

Sally Haney 0:00

So welcome to our presentation, which as you've probably figured out is coming to you in audio format. Keeping it real. That's what this is all about our reaction to using a new students-as-partners theoretical framework. When we saw the call for proposals, well did we struggle? We thought, let's do a podcast. But why a podcast? And is there any issue with that? I'll just throw it out to the team. Why podcast?

Amanda Creig 0:31

As kind of a student perspective on this, I think a lot of times we see research dissemination in the form of a journal article. But that's not always accessible to students in ways that they find intriguing or captivating. So, I think at least for myself, listening to podcasts, it's a new way of finding out what people are doing without having to go to an X process of going to a journal article and reading when maybe you're not that kind of learner. Mm hmm.

Michaela Chronik 1:00

Yeah. to piggyback off of what he said, Amanda, I definitely agree. I think, frankly, we're interested in making a podcast because it's just less boring. It's to do something a little bit different than maybe other people will for this journal submission.

Yasmin Dean 1:21

Yeah, I agree with everything. The two of you have said, I really find that most academic papers and that process is very top down very hierarchical. And yet, we're trying to work as students as partners, faculty, and students as partners working together. And it's all in all the papers that we read, it says amplify the student voice. And yet the written word would not amplify your voice, I fear that it would hide your voice. So for me when I heard that this was going to be a creative call for publications, I thought, podcasts that's the way to go. Yeah.

Sally Haney 2:00

So we should probably provide some context as to, you know, why is it that the four of us sitting around this table, I will just try to do that very quickly. We are all engaged together in a subtle project we have funding and our goal together is to do the type of research that allows us to create a number of research deliverables, probably a website and a podcast that help faculty and students who are involved in international field schools, engage in best practice. And so the deeper part of that context, I'll let someone else explain, we all traveled together to India, at the India field school back in 2018. And Sally, and Yasmin asked Amanda and myself to take part in this project, because we all shared an international experience together.

Amanda Creig 2:55

I think, for Michaela and I, we are always excited to be participating in anything that relates to our journey of at the end of field school, and to piggyback on that and have other opportunities to partake in research ongoing is really exciting.

Yasmin Dean 3:12

Yeah, I think it's important to say that we invited everybody in the field school to potentially participate, and at different times different students have stepped forward to say yes to the adventure of CO working with us. And this time around, it happened to be the to view which has led to all of us having deeper conversations about, well, why you? And what are the expectations of the work that you bring to the table? And as we move this shared work together forward, how do we set it up so that other students, perhaps students from equity serving groups, might also be willing to step up in the future? So how do we create a more friendly student faculty relationship?

Sally Haney 3:58

One thing we decided if we were doing students working with students as partners, research together and work together, we wanted to draw on the frameworks and some of the models in place. So we were really fortunate to have a colleague share a framework that actually hadn't been published yet. And so this is a framework developed by, I'll just mention the names - McCollum, Akesson, Allen, Chen, Spencer, and Verwood. And the article was the stages of engaging students as partners, a guiding framework for successful SoTL activities. So we dove into that paper. And there were several steps. So let's offer some feedback about that framework. And we also did check in with other frameworks and models too, some overall impressions.

Michaela Chronik 4:52

I remember the first few times I went over the framework. I remember thinking that a couple pieces were missing relating to our relationship. I remember thinking there was no specific spot in the framework that emphasized the importance of relationship-building. And I think just working with people, that's an essential piece to work successfully in the research world, you need to know get to know the people you'll be talking with, you have to feel comfortable around them, trust them, especially in a research project that you need to be open and honest about every step of the way. That was one of my major things I wish I could have added into it.

Sally Haney 5:41

I thought it was quite useful in that there were a number of steps that it was just it was such a refreshing activity to say, "Okay, where are we with all these steps?" So the first step was learning what it can look like. And, and to me this step sort of spoke, I think it would speak to a team if the team hadn't really figured out yet -- who are we, what are we doing together? And I felt like we probably had already figured out that piece to some degree.

Yasmin Dean 6:08

Well, I think we had figured out some of it. But I think that the framework itself, gave us a roadmap to make sure we had done those steps. And there were pieces perhaps that without the framework, we would have glossed over a little bit more - the shared goals, the steps to how we were going to achieve our shared goals. Looking at the framework together in Sally's kitchen provided us a great opportunity to make sure we did our homework and our due diligence on this project.

Amanda Creig 6:40

I do have to echo that as well. I think, before this, I didn't really think about looking at frameworks regarding this. But I think sometimes ignorance in a sense of not doing enough knowledge-checking about this can lead to some challenges. So this framework is a really great base for having that check-in first, seeing what can be mitigated as we go along. But also having that awareness in your mind of, "Hey, these might arise. These are the steps of creating a great partnership that can flourish in certain settings." And it was a great guide for that for me to see how I can do this, what challenges may arise and how we can work through them as partners.

Sally Haney 7:23

And I remember, you know, step two is doing the planning. And step three is initiating, identifying shared goals, step four, active participation and managing the relationships. And step five was reflection and dissemination. So I remember in looking at steps two, three and four, we had some pretty intense conversations ... what were some of the tensions that bubbled up?

Michaela Chronik 7:46

The first thing that pops into my head, I remember us talking about the topic of fear of letting others down. I think both me and Amanda are both "yes people." And we're not afraid to jump into projects that we're invited to. And I think that allowed us to kind of open up the conversation and say, "It's okay to say no." And we just have to be conscious of the other stressors in our life - competing commitments, because we are students, we have classes and other projects underway.

Amanda Creig 8:29

Piggybacking off of what you're saying Michaela, as well as managing expectations, in the sense of the power dynamic that's at play here as well, because we're, we're students, typically seen in a traditional university or postsecondary setting, any educational setting, you listen to a prof, you have to go along with a course outline. And to have that at play here to be in a true partnership and being asked questions and being welcomed for your your input to be heard, was very challenging for me. But to have that managing of expectations, even power dynamics of whose name is going to be first if a publication comes about? Are we going to get compensated? And how are we going to get compensated? And some of these things came up in the article that helped us facilitate that conversation really nicely. I think without that, then we would have never really talked about it. I wouldn't have thought about it as a student going into this.

Sally Haney 9:28

Maybe we could talk a bit more about the power dynamics because I know I just I'm so increasingly aware of who holds power at times and, and the other thing that I think I've learned from you is, you know, Yasmin, you and I are often trying to share the decision-making and really spread it across all these hands. Right? All the work. But then I also heard from you two students, that sometimes you don't want to make the decisions. Like, that's your job, Yasmin. Can you two talk a little bit more about that?

Michaela Chronik 10:02

I think that's a great point, Sally. And my response to that is at the beginning of the partnership, I think Yasmin was the first one to say this analogy. Faculty shouldn't put students in the driver's seat right away. Because I think it's the responsibility of faculty to kind of catch students up to speed if they (faculty) are the ones who started the research project, we kind of need to get caught up on what are the project details? What are our expectations, knowing terminology on whatever project we're working on? And like you said, Sally, we don't necessarily want to take on every single task. We kind of need to be slowly brought into it.

Sally Haney 10:47

Though, I would have loved to push the entire experience off my desk (laughter). I'm kidding.

That, to me, is a really good example, you know, sometimes just getting an ethics application through in order to support and guide the research, I'm still coming to terms with how complex that is. And I also felt a terrible amount of pressure, because because if that part doesn't come together, then your funding is sitting there, and if it doesn't come through, then you (students) don't you don't get paid. We get paid. We get paid no matter what. So that I just felt an incredible amount of pressure. But I could see that it would, it would be really unfair, I think to say, "You're going to take on a big piece of all of these documents that have to be prepared for the ethics application."

Yasmin Dean 11:36

Yeah, which is really true. In that case, the faculty had to be in the driver's seat, but you also needed faculty that were willing to share all the documentation with you and invite you in, to look at it, examine it. And I remember, one of you said about the whole ethics process, that it really helped you understand the background behind our project, and how we would be taking on this work as we went forward. So it's an interesting balance of: Be in the driver's seat, but also make room for someone else to take over the steering wheel every now and then.

Amanda Creig 12:13

And it can be daunting, I think, as students to take that steering wheel. I know there's a fear of letting group members down, and any group partnership setting, but I think when you're working with faculty or with professors, there's that added stress. And maybe it goes both ways. You don't want to let students down. But as students, we don't want to let professors down. If we do get that chance to take that steering wheel, what if we make a left turn instead of a right and the project goes astray? And then it's all on you. So I think putting that responsibility on a professor, it's a lot more settling as a student. Yeah, you have to have both ways.

Sally Haney 12:53

We all did some reading of various frameworks and models. But, overall, how did that lay on you? I noticed Michaela just shook her head, no.

Michaela Chronik 13:05

Yeah, I remembered thinking that the literature we've read about partnership in general or working with students, it was probably written by faculty, higher education people. And I think it was written for faculty members and professors to read. I don't think it was written in a way for students to understand. I remember, it's not exciting reading. (Laughter). I remember that it didn't reflect the perspective of a student. And I don't think it was written in a way that a student would pick it up and be interested in reading it. If they were interested in becoming a part of a research project, I don't think the material we looked over was stuff that a student would pick up and be like, "Oh, I'm going to educate myself on partnership practices." I just don't think it was set up in a way that it was accessible for undergrad students at least.

Amanda Creig 14:06

Yeah, a lot of it, I think, that I read reflected a grad student's experience, but it reflected it in a way that was paraphrased by the author. Right. So I think even when we're talking about doing a podcast, having student voice in here, you can actually hear us. It's not yourself, Sally, or Yasmin, paraphrasing our own words. So I was really looking for that in those articles. It was great to hear about what students' experiences were, what challenges they may have had, but it's really great when we get the opportunity to hear that directly from students. I think this is what we can do here.

Sally Haney 14:41

There's a certain linearity that comes with first of all, the printed word, and certainly when we talk about steps, steps often feel linear, even though I noticed in this, there's a couple of papers just in front of me now and they actually have circular diagrams, which suggests that the steps can run into one another. But I remember as a group, we thought that there was a certain linearity that we felt a bit of discomfort with. What I'm trying to remember in the process is how did we end up listening to the story that I'm going to play now.

Roy Bear Chief 15:20

(Pre-recording) The story of Ani to pisi. Ani to pisi is the spider web. That's what Ani to pisi means in English, spider web. This story was told by my older brother, Clement. Apistotoke, the creator, instructed Ani to pisi to wrap the world with the people in it, in his web, and let them down to the lower world. Ani to pisi did as he was told, and let them down from the upper world. After people were lowered from the upper world, which is Spo mootsi, which means upper world, down here. Ani to pisi explained to them that the web would remain with them, so that the creator would know when to help them. Whenever there is trouble or an emergency, one string of the web would vibrate. And this would signal the Creator who would come to help. Man was told to pattern his life after the web so that they can stay close together and help each other whenever there is a problem anywhere on the web. When there is no trouble, the web would remain calm. Otherwise, it would vibrate. And everyone on the web would know and come to help with whatever the problem may be. Ani to pisi teaches us to help each other much like this, this university. There's many vibrations in this university, and each be our duty to, to go and help. That's what Ani to pisi is all about. And last but not least, if you look at the graphics, and the graphic art, if you look at it, imagine for a moment, if you remove the

circles out of the graphic, what we then have is an appearance of the teepee standing alone or standing like silos, which signifies that they're moving away from relational building. However, with a circle intact, we are interconnected. We are one. That is the importance of the circle, and how it defines Indigenous way of life, ways of knowing and being. Thank you.

Yasmin Dean 18:04

I just like to express appreciation to Roy Bear Chief and his late brother Clement, for gifting us with the story of Ani to pisi, which is the story of the spider web, as you just heard.

Sally Haney 18:17

So with that story, we felt that that story needed to be somehow melded with all of these frameworks and models that we see that are to guide students-as-partner work.

Yasmin Dean 18:32

When we were talking about frameworks and talking about students as partners, I saw very much that the concept, students as partners, needs to be at the centre of our spider web. And collectively as a research team, we could put our ears to the ground, as it were, and listen to what are the vibrations that make for good partnership. And therefore good research,

Sally Haney 18:53

Because I know, you know, Roy talks about it's about coming to help.

Yasmin Dean 18:59

Yes,

Sally Haney 19:00

It's about helping each other. And it's about listening for vibrations, which are usually an indication of a tension or a break in the web.

Yasmin Dean 19:08

And staying in the circle together, like being part of the same circle, which I think is a real tension of students as partners. How do we actually stay in the same circle when some of us are paid, and some of us aren't, some of us have more time and capacity and understanding for what we're trying to do, and others are just learning how to drive? And we saw that even when we looked at the framework by McCollum, Akesson, Allen, Chen, Spencer, and Verwood, because when we tried to present this work, and at one point, we described it as the "McCollum framework" - once again, we were privileging the academic researcher's name and we were forgetting the students' names that accompanied that model. And for us, I think that was a real turning point around, how do we do this, and have it still make sense as we try to disseminate the information that we learn?

Sally Haney 20:08

But it's interesting, like, you know, we need to be very concerned with equitable acknowledgement. And yet, when we submit this podcast, for example, how should we order our names?

Amanda Creig 20:24

I think that's a conversation that's not determined in one sitting. I think what we really do great in our partnership is have ongoing conversation in settings that aren't so institutionalized, like at somebody's house for lunch, or for breakfast. And it's a continuation of that conversation, that gets revisited. And that can change at any time as well. It's always open for fluidity.

Michaela Chronik 20:51

The order of authorship will differ from the different projects we have moving forward. Maybe for this podcast, it'll be one way, but maybe once we end up developing the website or the book, there would be different levels of work put into that project down the road. So I think it might change as we go on.

Sally Haney 21:19

I think one thing that we might have touched on before was also just, what do each of us consider to be the currency that we're looking for in this work that we do together? Why are we even doing this?

Yasmin Dean 21:34

We're continuously kind of like those, you know, hanging monkeys swear, I did use a monkey metaphor, intentionally, I guess. But where one hangs on to the hand of another to hang on to the hand of another, in order to create something that gets us to the point we want to be, as opposed to just I did this, or you did this.

Michaela Chronik 21:59

Reflecting on myself on why I'm in this partnership, it's gonna sound a little bit more selfish, I think. But I really loved the field school, and I was excited to just be a part of it in another way. I'm really looking forward to interviewing past field school students, because I enjoyed the trip so much, and I'm so interested in learning everyone else's experiences. And on the other side of that I saw being in this partnership as a good experience to put on my resume. To be honest, it's just a great opportunity to work with people in higher education to work with my professors closely. And just get some experience with research work and going to conferences. And I saw it as just a great opportunity that I haven't done before.

Amanda Creig 22:58

I think one of my greatest drivers was I'm hoping to go on to further education and go to graduate school. So this is something that would really help propel me in that in just the level of experience alone. But then also, we've gotten these great opportunities of going to conferences with you both, and disseminating what we've been doing to others and having that rich experience that I don't think any of us would have gotten, like Michaela and I would have gotten, if we didn't have this opportunity. So selfishly, it's been having, you know, opportunity

to further expand our university experience, learn from both of you, just really getting a chance to learn more, learn deeper. But also having that selfish, this would look great on a grad school application.

Yasmin Dean 23:49

I just want to talk about the word selfish for a moment, because I don't think that's selfish at all, to recognize, you have to put the oxygen mask on yourself before you can put it on anyone else, right. And, in this case, anything that you do to help further your own academic agenda is important because that's going to lead you to the next thing that you want to get to. But if we were going to use the word selfish, I could easily say, "Oh, well, selfishly I want to work with students because I know any conference presentation I do is better with the student voice." It's more interesting, it's more dynamic, it's more fluid. And so on both sides, we get things by making that decision to participate with one another. It does lead us though, to asking that question of why is it we put out the call we put it out to everyone but only a few typically answer any call. And, and then what I worry about I think what we all worry about is how do people that might feel a bit more marginalized than any of us in this room, how do they feel invited in the same way? Are there other things that we could do to invite more people to our table? And do we have enough room at the table for everyone? We do, because we have a sliding table that opens magically. (Laughter)

Sally Haney 25:23

I think there's a lot more work that has to be done to open up this experience to many, many more people, because it's true, we've invited routinely, you know, for example, students that have been on multiple field schools to take part in a research presentation or a talk here, just like ... the microcosm is the field school, when we're, you know, walking through the streets of Delhi or whatever we're doing, if you recall, there's a continual offering of who wants to organize our ground travel today - it's not necessarily going to be Yasmin and me.

Amanda Creig 26:02

It wasn't in the time of my experience, it was me. (Laughter).

Sally Haney 26:07

So that's the piece I think we're trying to bring to these types of opportunities as well. But it's challenging, and even though one puts out the call, it's not necessarily heard. And so I think we have to think about more creative ways to put out the call for participation, particularly in the undergraduate scene.

Yasmin Dean 26:31

And we also have to recognize that not only are there tensions in our call, and the platform that we choose to put out the invitation, there's also the other part of the reality, which is, perhaps not everybody wants to accept this call. And perhaps they're not in a place in their lives where they can right now, as well. And I know even with the two of you, we have discussed a few times now - How's your schedule? How are all the other competing demands on your time for whether you can continue to work in the same way in relationships with each of us.



Sally Haney 27:10

The other piece I wanted to touch on, we can always edit this piece out. But ...

Yasmin Dean 27:18

Now the listener's really listening. (Laughter)

Sally Haney 27:22

So students as partners. You know, there's there's a growing body of research around what this relationship looks like, quite typically associated with doing research together and disseminating. And I guess that's the other tension around all the literature for me, which is as educators, I think we could be doing a lot more to creating partnerships, from the minute that 17- or 18-year-old walks through the doors. And I noticed that in my own classroom, things are changing for me because of my involvement with you three, because of our conversations about sharing the load, because of listening to the stories that Roy shares, and figuring out, am I listening? Am I making the offer? And are others learning to make the offer to come to help? Right? So that's the other piece for me, which is, working with students as partners, to hive it off into kind of capital-R research projects, is it? I don't know why but I struggle with that a bit.

Yasmin Dean 28:32

Yeah, I think it has to be just all parts of these nice small little bite-sized projects that allow everybody to have a part in and and help the research to come to life to be meaningful in the moment that we're doing the research

Sally Haney 28:50

We will end on this question, which is if we were beginning to craft our very own model or framework, and we thought of it as a bunch of ingredients that we put together, what's what's the number one ingredient that you would pour into that thing?

Yasmin Dean 29:11

Wow, chocolate. (Laughter)

Sally Haney 29:14

We have said food is the the tie that binds.

Amanda Creig 29:20

Yasmin's poached eggs

But with those poached eggs, is invitation. I want to say that's one of the drivers and there are many branches of invitation. There's many spices, shall you say that go into the dish. But invitation of anything - invitation to participate, invitation to be vulnerable, to want to do this, to want more from - this crucial ingredients in this.

Michaela Chronik 29:56

If we made our own model, I know I touched on this a little bit before is the relationship piece. And just being a kind human being. I think, if we were to share a model with other universities, other students wanting to work with their professors, I think everyone should take note, just be kind, introduce yourself, get comfortable with each other, get to know each other so that you develop a sense of trust. And the student feels comfortable in sharing their opinion, sharing their thoughts, having those tough conversations, like we talked about earlier about pay and power dynamics. And I think to have tough conversations, you have to feel comfortable with the people that you're working with. And especially if it's a research project, in university, you're most likely going to be with these people for a long time. And why not make those relationships successful, and just not awkward.

Yasmin Dean 31:02

I think you said it all. I think one thing I'll add is, this is to us or to any of the faculty or staff that might be listening to this podcast, keep the invitations going. So if I as a professor, put out an invitation in my class, and two students accept, that doesn't mean that I shouldn't keep on offering invitations for other projects or other opportunities down the road and, and just to really set up that environment of inclusivity, as well as reminding people that there's no judgement if they can't accept the invitation.

Amanda Creig 31:41

I think there's a responsibility on us as well to bring in our peers to this because I've had a lot of my peers come up to me and say, "I didn't even know that was a thing. I didn't even know I could participate in this research." So I think there's a level of responsibility from us as students to bring in our peers.

Sally Haney 31:58

The ingredient, there's a couple that I might add to our recipe. One is messiness, and a tolerance for messiness, which I'm actually not great with, but I'm learning that this work is very circuitous, it takes time, it's messy. Sometimes I get the feeling like I could just do this piece faster myself, but then it's always better when we give it time to breathe and be circuitous and you know, sometimes we go down weird paths and it's wonderful. So yeah, I think it's tolerance for messiness. And then really super clear communication at the same time.

Yasmin Dean 32:37

There's a Blackfoot word for good and done. Roy Bear Chief taught it to us. "So Kapi," means good, done.

Sally Haney 32:39

So Kapi.

Amanda Creig 32:43

So Kapi

Michaela Chronik 32:45

So Kapi

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