

# Teaching and Learning Together: Principles and Possibilities

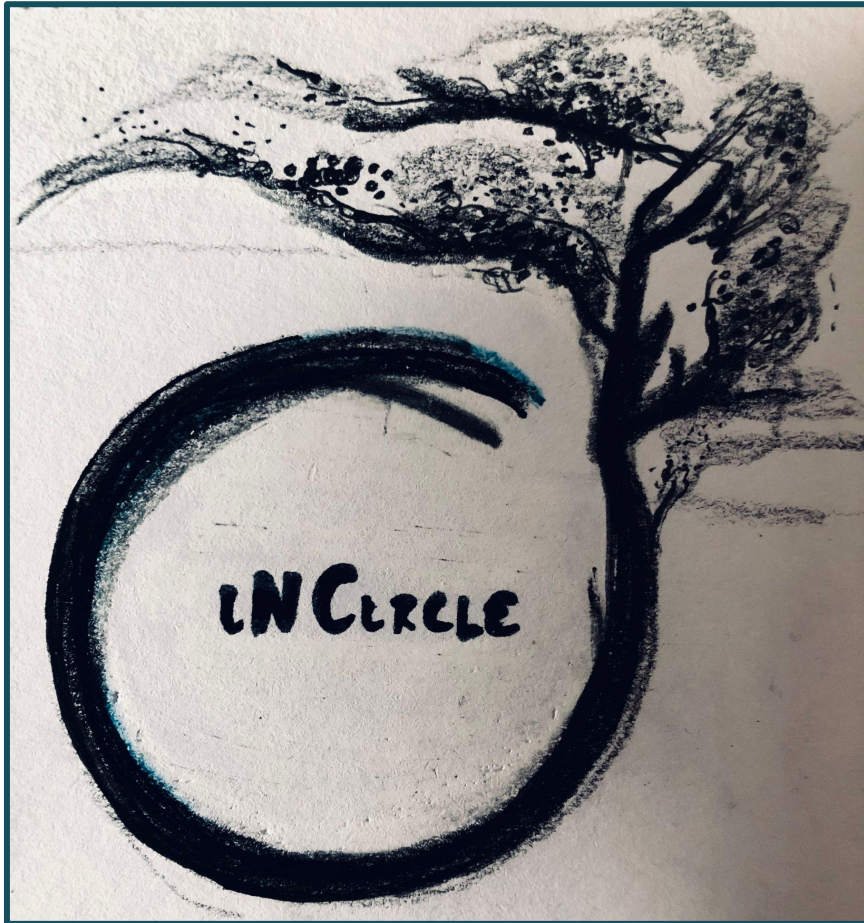
*Eastern Michigan University*  
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Partner, Bryn Mawr College, Class of 2021

# Overview of keynote

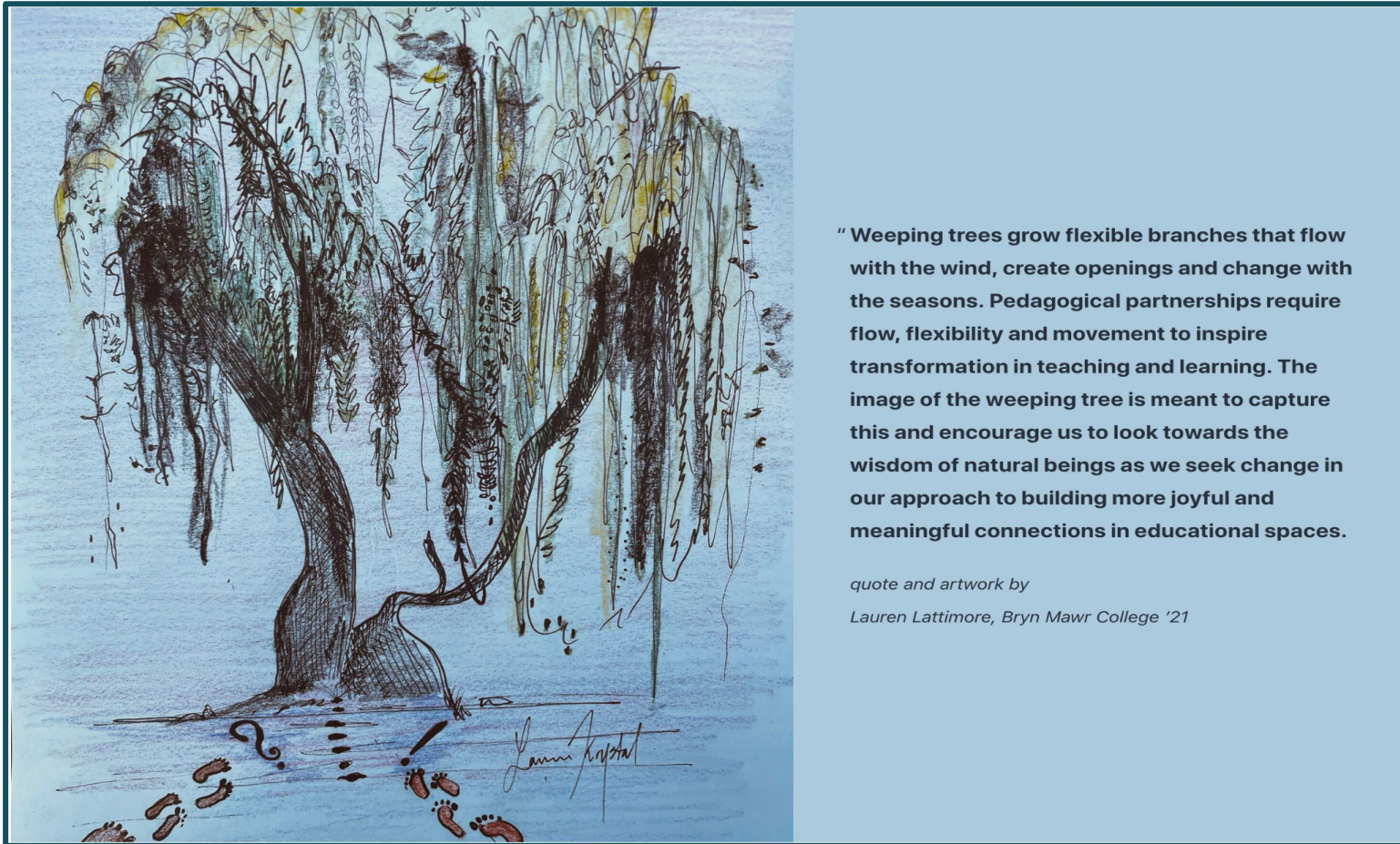
- Present a **definition** and **underlying principles** of pedagogical partnership
- Review **arguments in the scholarly arena** for the potential of pedagogical partnership
- Provide examples of some of the **most common outcomes** of pedagogical partnerships as articulated in student and faculty participants' words
- Highlight **partnership work** at Eastern Michigan University
- Invite ideas for possibilities for **pedagogical partnership** at Eastern Michigan University





# Definition of pedagogical partnership

“A collaborative, reciprocal process through which all participants have the opportunity to contribute equally, although not necessarily in the same ways, to curricular or pedagogical conceptualization, decision making, implementation, investigation, or analysis.” (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014, pp. 6-7)



**“Weeping trees grow flexible branches that flow with the wind, create openings and change with the seasons. Pedagogical partnerships require flow, flexibility and movement to inspire transformation in teaching and learning. The image of the weeping tree is meant to capture this and encourage us to look towards the wisdom of natural beings as we seek change in our approach to building more joyful and meaningful connections in educational spaces.**

*quote and artwork by*

*Lauren Lattimore, Bryn Mawr College '21*

Painting by Lauren Lattimore, Student Partner, Bryn Mawr College, Class of 2021

# Principles underpinning pedagogical partnership

- **Respect**—an attitude
- **Reciprocity**—a mode of interacting
- **Shared responsibility**—a process and an outcome



*Pedagogical partnership is enacted within “an ethic of reciprocity”: a “process of balanced give-and-take not of commodities but rather of contributions: perspectives, insights, forms of participation.”* (Cook-Sather & Felten, 2017, p. 181)

For detailed discussions of these points, see *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching: A Guide for Faculty* (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014, pp. 1-6)

# Arguments from the literature

- “Engaging students and staff effectively as partners in learning and teaching is arguably **one of the most important issues** facing higher education in the 21st century” (Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014, p. 7) [England]
- “... ‘**structural disadvantage**’ ...[in higher education]...constitutes and is constituted by multiple forms of violence—epistemic (knowledge related), affective (feelings related) and ontological (being related)—that do harm to students. ...[P]edagogical partnership can contribute to redressing these harms and promote **greater equity and justice.**” (de Bie, Marquis, Cook-Sather, & Luqueño, 2021, p. 1) [United States and Canada]
- “[Working with students as partners] **challenges traditional assumptions about the identities of, and relationships between, learners and teachers**” and explicitly names students “to intentionally and clearly assert the role students can assume alongside others with educational expertise” (Matthews, 2017, p. 1). [Australia]
- “...if we all engaged in partnerships through which we...discuss how teaching and learning experiences can include and value everyone, **our campuses would become places of belonging.**” (Colón García, 2017, p. 5) [United States]



# Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT) Program

- Launched at Bryn Mawr and Haverford Colleges in 2007 in response to administrative desire to support faculty and faculty desire to develop **more culturally responsive classrooms**
- Developed based on recommendations from and in collaboration with students who identify as belonging to **under-represented and equity-seeking groups**
- Basic approach: **semester-long, pedagogy-focused, one-on-one partnerships** between faculty members and **paid undergraduate student partners** not currently enrolled in the focal course
  - Weekly **classroom observations** conducted and detailed notes generated by student partners
  - Weekly meetings between **faculty-student pairs**
  - Weekly meetings of **student partners and director of SaLT**



# Most common outcomes for faculty

- Gaining a **perspective** that they cannot achieve on their own
- Building **confidence** in pedagogical approaches
- Recognizing equitable pedagogical practices and **making them intentional**
- **Sharing power—and responsibility—**in learning



Painting by Lauren Lattimore, Student Partner,  
Bryn Mawr College, Class of 2021

## Gaining a perspective that they cannot achieve alone

*“For the first time, I was able to **get the sense of how others experienced the class.** Her perspective gave her access to specific insights which I remained blind to: she alerted me to students’ confusion, affirmed and/or challenged my choices of activities, and helped me identify the pedagogical practices that worked, even for the most withdrawn students.”*  
(Faculty member quoted in Cook-Sather 2014a, p. 38).

*“There were a number of times when [the student consultant] was bringing positive observations that I wouldn’t necessarily have known — that so-and-so was feeling particularly interested and engaged by a topic or a teaching approach that I wouldn’t have necessarily thought about. I often felt like, ‘**Oh, I didn’t see it that way, and now I do; now I have that perspective.**’”* (Faculty member quoted in Cook-Sather 2014a, p. 37).



## Building confidence in pedagogical approaches

*“While I was worried about the mechanics of running a course—Is my writing on the board legible? Am I talking too fast? Do I stop for questions enough?—[my student consultant] encouraged me to think about and, crucially, say aloud my values as an instructor. She asked me to articulate my ideal class environment: one where all students are unafraid to learn from each other and their mistakes, and to support each other as they struggle through difficult material.” (Perez, 2016)*

*“[My student partner] helped me stave off some imposter syndrome flareups I was having at the beginning of the semester. Explaining to her my thoughts about teaching and my place in my discipline helped me remember that I know what I’m doing and, at the very least, I have tried to be very conscientious about teaching in a way that is reflective of my values.” (Faculty member quoted in Cook-Sather, 2020)*

## Recognizing responsive pedagogical practices and making them intentional

*“My student partner identified a bunch of **things that I knew and did in a conscious way but wouldn’t have thought of as culturally responsive**. I did them to solve a different problem: trying to make the class more interactive (that was my goal)—How can I make them think about or do something? And [my student partner] perceived them as actually connected to the students’ personal experiences.*

*So what I was already doing for another reason had that unintended consequence.... I had one purpose and she saw other purposes....so **by her identifying them, I became more conscious and deliberate in doing them.**” (Faculty partner, quoted in Cook-Sather & Des-Ogugua, 2018)*

## Sharing with students power—and responsibility—in learning

*“One unexpected side effect of working with the Student Consultant was a subtle change in attitude that I experienced. I have always strived to adjust course content and process to match student interests and needs, but I had always seen that as a process of me adjusting things for them. Mid-way through the semester of working with my Student Consultant, **I realized that I was thinking about my class in a more collaborative way than I had before:** I was thinking about building the course with the students, as partners.”* (Faculty partner quoted in Cook-Sather, 2014b, p. 39)

*“I work with students more as colleagues, more as people engaged in similar struggles to learn and grow. I have become even more convinced that **students are experts in learning and essential partners in the task of creating and developing new courses and refining existing ones.**”* (Faculty partner quoted in Cook-Sather 2014b, p. 39)



# Most common outcomes for students

- Deepening **learning and academic engagement**
- Building **confidence** and sense of **belonging**
- Fostering **understanding of teachers** and teaching
- Contributing to student partners' sense of their evolution as **active agents** in their own and others' development
- Building **job skills**



Painting by Lauren Lattimore, Student Partner, Bryn Mawr College, Class of 2021

# Deepening learning and academic engagement

*“You really don’t understand the way you learn and how others learn until you can step back from it and are not in the class with the main aim to learn the material of the class but more to understand what is going on in the class and what is going through people’s minds as they relate with that material.”* (quoted in Cook-Sather 2014b, p. 37)

*“Being a student consultant has allowed me to **understand the rationale behind an activity or behind an assignment a lot better**. So now when I am a student and receiving information, I can not only receive the content, but I can also see why it is being delivered in this way. Why I am being asked to engage with this particular text in this particular way. So seeing the content as it is as a student but also going to the next level to see the pedagogical reasoning behind it has totally deepened my learning.”* (Student partner quoted in Cook-Sather 2018b, p. 927)

## Building a sense of confidence and belonging

*“I think I feel **more confident speaking to professors** .... Before I would have just been this is how everyone teaches. But now I feel like I understand both how to approach a teacher about that and feel like I have something to say that’s worth hearing.”* (Student partner quoted in Cook-Sather, 2019, p. 927)

*“I often tell people that I would have left Haverford [College] were it not for the SaLT program. Although this is probably an exaggeration I am now unable to test, I do feel like I owe SaLT a debt of gratitude for making me **feel like an integral part of the school and its processes.**”* (Perez-Putnam, 2016 [student partner])



## Fostering understanding of teachers and teaching

*“It made me **a lot more compassionate towards my professors**, more empathetic, because I saw how hard my faculty partners were working, it made me a lot less likely to disparage my own teachers and less willing to tolerate that from other people.”* (Student partner quoted in Cook-Sather, 2018, p. 926)

*“When I was writing the last paper I had [in a particular class], I found myself looking at the prompt and **thinking more**. The professor wasn’t necessarily explicit about making connections, but I found myself being able to look at what the assignment was and being more able to decipher what the professor was emphasizing and what they were looking for. I think I ended up writing a better paper as a result. And it was sort of interesting to realize that I don’t think I would have thought of this last semester; I would have just answered the question. Whereas this was more like, **what is the intent behind the questions, and why are these questions set up as they are?**”* (Student partner quoted in Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten 2014, p. 12)

## Contributing to students' sense of their evolution as active agents in their own and others' development

*“It made me feel a sense of **ownership of my experience both inside the classroom and outside the classroom.**”* (Student partner quoted in Cook-Sather, 2018, p. 928)

*“I started to think of myself more as **an advocate within classroom spaces for my peers.** I began to feel I had a lot more agency and could be an agent of change within my classroom spaces.”* (Student partner quoted in Cook-Sather, 2018, p. 929)

*“It’s really tough for women, for women of color, for LGBTQ folks...‘consultant,’ ‘fellow,’ these are words not typically afforded access to people like me. So, having the experience, being able to say I do know these things, I can prove them...**improved my confidence, my job seeking confidence**... And the reason for that is programs like [SaLT]...I would not be in that same position if it wasn’t for that same training and understanding.”* (Student partner quoted in Cook-Sather, 2018, p. 929)

# Contributing to job preparation

## *(a) observation and analysis skills*

*“I really think that is an important skill—to **separate events from how you feel about them.**”*

*“I found important insights through my observations of the class I worked with and the note taking/analyzing process, which I think is instrumental in any educational setting.”* (students quoted in Cook-Sather, 2011)

## *(b) capacity for communication across positions and perspectives*

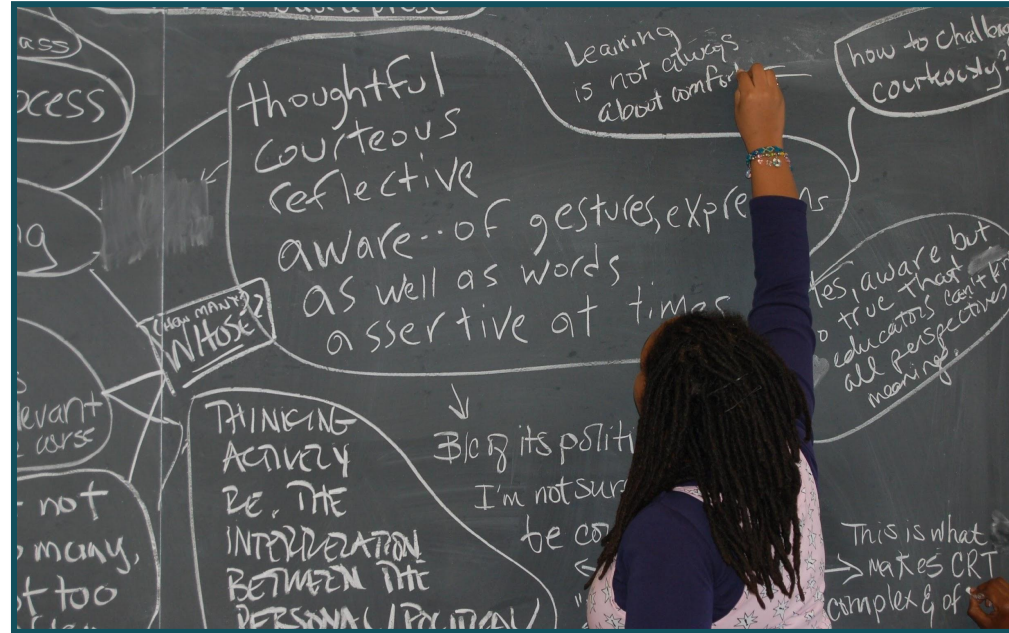
*“My principal and I have a great relationship. I think it’s because of the [work I did through the SaLT program]. I learned how to communicate my thoughts regarding pedagogy in accessible but profound ways. And **I learned how to navigate a relationship with someone who wasn’t my peer.**”* (Student quoted in Cook-Sather, 2011)



# For silent reflection and then discussion:

## Most common outcomes for faculty

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## Most common outcomes for students

- Deepening **learning and academic engagement**
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- Fostering **understanding of teachers** and teaching
- Contributing to student partners' sense of their evolution as **active agents** in their own and others' development
- Building **job skills**

*Which of these outcomes are especially important in your work at EMU and how could partnership support your pursuit of them?*

# Teaching and Learning Together (TaLT) innovations to build on...

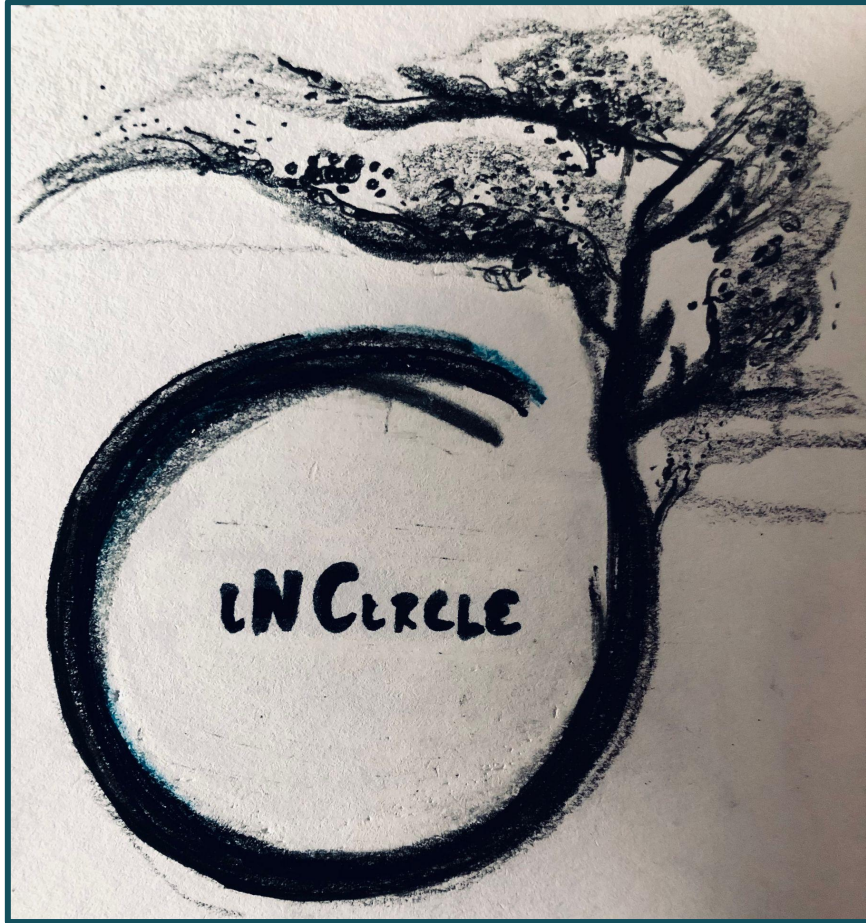
- Learning Community with Students and Faculty (ongoing)
- A learning community for next year focusing on clinical educators and their students (coming soon)
- A CFP for research funding for faculty and student partners to work on questions of how to make partnerships successful on campus (coming soon)



[https://www.emich.edu/facdev/events/teaching\\_and\\_learning\\_together\\_talt.php](https://www.emich.edu/facdev/events/teaching_and_learning_together_talt.php)

Where do you see possibilities for this kind of work in your practice?

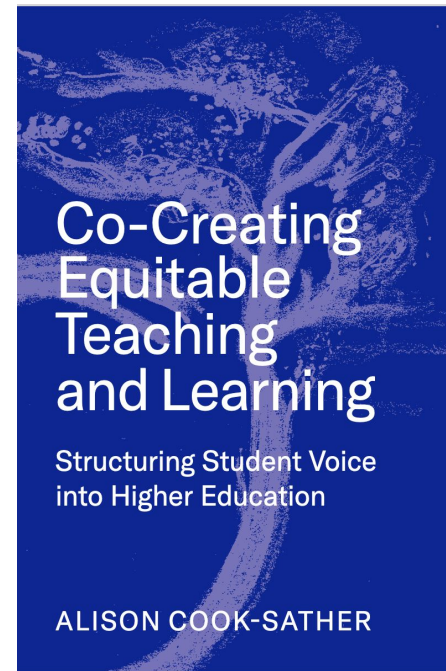
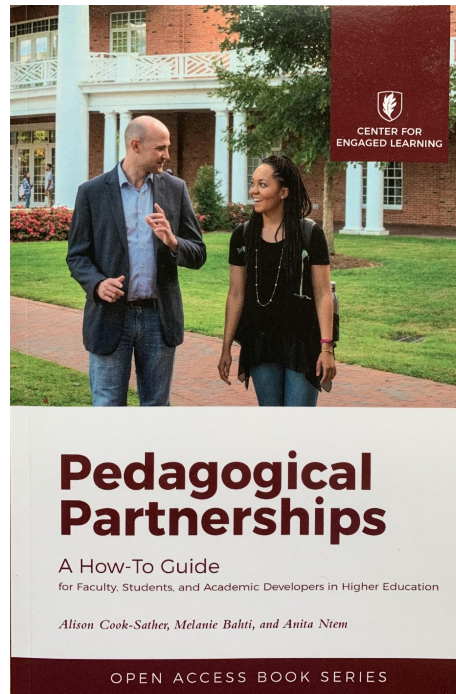
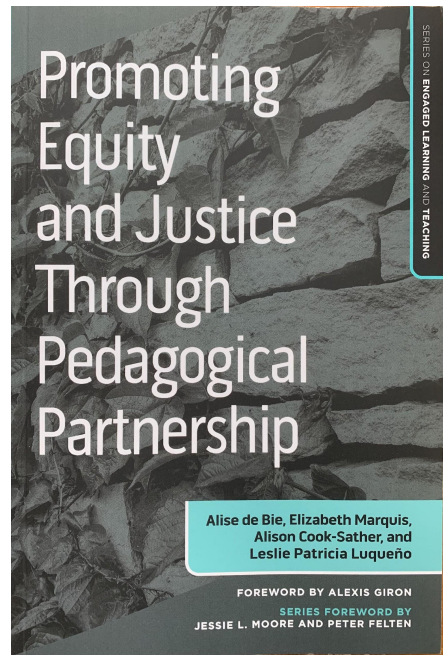
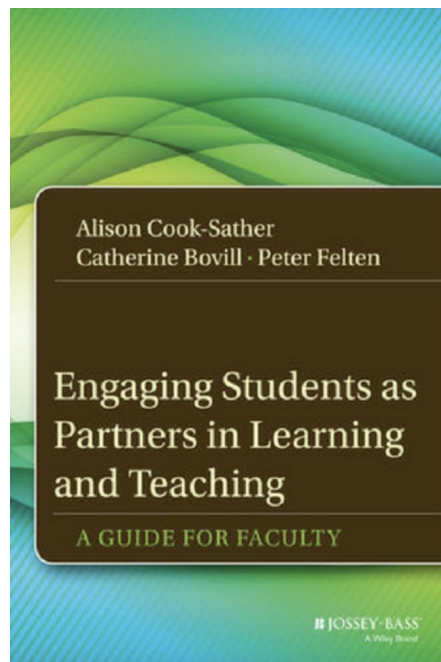
# Possibilities for pedagogical partnership work at EMU



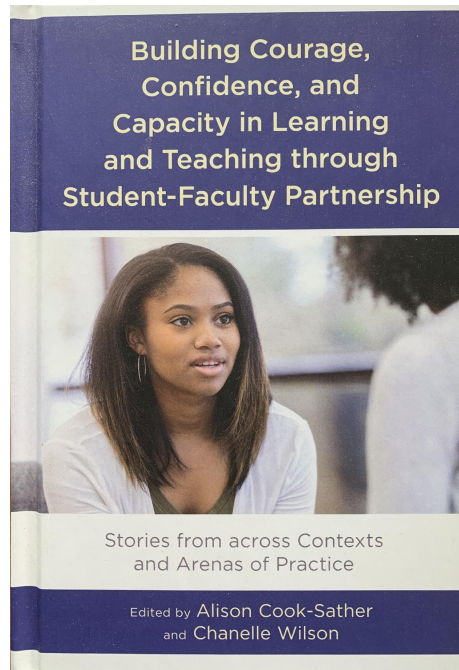
What insights, inspirations, questions, or concerns do you have about possibilities for pedagogical partnership at EMU?

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## Sample resources for developing and expanding pedagogical partnership



## Resources for Faculty, Staff, and Students



What follows is a list of resources that may be of interest to faculty, students, and staff members. Click the headings below to go to the category of resources that interests you.

- [Pedagogical Partnership Program Guides](#)
- [Journals on Pedagogical Partnership](#)
- [Pedagogy](#)
  - [Accessibility/Inclusivity](#)
  - [STEM](#)
- [Sample Activities for a Faculty Pedagogy Seminar on Equity and Inclusion](#)
- [Remote/Hybrid Learning](#)

<https://tli-resources.digital.brynmawr.edu/resources-and-scholarship/resources-for-faculty-and-staff/>

# Selected Resources

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