



# PARTNERSHIP PEDAGOGY

Partnership pedagogy is a key concept shaping curriculum transformation at the University. It refers to curriculum that is co-created with a range of internal and external partners – community, industry, our commercial providers, our Research Institutes, and our students. It embraces four aspects of curriculum co-creation: the co-design, co-development, co-delivery and co-credentialing of curriculum.

Collaborating with diverse partners in local, national and international networks and communities enables the University to exchange knowledge and co-create highly relevant and responsive learning. This will become increasingly important in the future as the world of work becomes even more fluid and changeable. Co-creation will enable us to devise adaptive responses to ongoing regional or global changes and to shape and participate in the disruption we and our students are navigating.

Western Sydney University is embedded in the social and economic concerns of the region and shares a mission to promote the wellbeing of the communities in the region. To do so it is vital for our University to grow more genuine curriculum partnerships that exemplify deep engagement and deliberate reciprocity with business and community organisations and our students and graduates. Properly established and maintained these educational partnerships will foster the growth of the GWS region as well as the growth of the University and development of our students. These partnerships will enable students to engage with complex learning situations in an authentic and immersive way and provide greater scope for the development of the capabilities which will help graduates remain relevant and critically engaged in a rapidly changing world.

## WHAT IS PARTNERSHIP PEDAGOGY?

Partnership pedagogy is more than providing work placements or seeking external feedback. It is enacted differently in different disciplines



and can be complemented by other pedagogies. For example, transformative pedagogies, inquiry-based learning or employability. Regardless of the disciplinary focus, genuine co-creation involves more than providing internships or establishing an external advisory board. Partnership pedagogy involves a genuine purposeful relationship with a partner or partners to co-design, co-develop, co-deliver or co-credential curriculum (Barrie & Pizzica, in press).

- **Co-designing** curriculum – where the overall intention of the curriculum is thought through and developed. The goals and purpose of the course and curriculum elements are formulated via ongoing dialogue between partners, learning outcomes are identified, pedagogy refined, content devised, learning activities and assessment strategies conceptualised.
- **Co-developing** curriculum resources – involves collaborating in the production of tasks, resources and artefacts to be used in the teaching and learning activities. This may include classroom activities, audio,

video resources, apps or computer simulations, text or image-based resources. It may include re-purposing professional materials so as to provide students with access to contemporary tools and authentic resources during their studies.

- **Co-delivering** curriculum – when we talk about partners collaborating in co-delivering or co-locating teaching or learning we tend to think of either workplace placements or guest lectures. There are many other ways partners can collaborate in the delivery of curriculum such as mentoring students, participating in simulations, acting as clients for student consulting teams, participating in student conferences, or collaborating in cooperative research projects.
- **Co-credentialing** and co-assessing – partners collaborate in designing assessment tasks and standards, both on and off campus, setting questions, determining criteria, co-marking or supervising assessment activities. The co-credentialing aspect may also embed



certification or accredited activities within the curriculum to enable students to attain external certification within a unit or course.

These four stages of co-creation are not exclusive, there is often considerable overlap between stages when working with partners, and partners often collaborate in more than one stage.

## WHO ARE OUR CURRICULUM PARTNERS?

Our diverse partnerships include:

- Greater Western Sydney community and business association partners - including volunteers, community groups, Western Sydney Business Council, Aboriginal elders, schools and alumni
- University network partners - for example Sydney School of Entrepreneurship and UN Regional Centres for Expertise in Sustainable Development Solutions
- Industry and employer partners - including Local Health Districts, PWC, Sydney Water, the St Vincent de Paul Society and SMEs
- Commercial provider partners - with Adobe, Microsoft and others
- Edu-venture partners - including Open Education Services and the Sydney Institute of Business and Technology
- Research & innovation partners - with research groups, institutes and industry research linkages and our start-up incubator Launchpad
- Students - scaffolded engagement of student partners in curriculum transformation and governance.

## PRINCIPLES

To support sustainable co-creation of curriculum the partnership needs to be clearly beneficial from the perspective of all the partners. While there are no completely right or wrong ways to forge 21C curriculum partnerships, as some develop organically, and others are brokered through more formal agreements, some guiding principles to help the relationship be successful, sustainable and scalable include:

- Interdisciplinary - draws on the multiple perspectives, theories, resources or data from different disciplines; parties challenge existing ideas and practices, develop new ways of working and learning together and ease barriers for potential partners (Flint and Harrington, 2014).
- Interdependence - welcomes the different experiences and knowledge that all parties bring; encourages multipoint collaboration, dialogue and shared leadership; advances transformation through reciprocity, common goals and shared benefits (Butcher, Bezzina and Moran, 2011).
- Integrity - encourages honest and innovative thinking for social responsibility (Keynan, 2014); fosters trust as parties are open about their contribution and rationale for investing in the partnership (Flint and Harrington, 2014); follows open and agreed methods of governance.

## PROMPTS TO GET STARTED

### 1. Who will be the project partners?

Where will you most need expertise - in co-design, co-development, co-delivery or co-credentialing? Who has the knowledge, experience, resources or networks to enhance the relationship? Who will derive meaningful benefits from being invited? Whose absence would risk equitable development?

### 2. What are the shared goals for the project?

What have you and your partners discussed and agreed on as the ultimate educational purpose of the collaboration? Have you recorded this, so it can be revisited later as the program evolves? How are you intending to communicate this to the students?

### 3. How does your partnership contribute to transforming student learning?

How does the involvement of your partners enable students to learn new concepts or learn in new ways? How will the partnership address the predicted challenges of a disrupted future of work and society for students? How will it provide a signature learning experience?

### 4. Are you aware of the benefits all partners seek to derive from being involved?

Are the anticipated benefits reasonable? Are

the realised benefits sufficient to make the relationships sustainable and to encourage everyone's ongoing involvement?

### 5. Have you established clear roles within the project for yourself and your partners?

Does everybody understand what they need to do and when they need to do it? Does everyone understand how and why they will interact with students? How will you invite student partners into this project?

### 6. How have agreements between you and your partners been recorded?

Have you had a meeting with your partners where you formalised an understanding of how the partnership will work? Do you need to document this agreement or formalise it with a contract or memorandum of understanding?

## PARTNERSHIP RESOURCES

Further partnership resources and practical examples see the [21C project resources page](#) and the [21C Curriculum Scholars Network](#).

## REFERENCES

- Barrie, S., & Pizzica, J. (In Press). Reimagining university curriculum for a disrupted future of work: Partnership pedagogy. In J. Higgs, G. Crisp & W. Letts (Eds), *Education for Employability: Learning for Future Possibilities*, Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense-Brill Publishers.
- Butcher, J., Bezzina, M., & Moran, W. (2011). Transformational partnerships: A new agenda for higher education. *Innovative Higher Education*, 36(1), 29-40.
- Keynan, I. (2014). Knowledge as responsibility: Universities and society. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, 18(2), 179-206.
- Flint, A., & Harrington, K. (2014). [Framework for partnership in learning and teaching in higher education](#). York: Higher Education Academy

## CONTACT

Visit the resources on our 21C website or contact [Dr Jenny Pizzica](#) in the Learning Transformations team.