reading and interacting with the scenarios and for the scenarios to be seen as dynamic content. While participants were reading in small groups, we paused and asked questions, encouraging participants to do the same. Participants could ask questions, interject with observations, or suggest alternative actions. In the final section of the workshop, we invited groups to share their thoughts and processes in each scenario.

As we planned for the workshop, we prepared an extensive list of topics and themes that could be brought to our audience. However, as the group acted out the scenarios, it became clear that they were read and heard differently, and taken in multiple directions, which we, as authors, had not anticipated. Participants with and without experience in pedagogical partnerships were able to introduce their own ideas and highlight themes that were new and had gone unnoticed by us. This experience highlighted the powerful role scenarios could play in contextualising partnership work and allowing participants to translate to the individual contexts.

DISCUSSION

The participants' responses to the materials we presented excited us. As experienced partnership practitioners and scholars, responses to the scenarios brought a different kind of engagement and questioning we had not experienced previously. We shift now from describing how we used the scenarios in our workshop to a critical commentary on how we believe the scenarios can be used to enable discussion, reflection, and planning of partnership within and beyond a SoTL context in the future. We link our commentary to examples from our experience with each of the five scenarios and conclude with considerations for putting scenarios into practice in other partnership settings.

SBL feedback and reflection cycle: tone, language, and behaviour

Scenarios allow individuals to engage in and explore learning experiences, generating new understandings and appreciations through the process of feedback and reflection (Klassen et al. 2021). When we offered participants the chance to “act out” partnership encounters, the space for reflection and feedback enabled individuals to be attentive to the details that shape human interactions in partnerships, including physical and linguistic interactions that go beyond the limitations of two-dimensional text. A number of studies have addressed the importance of considering the individuals' tone, language, and behaviour within partnerships (Bovill 2015; Cook-Sather et al. 2021). Scenarios based on real experiences offered participants an opportunity to share feedback and reflect on the nuances that show how language, location, and status may play out. As an example, scenario 1, “the first meeting,” is a good illustration of how setting the tone from the start by indicating the relationship one wishes to establish with a partner, makes transparent the boundaries for the partnership and the power dynamics that are

present. A key benefit of examining tone in SBL was to address and acknowledge student and faculty vulnerabilities as they navigate power and identity in partnership (Cook-Sather 2015; Cook-Sather 2017; Marquis et al. 2019; Matthews et al. 2018).

Through experiencing these scenarios in a supportive environment, we were able to reflect on not only how we might identify ourselves in the situation, but also what such a scenario might be like for the partner we are working with. For example, the first meeting between the potential partners is supposed to set the right tone, minimizing student and faculty/staff vulnerabilities. Referring back to scenario 1, we can argue that setting a correct tone could have alleviated student nervousness about what was expected of them in the early stages of partnership. Reciprocally, had the student felt less nervous and insecure, faculty/staff might have experienced less uncertainty, due to the lack of plan or feedback about how to take a partnership forward. By role-playing the scenarios, we peeled back the layers of day to day experiences of partnership. This enabled us and our audience to initiate a frank discussion about goals and intended outcomes, hopes and aspirations, as well as shared challenges and concerns of those who were involved in pedagogical partnerships.

The embodied nature of SBL provided us opportunity to explore the affective, emotional dimensions of partnerships (Felten 2017). To implement the feedback and reflection components of SBL in our workshop as we acted out the first scenario, we invited the readers, actors, and audience to respond to a few reflective prompts, either on their own or with others. These questions supported feedback and learning about potential first meetings between partners, and the ways in which tone, language, and behaviour contribute to establishing partnership. A selection of the reflective questions we asked are outlined in Table 1 and the full list of questions is available in Appendix.

Table 1. Reflective questions about potential first meeting between partners

Example of questions for scenario 1: Getting started in SoTL partnerships
How might we know if the individuals in the scenario are actively listening to one another?
What words are students and faculty using to refer to each other or to other students and faculty? What do you think they are trying to signal in the words they are choosing to use? Is there anything you would change or add?
How do we know if the students and faculty are actively valuing what the other is contributing? What are they saying or not saying to demonstrate value?
To what extent do you get a sense of positive affirmation in the ways they respond to one another? How could this be improved or extended upon?
Are they connecting and understanding one another?
What do you think might be unspoken in this interaction?
Does the tone, language and behaviour give you a strong sense of partnership?
In what ways does this conversation seem similar to the conversations you have experienced?

The generative nature of SBL

Our workshop aim was to provide an authentic learning experience that prompted participants to consider different ways of acting and problem solving in everyday situations they may encounter in partnership (Sheridan and Kelly 2012). We wanted learning to be embedded in situations that could potentially arise in the context where participants apply partnership practices (Klassen et al. 2021). As we role-played the scenarios with workshop attendees, we were surprised by their power to generate new ideas and complex conversations about the merits and challenges of partnership. They enabled diverse participants (with differing identities or varying levels of prior experience of partnership) to explore and translate powerful themes of partnership into their own contexts and frames of reference. For example, one of us reflected on the scenario that they helped to create, which led to a rich discussion among workshop participants. The participants understood the scenario in an entirely different way than the faculty member had experienced it at the time it took place. It was fascinating to be able to watch and experience these different understandings of the same scenario being exposed, discussed, and critiqued.

In this way, the scenarios took on a new life, becoming independent from us, their authors. Each reader and listener was able to reinterpret the scenario in their own way and find something that could be applied more effectively to their institutional or personal context. While a more experienced group member might take it for granted or consider overly obvious the practical work that faculty and students need to put in before or while engaging in partnership, it might not be equally obvious to a newcomer to partnership. We found the use of scenarios created discussion of what type of work should be done to adequately prepare students and faculty/staff for a partnership project in individual contexts, and provide opportunity for trial and error. As such, the scenarios we created could serve as skeletal frameworks that readers could use to adapt for different and diverse contexts.

Observing the complexities of partnership

Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) argued there is a tendency in the scholarship about partnership-based experiences to report positive outcomes while ignoring some of the challenges or even unsuccessful examples of partnership. There is a growing body of literature that engages with challenges and limitations of partnership (Bovill et al. 2016; Marquis et al. 2019; Matthews et al. 2018; Yahlnaaw 2019) and calls for critical perspectives that examine assumptions about knowledge, experience, and identities (Cook-Sather 2015; Cook-Sather et al. 2018; de Bie et al. 2021; Healey et al. 2019). The scenarios that we have developed were, in part, an attempt to bring forward some of the complexities surrounding the nature of relationships within the academy. For example, difficulties in breaking down hierarchies, building trust and respect, and creating support systems to equitably distribute power and responsibilities. Table 2 outlines a selection of reflective questions we posed in the scenarios to enable discussion of difficult situations participants might encounter in partnership.

Table 2. Reflective questions to enable discussion of difficult situations

Example of questions
How challenging is it for faculty to step back and refrain from exercising their traditional authority in their relationship with students?
How challenging is it for students to handle newly acquired power and equality with faculty?
How challenging is it for the partners to encourage and positively reinforce each other?
Are partners acknowledging the differences in expertise and in opinions and working through those differences?
Considering the non-traditional and innovative, even transformative nature of partnerships between faculty and students, when going public with collaborative research, how can partners prepare for the audience that might not share the values of partnership based SoTL?
How does the language that is used by all parties reinforce equality, mutual respect, and trust?
Are there subconscious linguistic structures that reinforce power dynamics and strengthen hierarchies?

In observing the complexities of partnership, our intention was not to be negative. Rather, we wanted to acknowledge the complex nature of human behaviour and that partnerships are part of a transformative movement that is attempting to change the attitudes and practices entrenched within the higher education system. Viewing hierarchy as an inequality that is merit-based and thus justified continues to be the foundation that governs many relationships within the contemporary higher education system. If partnership-based pedagogy is to confront this long-held tradition, we (as faculty/staff and students engaged in partnership) have to be honest about it and call out the different ways and instances in which our language, our behaviour, and our engagement with partners is hierarchical. This is not easy to do. We argue that scenarios provide opportunity to explore (dis)comfort that comes with usurping these established structures and to practice, in a low-stakes way, how to support and enact new models of interaction.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND A CAUTIONARY NOTE

When using the scenarios, we believe that it is important to pay particular attention to the dynamic interaction of the content, the performance, and the audience. The performative nature of the scenarios allowed us to explore our understanding or awareness of our behavior vis-à-vis our partners; of the speech patterns in our interactions with others, of which we are not always conscious; even of the physical space that partners occupy when engaged in a dialogue or in a collaborative work. Performing the scenarios, we came to an understanding that the identity of those who were performing certain parts would also play a crucial role in the process of interpreting the scenario details. We acknowledge that some scenarios and performances are complex and challenging; these may situate students and faculty in vulnerable positions (Seton

2010) that can highlight systemic inequality, cultural relativism, and epistemic hierarchies (Cook-Sather et al. 2021; Mercer-Mapstone and Bovill 2020; Mercer-Mapstone, Islam, and Reid 2021).

An important implication, therefore, for future use of scenarios in partnership is to ensure attention is paid to these dynamics, but also that facilitators provide safe learning spaces where participants feel welcome to engage in the scenario/performance and can see themselves represented. For example, changing the performers and introducing diverse identities to represent the role of the student and the faculty member may provide opportunity to explore the diverse issues within the dynamics of partnership, as well as relationships in general within academia and our society at large. Table 3 provides examples of questions that highlight some of the dynamics to consider with participants.

Table 3. Questions that highlight some of the dynamics to consider with participants

Attending to issues of context
How does the meaning, the perception and the interpretation of the scenarios change if “actors” with different sexual, gender, racial, as well as social and professional identities, were to act it out?
How would the scenario change if it were a student from an equity-seeking population?
In what ways might the interaction feel different if the faculty member were from an equity seeking group?
What if they were a distinguished professor or newly hired faculty?
How would we read and interpret the scenario differently if it were a male-identified student participating in the dialogue?

CONCLUSION

From our experience, we argue that SBL is an opportunity to explore how students and faculty/staff learn about partnership authentically, fostering an increased sense of self-awareness, which ultimately transforms partners’ understanding of themselves and the processes of partnership (Cook-Sather and Abbot 2016). The proliferation of practical “how to” publications, case studies, and reflective essays provide us with rich, contextualized insights into how, where, and why partnerships occur. However, bringing these complex dimensions to life is often challenging. Partnerships can feel risky, they are situated and contextually bound, they “unfold” and develop over time, are inherently relational, and have an emotional component (Bovill 2020; Felten 2017). The use of scenarios allowed us to explore the complexities of partnerships, and most importantly, feel the discomfort and emotions of partnership.

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NOTES

This article outlines our argument for the use of SBL in partnership practices, based on our experience at the ISSOTL conference in 2019. In the spirit of partnership, we share our resources and additional signposting in the Appendix. In doing so, we invite others to use, share, and critique the use of SBL to enhance partnership practices in other areas of learning.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

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APPENDIX

Using scenarios to explore student-faculty partnerships in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

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How to use this resource

The purpose of this document is to create a flexible learning tool which can be used by students and faculty working in partnership to begin conversations about their own partnership experiences or expectations. By putting Scenario Based Learning (SBL) into action, the authors hope that students and faculty will gain a deeper understanding of their partners' perspectives and form more equitable, long-term partnerships. While the scenarios in this Appendix focus predominantly on partnerships in SoTL research (as they were originally designed for the 2019 ISSOTL pre-conference workshop on this topic), they can be taken as a model and adapted for a wide range of partnership practice.

Before you get started

Here are a few things to keep in mind to get the most out of the scenarios and discussion:

1. **Make the scenarios work for your partnership.** Only use the scenarios that you feel are relevant to your partnership experience. If you've passed the "getting started" phase, skip that scenario or save it for a future partnership experience. If these scenarios feel too rigid, do not accurately reflect the dimensions of your specific partnership, or the research scenarios your team is engaging in, modify them to reflect your authentic experience. Though the simplest use of these scenarios is reading the scripts exactly as they are, this may not be the most effective approach for you and your partners. If this is the case, it may be best to use these scripts as a model for a new, original script that will suit your team's unique needs.
2. **Make sure you have willing participants.** While SBL can be a useful tool to stimulate discussion and reflection, it does require a certain amount of commitment from participants. If one or more partners does not feel comfortable reading the script in a performative manner, allow them to be observers to the scene if there are other members willing and able to read. If there are not enough members willing to perform the script, consider reading it individually and having a group discussion about it afterwards, which will still allow for thoughtful reflection and open conversation but in a manner that respects all partner preferences.
3. **Who performs each role matters.** The identities of those who read each part of the scenario can shape the experience of listeners (and readers). Some scenarios or identities may situate students and faculty in vulnerable positions in that they can highlight systemic inequality, cultural relativism, and epistemic hierarchies. Be attentive to who performs each role, and to creating a safe space for all readers and listeners – so that all participants feel welcome to engage with the scenario and can see themselves represented.
4. **Be an active listener and observer.** Make sure to be an active listener and observer to all parts of the scenarios and their interpretation. Consider the tone of the script, body language of the readers, and other influences that may impact each partner's interpretation of the scene. If you are the partner in the position of authority, allow space for vulnerable partners to speak up first and share their opinions. Make sure all

interpretations shared are validated and not attacked or received with defensive comments. If you or any of your partners find it difficult to take a step back and observe, consider asking a neutral party to facilitate the discussion to avoid overpowering any individual voice.

5. **Don't be afraid to do a couple of read throughs.** When deciding how best to approach the script performance, consider reading through it multiple times. Perhaps the first time, you read it straight through to the end and just share general observations. The second time, you might read it with some particular discussion questions in mind. You can even consider trying a read through where you pause intermittently and consider "what if" alternative lines or endings.
6. **Use the discussion questions wisely.** The prompts and questions provided in this resource can be applied to any of the scenarios but using all of them at once or the same questions for each scenario might prove overwhelming or ineffective. Before engaging with each scenario, pick out a handful of questions or create your own questions that will lead to the type of discussions and critical reflections most beneficial for your partnership's needs.

Introduction to the scenarios

Facilitator notes

1. **Getting started in partnership.** We suggest the workshop facilitator acts out this scenario twice. The first should be a complete run through, observed by workshop participants. The second should provide opportunity for workshop participants to pause and ask questions/suggest alternative dialogue or actions.
2. **Digging in: methods and analysis in SoTL partnerships and Going public through SoTL partnerships.** These are four scenarios that can be shared with workshop participants. We suggest they work in triads or small groups. Give participants time to read individually. These can be role played in small groups or in front of the whole workshop (replicating the process listed in item 1) or used as a basis of discussion if role playing is not an option.
3. **Discussion prompts for the scenarios.** A list of possible questions are outlined on page 15 of this resource. We suggest you use, add, or amend to fit the context and participants in your workshop.

Areas of partnership	Numbers and titles of the scenarios	Short summaries
Getting started	Scenario #1 "The first meeting"	This scenario describes the experience of a student and a faculty member meeting for the first time to discuss how to begin a SoTL project. They are wanting to research the outcomes of introducing a new teaching approach involving visual literacies in a nursing class, but the student is a bit unsure about what they are being asked to do and the faculty member has assumed the student is knowledgeable about visual literacies. The conversation captured in the scenario illustrates the challenges of the early stages of negotiating partnership.
Data collection methods and data analysis	Scenario #2 "Methods and data collection"	This scenario describes an interview conducted by a student partner with a faculty member regarding their approach to teaching literature reviews. The interview is part of a research project about the differing perspectives between faculty and students on teaching literature reviews. It is conducted in partnership between three faculty members and three undergraduate students. The conversation captured in the scenario highlights the hierarchies in the interactions between students and faculty/staff.

<p>Data collection methods and data analysis</p>	<p>Scenario #3 “Analysis and making sense of data”</p>	<p>This scenario describes a conversation between a faculty member and several student partners who have recently completed semi-structured interviews on teamwork experiences of first year engineering students. The conversation captured in the scenario can be viewed as a good example of the tone that each partner uses in their interactions with others, the guidance offered to students by the faculty partner, the positive reinforcement that each participant offers to the other members of the group, etc. It shows that this faculty-student research group has been working really well and has established a high level of trust.</p>
<p>Going public</p>	<p>Scenario #4 “Going public: Presenting”</p>	<p>The scenario describes a conversation between student researchers presenting their findings at an ISSoTL conference and their audience. The research, conducted in partnership between a faculty member and several undergraduate students, was about female-identified undergraduates’ experiences and their underrepresentation in a particular discipline. After the presentation, an audience member, also female identified, chooses to make comments about the voice and cadence of the speech of the two female presenters instead of engaging in a dialogue with them around the topic of their research. The conversation captured in the scenario</p>

<p>Going public (cont.)</p>		<p>highlights the deep-rooted and perhaps subconscious bias towards female-identified presenters at a professional conference.</p>
	<p>Scenario #5 “Writing for publication”</p>	<p>The scenario describes a conversation between faculty and student partners after they had received a review of an article they had previously submitted to a professional journal. The conversation captured in the scenario shows how student-partners come to a better understanding of what is involved in the process of article submission, the hard work that comes after the review is received and they have to first digest the reviewers’ comments, then address them and prepare the paper for resubmission. It also highlights how students come to better understand the process of collaborative writing, the place or value of their individual voices in a paper that has various co-authors, as well as the messiness and non-linear nature of writing.</p>

Scenarios

1. Entering into partnership: Starting up a research collaboration

The First Meeting

Narrator: the staff and student partner have recently received funds to research how a recent change of introducing a visual task (using photographs) into reflective portfolios has worked in a nursing class. The student partner thought the project sounded interesting and linked with their interest in visual literacies from a class they took in education last year. However, they haven't engaged in pedagogical/SoTL research before. The faculty partner is also quite new to pedagogical research. They have lots of ideas about possibilities but really want to explore and co-design the project with a student partner. They are particularly interested to see that the student has experience of visual literacies and is keen to learn from them.

This is the first meeting of the student and staff partner. They've received some guidance on what to discuss in their first meeting: why are they motivated in this project? What skills do they bring? What will success look like?

Faculty: I'm really excited to be working with you on this project. I don't have any fixed ideas of how this will work and I'm hoping we can just dive right in and pool all the ideas we have.

Student: Erm, sure. Could you tell me a bit more about what it is you think the project will focus on?

Faculty: Well, I'm hoping that might be the focus of some of our work together . . . determining how we investigate what has been happening in my class! I'm hoping we can learn together and from each others' different backgrounds.

Student: Ok. I've got a sense that you've changed something in your class and you want to see if it's worked. Is that right?

Faculty: Yes. I think I outlined it quite clearly in the project statement you read when you applied to be my partner on this SoTL project. What is it that you don't understand? I just thought you already were prepared for this project because you said you had done something with visual literacies before. I guess I might have been wrong, but I was hoping to learn something from you about all of this.

Student: Yeah, I have studied visual literacies before in one of my education classes last year and I thought it was really interesting. That only looked at the theory behind it though. I haven't used it in any research. Is that going to be a problem?

Faculty: [extended pause] Erm, no. Not necessarily. I'm also new to doing this kind of research. I'm a health scientist! Hmmmmm. Where should we start then seeing as we are both a little unsure?

Student: [another pause]. I'm not sure. How about we work through the questions they suggested at the partnership orientation? I think they asked something about motivations for working together, skills we bring, what success might look like for the project. Would that help?

Faculty: Absolutely. Let's start there. Maybe we can also think about what other things we need to know about the project and each other before we start too.

2. **Digging in:** Methods and analysis in SoTL partnerships

Methods and Data Collection

Narrator: Three undergraduate students joined with three faculty to collaborate on a research project about the differing perspectives of students and faculty on teaching literature reviews. Using the Decoding the Disciplines approach, the research consisted of student researchers conducting interviews with faculty and undergraduate students to determine how students and faculty approached the literature review process. The interviews conducted illuminated as much about student-faculty interactions as about the literature review process.

Student researcher: Dr. [Insert], could you tell us how you go about conducting and writing literature reviews in your own research? Please sketch out your process on the white board as you talk.

Faculty interviewee: I don't want to use the board so I'll just sit here and talk. Well, I begin my literature review process by trying to understand how all the pieces fit together. The structure of my literature review is a "radial" one—from the topic I'm interested in to its surrounding issues. I ask myself "Where does this fit and what do other scholars have to say about it?"

Student researcher: *tries to interject*

Faculty interviewee: Once I understand this question, I then determine the relevant literature to read and the audience for my research.

Student researcher: Why do you . . .

Faculty interviewee: What's important for me is the recursive, iterative nature of the literature review process. What I do is so different than what undergraduates do

because I already know the literature. Undergraduates are just beginning to learn the field of political science, but it's different for me because I'm embedded in it.

Student researcher: I wonder if you could map out your process on the whiteboard?

Faculty interviewee: Oh, I don't think that's necessary. Why don't you just ask me whatever questions you need instead?

Student researcher: Well, would you be able to break down further your actual process of writing a literature review? How do you actually do this "radial process" — what are the steps to it? And how is that similar to or different from how you teach your students to do a lit review?

Faculty interviewee: Here's what I tell students to do. I tell them to do it step-by-step: first identify a topic, then synthesize material and tie concepts together, and then develop a conclusion to lead to another research question. Sometimes I give them sequential assignments which require them to write a scholarly literature essay based on a small set of sources to practice the task of tying concepts together. Sometimes I also use some exam questions to help with the synthesis.

Student researcher: It's interesting that you have such a linear process for students but a recursive process for yourself. Could you elaborate a bit more about why you think this is an effective teaching method?

Faculty interviewee: That's just how I teach students—you know, they're not immersed in the field yet and don't know the literature, so they have to start somewhere. They struggle if I don't spell out a number of clear steps . . .

Analysis and Making Sense of Data

Narrator: A faculty member and three students have recently completed semi-structured interviews on team work experiences of first year engineering students. The faculty-student research group has been working really well and high levels of trust have been established. This is the first time the research group has an opportunity to discuss how they will approach coding and it's the first time any of the student partners have coded qualitative data. The faculty partner has previously shared an introductory text on coding qualitative data.

Faculty: This is one of my favourite parts of doing research. It's exciting to see what kinds of things emerge from the data.

Student 1: Yeah, it's been a real eye opener doing the interviews. Students shared lots of things I wasn't expecting.

Student 2: Yeah, I agree. Though I'm a little worried that some of my interviews were a bit all over the place.

Faculty: That can be quite common in semi-structured interviews. They can often feel more conversational and jump around a bit.

Student 3: I wanted to share that there were some stories shared in my interviews about gender in teams. We didn't ask a question about that but it came up a handful of times. That feels really important and it certainly rings true from some of my experiences of team work in my courses.

Student 2: Yeah, I was also surprised by how much being a non-native English speaker was an issue too. We didn't ask specific questions about that either.

Faculty: These are great insights and show that the semi-structured interview worked! It let participants raise issues that were important to them but within a common topic. It sounds like you are talking about some of your research hunches about that data. One way we can approach coding, and it feels appropriate here, is to open code the data. This means we code all the things that stand out as interesting in what the participant said.

Student 1: What? Everything!?! That sounds like a lot of work and pretty complex. How can we make sure we're consistent? And I'm not sure we should be looking at things like gender or language since we didn't ask about those. What if some interview subjects had experiences related to those topics but didn't bring those up because we never asked? How can we make claims about anything from these interviews if they just reflect what people happened to say off the top of their head?

Student 3: I don't know. I think gender is pretty important when looking at student experiences in engineering.

Student 2: Yeah, and how can you say language doesn't matter? That's all we ever hear about in politics lately so it seems to me that language and related things like immigration status are highly relevant. Are you saying we should ignore important issues like that in our research?

Student 1: I'm not saying we should ignore those things, but I'm starting to wonder how we can actually learn anything from interviews like the ones we did. In our engineering classes, we're always talking about things that you can accurately measure. These interviews were meandering conversations with fairly random students. It'll be a ton of work to analyze all of these interviews, and what'll we be able to prove after doing all of that work? Are we wasting our time here?

Faculty: That's a great question. Qualitative research is different than the quantitative stuff we do in engineering, but that doesn't necessarily mean it's not useful. Let's keep talking about what topics we should analyze in these interviews and how qualitative research works. We don't have much more time today, however. How about as a first step we all read through the same two transcripts, marking them up to indicate what we individually think is most important in each. How about we all do that before our next meeting, and then we can come back together to discuss what we're each seeing?

3. **Going public** with the research conducted in partnership

Presenting

Narrator: As part of a research team investigating the underrepresentation of female-identified people in a particular discipline (field), we decided to use focus groups as a means of gathering data on female-identified undergraduates' experiences in this field. We (students) took the lead in developing, facilitating, and transcribing focus groups consisting of female-identified undergraduate students with varying degrees of experience with the discipline in question. The dialogue that follows is one that we remember having at an ISSoTL conference after we presented our research findings, when we asked the audience if they had questions about our research.

(Female identified) audience member: Thank you for a fascinating talk. I don't really have a question, but rather a comment that you might find useful for future presentations. I noticed the difference in the way the two of you, girls, were speaking as opposed to your male peer. I recommend that you learn from him to speak up and to speak with more authoritative, forceful voices. I'm actually a theater professor and I train my own female students about this (we call it "vocal fry") and it really helps them be more assertive. It's actually funny—you both speaking in vocal fry is a fitting metaphor for the way women don't feel heard in philosophy—if only you'd speak up, things would improve for you!

Presenter (female-identified student): So, you think that our voice should be lower pitch?

(Female- identified) audience member: Well, yes, I think you should not drop your voices' pitch as you present. You should speak up in order to sound more assertive and confident.

Presenter (female-identified student): Hmmmm . . .

Presenter (male identified) student: We really don't think it is our voices that are the issue here. [Presenters are thinking to themselves but not daring to ask: "would you make this comment to a female-identified faculty presenting?"]. In any case, to bring the

discussion back to our research, does anyone else have any questions or comments about our paper?

Interrupted by (Another) audience member: I think their voices are fine. That seems to be a sexist comment . . .

(Female-identified) audience member: Well, my only intention here is to help students be more professional . . .

[At this point, many audience members talk over each other to make points about whether the original comment was or was not sexist, ignoring the student presenters . . .]

Presenter female identified student: We would like to bring the discussion back to our presentation, please.

Writing for Publication

Narrator: 20 students and one faculty have been working together in a class to co-design the evaluation for a module. It has all gone quite well and students suggest they have never experienced a class where they were enabled to share responsibility equally for designing and conducting evaluation. Someone suggests they should share their experiences more widely. The faculty suggests after the module is over that she would be willing to work with any students who would be interested in writing up the work for a journal article. This takes place and a subgroup of 6 students plus the faculty member start a writing group. They make good progress in the writing, although the students often defer to the faculty on decisions regarding the manuscript—despite the faculty’s efforts to allow students to have a stronger voice. When the manuscript is ready to submit to a journal, the students balk at making the submission so the faculty does it—and several weeks later the faculty member calls the group together to talk about the feedback they have received from reviewers.

Faculty: This is quite difficult, but I’m afraid we’ve had a negative response from the journal to our article and they have decided they don’t want to publish it.

Student A: I thought our article was good, why have they rejected it?

Faculty: To be honest I’m not sure, I have sent all of you the feedback we received from reviewers, but in my experience, I will say this is some of the harshest feedback I have seen. This is not about the quality of what we have written, it seems like the editor was having a grumpy Friday and they have taken it out on us.

Student B: It’s like there’s nothing in our article they like. They don’t seem to get what we were trying to do. So does this mean all our work was for nothing?

Faculty: No absolutely not, it means this journal editor didn't like our work or didn't understand what we were trying to do, but it doesn't mean another journal editor won't be interested in what we have done.

Student C: I think if this was a piece of our graded course work and this was the feedback we received, I wouldn't find it helpful, it's so negative and is confused in what it's telling us to do. We should give them feedback on their feedback!

Faculty: I am inclined to agree with you, I wondered if any of you would wish to write back to the editor. We would need to agree what we would like to say as a group.

Student C: I would be happy to draft some ideas. I feel we need to give them some constructive feedback on their unconstructive feedback.

Narrator: Other students agree at this point and the group decides to write a polite letter back to the editor to say they didn't find the comments constructive whilst understanding the journal doesn't want to publish the paper. The faculty then suggests an alternative journal they might submit to and explains a rationale for why this might be a suitable journal. The group agrees to see if there is anything in the negative feedback from the previous journal that can help them edit the article before submitting it to another journal. The group works on the manuscript for another few weeks, also making some changes to make the article more likely to be of interest to the new journal which has a different focus.

Student A: This is exciting that we are ready to resubmit our article. Although I didn't realise that there is so much work involved in getting a paper published, I thought once we'd submitted it to the first journal that would be it.

Faculty: I know, it can feel like quite an extended process, and even if a journal shows interest, there is usually quite a bit of work to respond to changes that reviewers might ask us to make, and then the editing process to check for any errors, missing references etc, can also take time.

Student A: It's useful to know how this all works, but I admit I didn't realise that process can take this long. This feels like more than I signed up for.

Student D: I think I realised it would take a long time, but I've been surprised about how our article has developed. I'm not sure it feels like my writing any more.

Faculty: What makes you say that? It's very much your article as much as everyone else's. You have contributed very meaningfully to the process.

Student D: I think that in all the editing that has happened, I can't really see some of those original sections I wrote.

Faculty: That often happens with writing, the article is the product of so many edits and re-writing and re-crafting that some original paragraphs are not there, but they have led to the article we now have. It's not that your paragraphs have disappeared, they have been augmented into other paragraphs, or have helped steer us to rephrase or add in sentences explaining further what we have done.

Student D: I understand what you are saying, I was just surprised that the original sections we all wrote are not easy to see now.

Student E: Maybe that's one of the things I've learned. I needed to write something and see other people's writing in order to work out what it was I wanted to say more clearly. Writing is such a complex, non-linear process.

Facilitating discussion about the scenarios: Prompt questions

The reflection questions below can be applied to any of the scenarios but using all of them at once or the same questions for each scenario might feel overwhelming or ineffective. Before performing each scenario, pick out a handful of questions or create your own that will lead to the type of discussions and critical reflections most beneficial for your partnership's needs.

- How would you describe what happens in the scenario?
- What stands out to you in this scenario? Why?
- What stood out for student, staff and faculty colleagues? Did they notice different or similar things to you? How might these different perspectives help you think about partnership?
- Are the individuals in the scenario actively listening to one another?
- What words are students and faculty using to refer to each other or to other students and faculty?
- Are students and faculty actively valuing what the other is contributing?
- Is there a sense of positive affirmation in the ways students, staff, and faculty respond to one another?
- Are students, staff, and faculty connecting and understanding one another?
- Can you sense what is unspoken?
- Does the tone, language and behaviour give you a strong sense of partnership?
- Does this conversation seem similar to conversations you have experienced?
- How would the scenario change if the student, staff, or faculty were from an equity seeking population?
- What if the faculty member were a distinguished professor or newly hired assistant professor?

- Are staff and faculty able to step back, and are students able to step forward from their traditional roles?
- Are partners acknowledging the differences in expertise and opinions and working through those differences?
- Does the scenario seem to be a safe environment for partnership? Why?
- How might you enact the partnership scenario differently? Why?
- How does this scenario compare to your own partnership practice?
- What are the key things you learned from this scenario?
- What would it look like if someone was to walk into your partnership meeting/practice?



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