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**An Exploration of How Curriculum Co-Creation
Advances Student and Staff Aims
for Scottish Higher Education**

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Abstract

The Scottish higher education landscape has been evolving to place a greater emphasis on student engagement, in common with the higher education sector internationally. In the last ten years, discussion of curriculum co-creation and student/staff partnerships in learning and teaching have become increasingly prevalent in facilitating high levels of both student and staff engagement. My study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of what curriculum co-creation means in practice at Scottish universities, and how this approach affects students, staff, and their higher education institutions.

My thesis focuses on how undergraduate students and staff at Scottish universities conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum, and how these conceptualisations relate to their aims for students within higher education. I draw on a wide range of interdisciplinary literature to examine aims for higher education and key themes in 21st Century higher education. I position co-creation of the curriculum within the wider literature on student development, student engagement, and student/staff partnerships while also looking at how different conceptualisations of the higher education curriculum affect how it can be co-created.

I integrate different methodologies into my multi-phase, qualitative study. Through criterion and snowball sampling, I identified 24 staff and student co-creation practitioners at five Scottish universities who engaged in 15 curriculum co-creation initiatives. I conducted 20 in-depth, semi-structured interviews and one focus group discussion with these individuals during Phase 1. In Phases 2 and 3, I incorporated photo-elicitation methods embedded in an arts-based approach within four further focus group discussions and worked with two undergraduate student co-researchers using co-inquiry methods to learn from 25 students and staff who were not co-creating curricula. Drawing on aspects of a constructivist grounded theory approach, I analysed cross-cutting themes which emerged. My findings focus on participants' aims for higher education, conceptualisations of student engagement and curriculum co-creation, and the benefits and challenges of co-creating curricula.

I offer a new definition of curriculum co-creation that extends beyond broad notions of student/staff collaborations in curriculum development. I define the term as the values-based implementation of an ongoing, creative, and mutually-beneficial

process of staff and students working together to share and negotiate decision-making about aspects of higher education curricula. Examining further the notions of creativity in curriculum development, innovation to develop enjoyment of learning and resilience, and democratic engagement to promote positive civic impact are particular contributions that my research makes to deepen current understandings of co-creation of the curriculum. I advance connections between risk in curriculum co-creation and the development of self-authorship to help individuals face complex challenges and develop stronger democratic societies. Curriculum co-creation enacts participants' aims to foster not only individuals' personal and professional development but also their ability to advance social justice and have a positive impact on their communities.

Lay Summary

My thesis focuses on how undergraduate students and staff at Scottish universities understand the concept of co-creation of the curriculum and how this practice relates to their aims for students within higher education. I now define the term *co-creation of the curriculum* as: the values-based implementation of an ongoing, creative, and mutually-beneficial process of staff and students working together to share and negotiate decision-making about aspects of higher education curricula.

I draw on a wide range of interdisciplinary literature to examine the roots of Scottish universities and aims for higher education, and I provide an overview of key themes in 21st Century higher education. I position curriculum co-creation within the wider literature on student development, student engagement, and student/staff partnerships while also looking at how different perspectives on the higher education curriculum affect how it can be co-created.

In my multi-phase study, I collected a wide range of qualitative data. First, I conducted 20 individual interviews and one focus group discussion with a total of 24 staff and students who had participated in 15 different curriculum co-creation initiatives at five Scottish universities. I then conducted two focus groups with 16 other engaged students and two further focus groups with 9 staff who were engaged in enhancing their teaching. I worked with two undergraduate student co-researchers to analyse the student focus group data collaboratively and then lead together the staff focus groups to add a dimension of co-creation into my research design. I analysed themes including: aims for higher education, perspectives on student engagement and curriculum co-creation, and the benefits and challenges of co-creating curricula.

My study seeks to provide a deeper understanding of what curriculum co-creation means in practice at Scottish universities, and how this approach affects students, staff, and their higher education institutions. In particular, my research finds that co-creation of the curriculum fosters creativity in curriculum development, innovation that develops enjoyment of learning and resilience, and democratic engagement that benefits wider society. Curriculum co-creation helps achieve participants' aims regarding the personal and professional development of both students and university staff, and their ability to advance social justice and have a positive impact on their communities.

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis was composed by myself, that the work contained herein is my own except where explicitly stated in the text, and that this work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification except as specified. Parts of this work presented in the findings and discussion chapters have been published in the following journals:

- *International Journal for Students as Partners*:
 - “‘More than just a student’: How co-creation of the curriculum fosters Third Spaces in ways of working, identity, and impact’ (2019) available at <https://doi.org/10.15173/ijsap.v3i1.3727>
 - ‘Co-researching co-creation of the curriculum: Reflections on arts-based methods in education and connections to healthcare co-production’ (2018) available at <https://doi.org/10.15173/ijsap.v2i2.3427>
Please note: I undertook this work in partnership with Hermina Simoni who was a co-researcher. The text included in my PhD was jointly discussed but was written by me as lead author.
 - ‘Students as partners in learning and teaching: The benefits of co-creation of the curriculum’ (2018) available at <https://doi.org/10.15173/ijsap.v2i1.3207>
- *Teaching in Higher Education*
 - ‘Student perceptions of teaching excellence: An analysis of student-led teaching award nomination data’ (2019) available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562517.2018.1461620>
Please note: I undertook this work in partnership with Kieran Bunting who was a research assistant on the project. The text included in my PhD is cited and draws on our joint research but was written by me as lead author.
- *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership and Change*
 - ‘Co-creation of the curriculum: Challenging the status quo to embed partnership’ (2017) available at <https://doi.org/10.21100/jeipc.v3i2.529>
- *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal*
 - ‘Creativity and collaboration: An exploration of empathy, inclusion, and resilience in co-creation of the curriculum’ (2019) available at <https://sehej.raise-network.com/raise/article/view/846>

I have also taken part in other collaborations that are tangential to my research and contributed to my thinking, but the text is not included in my thesis except where cited:

- ‘Reimagining the place of students in academic development’ in *International Journal for Academic Development*, published with Peter Felten, Sophia Abbot, Jordan Kirkwood, Aaron Long, Lucy Mercer-Mapstone, and Roselynn Verwood (2019) available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2019.1594235>
- ‘Using play to facilitate faculty-student partnership: How can you co-design a module?’ in *The power of play in higher education: Creativity in tertiary learning* (Edited by Alison James and Chrissi Nerantzi), published with Sarah Dyer (2019)
- ‘Creating spaces: Embracing risk and partnership in higher education’ in *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education*, published with Juliet Hancock (2018) available at <https://repository.brynmawr.edu/tithe/vol1/iss24/5>

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Glossary of Key Terms

In an attempt to clarify understandings of key terms, I have defined my understanding of them below. I expand on many of these terms within my literature review.

Co-creation of the curriculum: Bovill, Cook-Sather, and Felten (2011, p. 137) suggest that ‘Co-creation of curricula implies students and academic staff working in partnership to create some or all aspects of the planning, implementation and evaluation of the learning experience.’ Furthermore, Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten et al. (2016) (2016) state: ‘Co-creation of learning and teaching occurs when staff and students work collaboratively with one another to create components of curricula and/or pedagogical approaches.’ Similarly, in my thesis I come to define co-creation of the curriculum as: *the values-based implementation of an ongoing, reciprocal, creative, and mutually beneficial process of staff and students working together to negotiate and share decision-making regarding aspects of higher education curricula.*

Higher education curriculum: I have been inspired by the work of Boomer (1992) who emphasises the iterative nature of the curriculum as a process, and Fraser and Bosanquet (2006) who suggest that conceptualisations of the higher education curriculum range from a product-focused, teacher-directed view to a process-focused, student-centred view. In addition, I have drawn on the work of Barnett and Coate (2004) who posit that the curriculum needs to help students engage with and develop knowledge, skills, and sense of authentic *being* – or attributes and capabilities – which are each changing constantly in the 21st Century. Therefore, I define the curriculum as a creative, student-centred space where staff and students engage in a process of learning and teaching that they continually adapt to meet their shared learning and teaching objectives.

Learning community: I define a learning community as a group of students and staff who actively work together to develop an inclusive environment and work towards shared academic aims and attitudes.

Staff: I use this term to encompass a variety of university employees including teachers (e.g., tutors, lecturers, and professors); academic developers; support staff (e.g., course secretaries, librarians, IT staff, and other staff who contribute to the wider student experience); and managers. While the majority of staff co-creators are

teachers, academic developers and other professional services staff can also play key roles.

Students: I use this term to describe learners as highly capable individuals who, through collaboration, often bring a wide range of valuable cultural, social, academic, and/or professional experience that should be drawn on in higher education to enhance the learning experience for all.

Student engagement: Drawing on the work of Kuh (2009, 2010), Trowler (2010), and Bryson (2014) , , and , I define student engagement as the opportunities that staff and institutions create for students to engage in learning, and students' active involvement in various aspects of learning. This definition is necessarily broad and recognises the separate – but intricately connected – responsibilities and contributions of staff and students.

Student representation: Within the UK, student representation is a formal process of students democratically engaging with specific roles (e.g., class representative, programme representative, school representative, sabbatical officer) to represent peers in enhancing the quality of the student experience.

Students as partners: In their pivotal literature review of this concept, Mercer-Mapstone, Dvorakova, Matthews et al. (2017, p. 1) suggest that “Students as Partners” (SaP) in higher education re-envision students and staff as active collaborators in teaching and learning’ by emphasising reciprocity and working towards the ideal of positioning of students as equals. This definition is necessarily broad. Furthermore, Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten (2014, pp. 6-7) state: ‘We define student-faculty partnership as 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.’ The term ‘students as partners’ has become a popular way of describing some forms of student engagement that counter discussions of ‘students as consumers’ (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Matthews, Dwyer, Hine et al., 2018) to acknowledge a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular collaborations between students and staff.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background and Positioning of the Term 'Co-Creation of the Curriculum'

In the last ten years, there has been a dramatic increase in the discourse surrounding co-creation of the curriculum (Bovill & Woolmer, 2018) and students as partners (Cook-Sather, Bovill, & Felten, 2014; Felten, 2017; Mercer-Mapstone, Dvorakova, Matthews et al., 2017). However, what is co-creation of the curriculum, and how – if at all – can or should it be differentiated from the concept of students as partners in higher education? I have been wrestling with these questions for several years to be broad enough to be inclusive, yet at the same time being specific enough to be clear about conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum.

The most widely-cited definitions of co-creation of the curriculum include the following:

- 'Co-creation of curricula implies students and academic staff working in partnership to create some or all aspects of the planning, implementation and evaluation of the learning experience' (Bovill, Cook-Sather, & Felten, 2011, p. 137).
- 'Co-creation of learning and teaching occurs when staff and students work collaboratively with one another to create components of curricula and/or pedagogical approaches' (Bovill, Cook-Sather, Felten et al., 2016, p. 196). The authors go on to describe on the same page 'the benefits of co-creating learning and teaching through partnerships' and how 'challenges might be addressed not only to enable co-creation but also to embed a partnership ethos and process within the wider learning community'.
- Writing for what is now Advance HE (formerly known as the Higher Education Academy in the UK), Ryan and Tilbury (2013) focus on the benefits of student entrepreneurship in "co-creation" models to engage learners in constructing and questioning knowledge and learning' (p. 6). Drawing on the work of Bovill, Cook-Sather, et al. (2011), Ryan and Tilbury (2013, p. 16) also say:
The concept of "co-creation" is used to indicate interactions that encourage collaborative and democratic input from students as stakeholders in shaping knowledge practices... The pedagogical ambitions behind learner empowerment are realised through the use of participatory, transformative and "active" pedagogies.

As seen above, definitions of co-creation of the curriculum focus on the concepts of student/staff partnership, collaboration, and democratic engagement in designing aspects of the higher education curriculum.

Other widely-cited definitions of student/staff partnerships in higher education also focus on collaboration, reciprocity, and new approaches to developing meaningful working relationships that engage both students and staff. For example:

- Cook-Sather et al. (2014, pp. 6-7) state:

We define student-faculty partnership as 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.

- Healey, Flint, and Harrington (2014) recognise that 'The co-creation process... underpins learner empowerment and is central to the concept of students as partners' (p. 32). They also state (p. 7):

Partnership is framed as a *process of student engagement*, understood as staff and students learning and working together to foster engaged student learning and engaging learning and teaching enhancement. In this sense partnership is a relationship in which all participants are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together.

- Additionally, Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017, p. 1) write: "Students as Partners" (SaP) in higher education re-envision students and staff as active collaborators in teaching and learning' by emphasising reciprocity and working towards the ideal of positioning students as equals.

As such, there can be strong overlap since definitions of 'co-creation of the curriculum' often use the word 'partnership' and some definitions of 'student/staff partnerships' also include 'co-creation'. Thus far I have not found literature that clearly delineates definitions of co-creation of the curriculum and partnership.

In the definitions of co-creation of the curriculum and students as partners above, these all describe high levels of engagement by students and staff as collaborative, democratic, and reciprocal so that both students and staff benefit from engaging.

Furthermore, Matthews, Dwyer, Hine et al. (2018, pp. 957 - 958) state:

Students as partners (SaP) is fundamentally about meaningful relationships between students and staff members at a university. ...Scholars have positioned SaP as a relational approach to student engagement that emphasises shared responsibility for learning and teaching through a process of mutual engagement between students and

staff. ...SaP is a process of renegotiating traditional positions, power arrangements, and ways of working in higher education.

In addition, in commissioned work for Advance HE, Healey et al. (2014, p. 7) use the terminology 'engagement through partnership' and suggest:

...[P]artnership represents a sophisticated and effective approach to student engagement because it offers the potential for a more authentic engagement with the nature of learning itself and the possibility for genuinely transformative learning experiences for all involved.

By using the term 'sophisticated', they imply that student/staff partnerships are important to 21st Century higher education in advancing mutually beneficial forms of engagement, but they also note the complexities and challenges of these relationships. As such, it is important to note that both student/staff partnerships and co-creation of the curriculum are distinct from other forms of student engagement because they promote different attitudes and ways of working with students-as-partners in learning and teaching (Advance HE, 2019; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Healey et al., 2014). In addition, Moore-Cherry, Healey, Nicholson et al. (2016) go a step further to 'propose the term *inclusive partnership* to conceptualise a non-selective staff–student relationship' (p. 84) that 'requires a re-conceptualisation of the learning and working environment experienced by *all* students' (p. 89).

Furthermore, Cook-Sather et al. (2014, p. 1) emphasise that, 'Partnerships are based on respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility between students and faculty'. They suggest that respect is an attitude of openness that promotes two-way communication, reciprocity is a way of thinking that promotes equity, and responsibility is an action of taking ownership and having a stake in making something a success (Cook-Sather et al., 2014, pp. 3-5). It is important to highlight – as do Cook-Sather, Bovill, and Felten (2014) – that students and staff can and should contribute in different ways to partnerships since their roles, expertise, responsibilities, and status are necessarily different. Students often contribute their expertise as learners, and staff contribute their expertise in the subject area and in teaching. In my research it is also important that participants clarify their conceptions of what the curriculum includes, who can influence it, and whether other perspectives contributing to its development are valued.

Cook-Sather, Matthews, Ntem et al. (2018) suggest that 'students as partners' in higher education is a broad, 'umbrella term' which has gained wide recognition within international networks of students and staff engaging in this work. I have also seen

the term increase in popularity. With definitions that are necessarily broad to be inclusive, the term 'students as partners' now encompasses an extremely wide range of work in which students collaborate with university staff. Indeed, in the first systematic literature review of students-as-partners, Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) found that – of the sampled literature that met the inclusion criteria – partnerships were most often extracurricular and implemented across a single institution rather than discipline-specific or curricular-focused. Although Cook-Sather, Matthews, et al. (2018, p. 3) describe the benefit of naming 'students to signal the inclusion of a group of people traditionally excluded from educational analysis and practice', they also note that naming only student partners – in the terminology of 'students as partners' – could undermine the aspirations of inclusion and equity, by assuming that staff do not need to be named or if the term signals that students work only temporarily 'as' partners.

Students-as-partners work is 'a re-positioning of the roles of students and staff in the learning endeavour, grounded in a values-based ethos' (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017, p. 2). In addition, engaging students as partners can be conceptualised by staff and students as a counter-narrative, a values-based practice, and/or a cultural change by advancing 'a process of renegotiating traditional positions, power arrangements, and ways of working in higher education' (Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018, p. 958). Furthermore, both terms 'students as partners' and 'co-creation of the curriculum' can advance counter-narratives to rhetoric focusing on neoliberal views of 'students as consumers' (Bovill et al., 2016; Cook-Sather, Matthews, et al., 2018; Wijaya Mulya, 2018). Of course, learning and teaching practices such as student engagement, student-centred learning, and autonomous learning are not new; however, they can be seen as foundational aspects of students-as-partners work and co-creation of the curriculum initiatives which are distinct because of their collaborative ethos. Although some forms of student engagement and student-centred learning may respect students and their views, they do not always afford opportunities for shared responsibility or reciprocity. For example, sharing responsibility is where students – in addition to staff – have a say in decision-making affecting their learning and teaching experiences, and there are often instances in which staff learn as much from students as students learn from them. Also, while autonomous learning suggests that students take responsibility for learning, co-creation of the curriculum suggests that students and staff share responsibility for learning and aspects of teaching in collaborative learning communities.

There have been numerous grass-roots efforts led by individual staff to implement co-creation of the curriculum, although these have tended to be small-scale and take place in North America, Australia, Scandinavia, and the UK (Bovill, 2014; Bovill & Woolmer, 2018; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). There are also several examples of institution-wide partnership projects enhancing learning and teaching (Dunne & Zanstra, 2011; Marie, 2018; Neary, 2014). That said, opportunities to engage in curriculum co-creation still occur relatively rarely across all higher education courses, programmes, and institution-wide projects since it can require significant changes with respect to both individual teaching approaches and wider academic cultural norms (Bovill, 2019; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018; Moore-Cherry, 2019). In the first systematic literature review of students-as-partners work, Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) identified 65 peer-reviewed publications worldwide between 2011 and 2015 meeting their inclusion criteria relating to 'students as partners' or similar terms within higher education. They have shown that examples are extremely diverse in who engages, how they engage, and what they engage with in higher education; however, in 92% of partnerships students partnered with academic staff (as compared to other partnerships with other students or with professional services staff) and the majority (59%) of examples were extracurricular (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017, p. 10). However, this could have resulted from the authors limiting the systematic literature review search term to 'students as partners' and not including other terms relating to curriculum co-creation, pedagogical partnership, participatory design, or enquiry-based learning.

Although Bovill (2019) suggests that partnership sometimes implies a greater sense of equality in the relationships between students and staff than in co-creation work, she notes that some academic staff can disengage from the rhetoric of partnership that can feel threatening to their practice. The majority of authors choose to use one term or the other without distinguishing between these concepts which are often overlapping in terms of the aims, processes, nature of relationships developed, and outcomes. I see partnership to be an 'umbrella term' (Cook-Sather, Matthews, et al., 2018) with one of the key differences being the focus of partnership in enhancing the wider student experience or the academic curriculum. I have drawn on the previously cited literature and the vast research explored in my literature review to show how I differentiate student engagement, student/staff partnerships, and co-creation of the

curriculum (see Figure 1). I will explore these topics further in the literature review chapter.

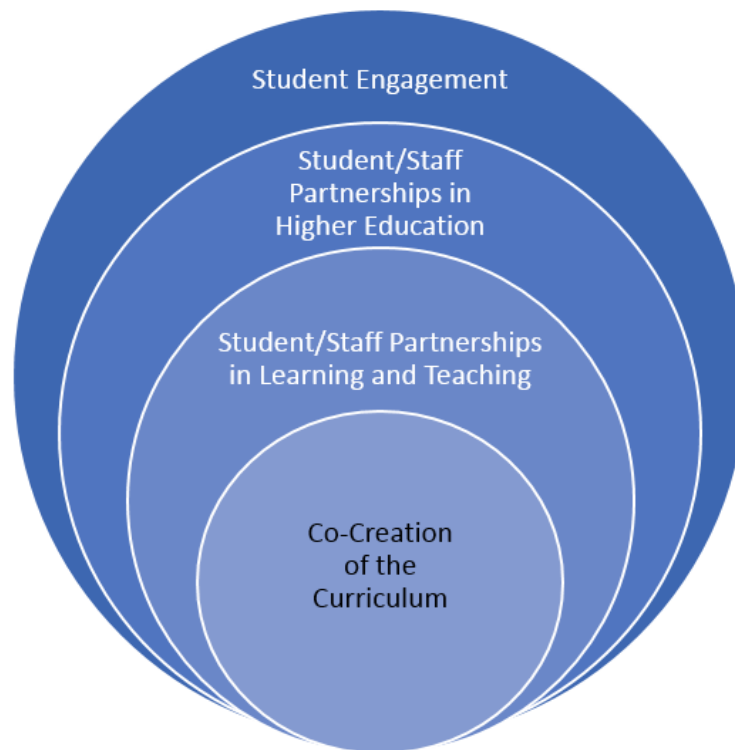


Figure 1: Differentiation of Student Engagement, Student/Staff Partnerships, and Co-Creation of the Curriculum

I have chosen to use the terminology of co-creation of the curriculum since it puts a clear focus on learning and teaching, although I sometimes use the terms interchangeably because, as seen in Figure 1, I view co-creation of the curriculum as a specific form of student/staff partnership. Co-creation of the curriculum was the first term with which I became familiar when I started my research in 2014 that served to delineate this form of relationship-based, collaborative work from the wide body of student engagement literature. I have positioned my work within the wider body of students as partners literature but I have preferred to use the terms ‘student/staff partnerships in higher education’ to signal partnership work that improves the wider student experience or ‘student/staff partnerships in learning and teaching’ to signal more specific partnerships focused on curricular enhancement. I have continued to use the term ‘co-creation of the curriculum’ since it clearly signifies an academic focus to collaborations around curriculum development and, now at this point, my body of work – including presentations, publications, and public engagement – is built around this term. In addition, drawing on the work of Bovill et al. (2016), Bovill and Woolmer

(2018) now distinguish between 'co-creation *of* the curriculum (co-design of a programme or course, usually *before* the programme or course begins) and co-creation *in* the curriculum (co-design of learning and teaching within a course or programme usually *during* the course or programme)'. While I now recognise that this is an important distinction, during the final stages of my research I took the decision not to revise my terminology throughout the thesis so both aspects of co-creation work are described here as 'co-creation of the curriculum' or 'curriculum co-creation'.

Rationale for the Study

Student/staff partnerships in co-creating higher education curricula have been an important area of development in recent years in the UK and internationally, particularly in North America and Australia (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, Dvorakova et al., 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Although the rhetoric of partnership has become increasingly prevalent in universities' learning and teaching strategies and quality enhancement processes (Quality Assurance Agency, 2012), genuine partnerships in curriculum development are rarely implemented in practice with students included and respected as active decision-makers (Bron, Bovill, & Veugelers, 2016).

At the time I began my PhD research in 2014, student engagement was an important area of focus in the higher education sector but the research and dialogue focusing on student/staff partnerships had not yet grown to what it is today with albeit niche but highly engaged networks. For example, the pivotal book *Engaging Students as Partners in Learning and Teaching: A Guide for Faculty* (Cook-Sather et al., 2014) had just been published that year but key groups and journals within the sector had not yet launched, including: the UK-based *Journal of Educational Innovation, Partnership & Change* (launched in 2015), the Researching, Advancing & Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE) *Student Engagement in Higher Education Journal* (the UK-based network began to develop in 2009 and the first issue of its journal was published in 2016), and the Canadian-based *International Journal for Students as Partners* (launched in 2017). These new journals as well as the RAISE community and the International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL) currently bring together international networks of staff and students who are passionate about collaborative ways of working and the benefits they can provide.

Drawing on my background in student representation and engagement of both staff and students in professional development opportunities to enhance learning and teaching, I was captivated by the idea of co-creating the curriculum when I first heard this term in 2014. This terminology labelled and made visible practices which had been occurring previously in higher education. In many ways, the concepts of student-centred learning, self-directed and autonomous learning, and student engagement are established aspects of 21st-Century learning and teaching (Astin, 1984b, 1993; Brooks & Grundy, 1988; Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991;

Shernoff, 2013). They are also foundational aspects of co-creation of the curriculum, which I see as a distinct form of student engagement – as described above – because it promotes different attitudes and ways of staff working with students in learning and teaching through enacting the core values of respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility (Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Although students and staff may each take on responsibilities for students' *learning* in traditional forms of learning and teaching, co-creation of the curriculum offers the opportunity for students and staff to share responsibility for aspects of not only learning but also aspects of *teaching*. Since it promotes greater student agency, it is also congruous – although not always overlapping – with enquiry-based learning, research-engaged curricula, and research-based education that share many of the same aims, benefits, and challenges (Marie, 2018; Moore-Cherry, 2019; Neary, 2014). Co-creating the curriculum is an active process of negotiating learning and teaching to benefit a particular learning community, whether it is an academic course within a subject area or a degree programme (Bron et al., 2016; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018).

Dunne (2016, p. 3) lists the following wide variety of terms used to describe students' roles when they are highly engaged in higher education, including co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects:

Students as Partners, Student Partnerships, Student-Staff Partnerships, Students as Researchers, Students as Co-Researchers, Students as Learners and Teachers, Students as Change Agents, Students as Change Makers, Student Fellows, Student Colleagues, Students as Producers/Co-Producers, Students as Co-creators, Students as Co-constructors of Knowledge, Students as Champions

Despite this wide range of terms, values and practices are often shared and 'students as partners' has emerged as one of the predominant labels that brings together practitioners and scholars working in these areas (Cook-Sather, Matthews, et al., 2018). I position my research on co-creation of the curriculum as part of the broad category of students as partners since I understand this term to represent the wide range of student/staff partnerships that seek to enhance many different aspects of the wider student experience in higher education. I value the similar nature and values of this work, but I use the term 'co-creation of the curriculum' as a way of highlighting student/staff partnerships focused on advancing the academic experience in a module, course, or programme. I consider the following terms to have slight nuances but they could be used almost interchangeably with the term 'co-creation of the

curriculum' since they encapsulate many of the same aspects: co-creation/co-production of learning and teaching; students as partners in curriculum development; students as pedagogical co-designers; and curriculum negotiation. I have chosen to use the term 'co-creation of the curriculum' since I feel it is one of the most concise, clear, and accessible terms for those outside this area of study to understand.

The rationale of my research was to understand staff members' and students' conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum, as well as the resulting challenges and benefits. I had previously noticed that both staff and students who engage in co-creation of the curriculum tend to be extremely enthusiastic about the experience and that, anecdotally, many students say that this is one of their best experiences in higher education. I wanted to explore whether this was the case more broadly while recognising that each co-creation project or course is unique depending on the nature of co-creation activities, the level of decision-making students gain, the engagement of both staff and students, and the types of working relationships they develop. Therefore, I aimed to learn from co-creation practitioners about their work to understand the nature of co-creation of the curriculum in higher education. I also wanted to engage other staff and students with the idea of co-creation to develop their awareness of the topic; learn about its challenges and benefits; and explore wider implementation of student/staff partnerships. I focused my work on the following research question: *In Scottish universities, how do undergraduate students and staff conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum, and how do these conceptualisations relate to their aims for students within higher education?*

I recognise the real challenges of engaging in co-creation of the curriculum at the micro, meso, and macro levels of higher education (Healey, Mason O'Connor, & Broadfoot, 2010), and I draw on theories of philosophy of education (Barnett, 2004; Barnett & Coate, 2004) and student development (Baxter Magolda, 1999) to show the positive impact of co-creation of the curriculum on individuals and their communities. My work continues to expand the findings cited in the literature regarding how co-creation of the curriculum contributes to students' personal and professional development (Bovill, Morss, & Bulley, 2009; Huxham, Hunter, McIntyre et al., 2015; Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017) and it explores the less-researched area of staff development that is often required for and also resulting from co-creating the curriculum. Furthermore, I explore the ways in

which co-creation of the curriculum can promote a 'pedagogy of play'. Farné (2005) uses this term to describe pedagogy that is both intentional and spontaneous, and Krug (2011) describes how a pedagogy of play develops a particular mindset by providing an approach to developing curricula that emphasises the exciting and creative processes of learning and teaching. I draw on their work to argue that the creativity and playful pedagogy inherent in curriculum co-creation can help develop resilience as students and staff challenge the status quo. Furthermore, they develop the knowledge, skills, and authentic *being* to deal with supercomplexity (Barnett, 2004, 2007) in today's ever-changing world.

My Positionality and Perspective

My part-time PhD research complements my full-time work in higher education to support students' and teachers' professional development. When I started my research, I was an Academic Engagement Coordinator working within Edinburgh University Students' Association promoting academic student representation and supporting students to develop their skills to collaborate with university staff to improve the student experience. I also worked closely with university staff across all disciplines to enhance the quality of learning and teaching. After I had completed the conceptualisation and data collection aspects of my study and while I was working on analysing the data, I began working as the Partnerships and Professional Learning Coordinator at the University of Edinburgh's Moray House School of Education and Sport. Throughout my career, I have explored how students and staff work to enhance student engagement and how student/staff partnerships can contribute to professional development opportunities. I aim to explore what impact the university experience and co-creation of the curriculum may have on students and staff, and how they can work together to promote student engagement and enhance the quality of learning and teaching in higher education.

While my study is not action research and does not put my own working practice at the centre of the study, my work in higher education is interconnected with my research; throughout, I have aimed to be reflexive and clear about my positionality. Like many others who research the broad area of student engagement (including curriculum co-creation), I take a constructivist stance 'based on the assumption that learning is a process of individual knowledge construction', building on previous knowledge to develop new understandings and make sense of the world (Coates,

2006, p. 25). My research also falls into the interpretivist tradition since I aim to understand and analyse students' and staff members' intentions and the motivations behind their behaviour and goals (Cousin, 2009). I make a number of assumptions, namely that student engagement is a critical aspect of the student experience to develop knowledge, skills, and self-authorship for their personal and professional lives. I also make the assumption that undergraduate students are highly capable. In common with the organisation Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs), I believe that students are experts in their own learning – they each understand how they learn most effectively and what motivates them to engage with learning – and, unlike most staff who attended university many years ago, students are experts in the experience of being a student in the 21st Century (sparqs, 2015). Furthermore, as with sparqs, the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), and Advance HE, I believe that developing partnerships between students and staff will promote student engagement and enhance the quality of learning and teaching (sparqs, 2015).

Since I was aware when I started my research that the field of co-creation of the curriculum is developing and advancing quickly, I was keen to share my work actively throughout my PhD. I have had the opportunity to present at eleven conferences ranging from A) the University of Edinburgh Learning and Teaching Conference to the national conferences B) Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain (PESBG 2016 and 2018) and C) Researching, Advancing & Inspiring Student Engagement (RAISE 2017), as well as a number of international conferences including: D) Higher Education Close Up Conference: Locating Social Justice in Close-Up Research in Higher Education (2016); E) JUnior REsearchers of EARLI (JURE 2017) Conference; and F) International Society for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (ISSOTL 2018). These opportunities to present my work and initial findings provided formative, developmental opportunities for me to gain feedback on my research, and they also inspired me to start publishing. My publications have contributed to the international, scholarly debate around co-creation of the curriculum and students-as-partners work in learning and teaching (Dyer & Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019; Felten, Abbot, Kirkwood et al., 2019; Hancock & Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019a, 2019b; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Simoni, 2018). In addition, it has been important for me to engage with and share my work with the academic community and the wider public via an academic blog and Twitter.

Engaging in these activities has helped me develop strong networks in my field and learn from colleagues in this quickly-evolving area.

Scope and Limitations of the Study

My research question lends itself to qualitative methods and to critical inquiry to learn about the nuanced nature of student and staff conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum, the benefits and challenges of engaging, and how it may help further individuals' aims for students in higher education. I wanted to research co-creation of the curriculum within one, discrete higher education context due to the need to limit the scope of my study. While recognising the part-time nature of my PhD research and the responsibilities of my work role, I focused on examples of co-creation of the curriculum in Scotland. As compared to the three-year undergraduate degree programme structure in England which can be more constrained, the Scottish four-year degree model may provide learning opportunities that can lend themselves to being co-created. Although Cook-Sather et al. (2014) collate a wide range of examples of co-creation of learning and teaching and Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) provide an extensive literature review on students-as-partners work internationally, there were not enough examples of co-creation of the curriculum in Scotland to incorporate quantitative methods in a meaningful way at the time I began my research. I was able to identify twenty projects at Scottish universities – using publications, conference presentations, and word of mouth – which I categorised as co-creation of the curriculum. There may have been a wider number and variety of co-creation projects of which I was not aware, and I was only able to include projects which were shared actively and made visible within the sector. However, this excluded individuals who, for whatever reason, were not actively sharing their co-creation work which can often take place behind classroom walls. Therefore, the small sample size resulted from the availability of staff and students sharing authentic co-creation-of-the-curriculum initiatives beyond their university, although more examples may have existed.

The 15 co-creation projects included in my research varied considerably and took place across various subject areas. These ranged from medicine and veterinary studies to science (geoscience and biology) to social sciences (politics, sociology, social work, and education), and humanities (philosophy). Although there were no examples here from the arts, this area are also ripe for co-creation opportunities.

Examples that included selected students were extracurricular projects with: (a) students serving as external consultants helping staff improve teaching and learning; (b) students and staff co-creating educational resources. Examples of projects including the whole class in graded courses are: (a) co-created grading criteria; (b) co-created aspects of assessment such as exam questions; (c) staff-supported, student-led peer teaching embedded into graded courses; and (d) co-created community projects which varied in nature, duration, and subject area but included teaching projects at local primary schools, service-learning projects, and science outreach projects with community partners. Despite this wide variety of co-creation work, trends surfaced: academic staff tended to lead the co-created projects; students tended to engage as either a whole cohort during the course, or as selected students who excelled in a course and later engaged in learning and teaching partnership projects; and students tended to benefit from course credit rather than payment for their work.

The lack of diversity in the selection of student co-creators has been identified as a challenge across the wider landscape of students-as-partners initiatives (Bindra, Easwaran, Firasta et al., 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). This also appears to be the case in my study. I used snowball sampling with staff co-creators identifying and referring student co-creators to participate in my study. Nine of the eleven student co-creators were British, two were mature students, and all appeared to be white. Twelve of the thirteen staff co-creators were British, and all appeared to be white. Although there appeared to be socio-economic diversity among participants, the lack of cultural diversity was apparent. Student and staff co-creators were also not generally representative of the populations of students and staff in Scottish universities in terms of their levels of engagement with learning, teaching, and the wider higher education community: all appeared to be highly engaged and self-motivated, often self-selecting to engage in co-creation projects. Despite these limitations, my research provides an interpretivist account of conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum across a variety of initiatives within the Scottish higher education sector, with the aim of facilitating dialogue about upscaling these initiatives to become more prevalent and inclusive.

Chapter Outline

Below I provide an overview of the chapters to come, summarising each to help the reader understand the structure and organisation of my thesis:

- In Chapter 2, I present my literature review focusing on the valuable work that has provided a foundation for my research. I start by describing aims of higher education, starting with the ideals of early Scottish universities that connect closely with the aims of many staff co-creators to have a positive impact on both individuals (by inspiring students) and on wider society (by advancing knowledge and developing students' wider capacities to contribute democratically). I provide a background to 21st-Century educational research ranging from the massification of higher education to theories of student development and from student-centred learning to notions of teaching excellence. I go on to examine definitions and conceptualisations of student engagement and co-creation of the curriculum. Next, I look at how ways of understanding and viewing the higher education curriculum can affect how this curriculum can be co-created.
- In Chapter 3, I describe how I used qualitative research methodology to seek to answer my research question and sub-questions. This focuses on Phase 1 of the data collection with staff and student co-creation practitioners at five Scottish universities. Subsequently I focused data collection with individuals who were not necessarily involved in co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects, including students (during Phase 2) and staff (during Phase 3). Incorporating arts-based methods and deliberative democratic methods of co-inquiry with student co-researchers were valuable aspects my research design. I discuss how the three phases of data collection that interwove various methods each contributed in valuable ways to the vast qualitative data gathered before describing how I used elements of constructivist grounded theory to analyse the wealth of data.
- I present my findings in the form of themes from my data analysis in Chapters 4 through 8, presenting the breadth of valuable data that helps clarify more about how and why staff and students engage in co-creation of the curriculum.

- In Chapter 4, I begin to present my analysis of the data, starting with conceptualisations of individuals' values and aims in higher education. This starts with reflections on how arts-based methods incorporated into focus group discussions led to very valuable qualitative data with participants articulating their aims for students. Themes include: students' personal and professional development; confidence; critical and independent thinking; employability and career direction; passion for lifelong learning; civic engagement; and character and values.
- In Chapter 5, I analyse participants' conceptualisations of student engagement, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of staff and students to promote engagement.
- In Chapter 6, I look specifically at participants' conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum as a values-based practice that promotes high levels of both student and staff engagement in the enjoyment of learning and teaching and in collaborative negotiations.
- In Chapter 7, I analyse the benefits of co-creation of the curriculum focusing on engagement, enjoyment, and fulfilment from learning and teaching; student personal and professional development; staff development; and the broader senses of impact for students and staff.
- In Chapter 8, I depict thematic trends of challenges with co-creating the curriculum. These challenges centre around: academic culture and priorities; academic structures, processes, workload, and sustainability; risks for staff; and risks for students.
- In my discussion in Chapter 9, I focus on six key themes that emerged, including: 1) high levels of both student and staff engagement; 2) new ways of working in learning and teaching; 3) student and staff identities in a space between traditional learner and teacher roles; 4) the impact of their innovative work and self-authorship on their civic engagement within and beyond the university; 5) new conceptualisations of curriculum co-creation; 6) and how curriculum co-creation may advance participants' aims in higher education.
- I conclude my thesis in Chapter 10 by discussing the significance and implications of my research, as well as making recommendations.

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Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I synthesise literature relevant to my work, including higher education theories and conceptualisations of student engagement, student/staff partnerships, and curriculum co-creation. I cover a wide range of relevant bodies of literature in: aims of higher education, themes in 21st Century higher education, student engagement, co-creation of the curriculum and pedagogic partnership, and the higher education curriculum. I conducted a rigorous review of a wide range of literature to understand key themes and how they relate to my research. To do this, I have been guided by my research supervisors, colleagues active in researching higher education partnerships, and key citations within other seminal and highly relevant higher education and student engagement literature. Although it was outside of the scope of this research to conduct a systematic review of all literature relating to higher education research, student engagement, and curriculum co-creation and partnership, I have drawn on established processes for conducting a rapid review of the literature in a systematic manner, which I explain in the section Co-Creation of the Curriculum and Pedagogic Partnerships.

Aims of Higher Education

There are a wide variety of different views on the aims of higher education, which I start to address in this section. The first Scottish universities were founded in the 1400s with 'traditional democratic character' and a strong focus on student-centred learning, teaching, and educational enhancement (Morgan, 1933, p. 53). In contrast to the English three-year undergraduate degree model, the Scottish four-year degree includes both depth and breadth (including aspects of liberal arts study of subjects outside the main degree or dual degree programme). Despite the focus on using lectures as the means of gaining knowledge in the early years of Scottish universities which also continues today, student voice was also important as they also learnt to engage, debate, and think critically about a wide range of liberal arts subjects including Latin, Greek, mathematics, natural philosophy, logic, and moral philosophy (Janin, 2008; Morgan, 1933). Morgan (1933, p. 196) notes that research, in addition to teaching, only became an important function in Scottish universities in the early 1900s with the aim of having 'the utmost benefit on their teaching functions'. He continues:

There is little to inspire students in class-teaching which repeats the same information year after year in the same stereotyped way. Conventional teaching is never inspiring. ...Hence the teacher should keep his interest in his subject fresh by himself making researches and investigations in connexion [sic] with it.

I agree with Morgan that 'conventional teaching' or lecturing without engaging students – in relation to teaching methods or providing relevant, up-to-date subject knowledge – does not tend to motivate learning or inspire students. It is helpful to see how the addition of research to university staff responsibilities was implemented with the key aim of furthering students' engagement with teaching to help it come alive. Despite this aim, Conroy and Smith (2017) analyse how the advent of the UK Research Excellence Framework with associated resources from national funding councils has created the conditions where research has '...come to colonize the academic mind and imagination' (p. 694) and facilitated an acceptance of 'alazony' (p. 704) by describing the arrogance and self-aggrandisement of those academics who focus on research to the detriment of teaching. However, this is the antithesis of the aims of early Scottish universities as Morgan (1933, p. 53) describes:

If Universities aim merely at providing higher education they fail in one of their important functions, namely, to develop the whole personality of their students, and to cultivate a feeling of attachment to the University and the ideals for which it stands.

In addition to advancing understanding of knowledge, it is striking to see Morgan reflect on the wider aims of Scottish universities to support students' personal and professional development, develop their character to stand for the ideals of the university, and contribute positively to democratic society.

Similarly, John Dewey and Albert Einstein each suggested that the purpose of education generally is the development of civic responsibility. For instance, Dewey (1934) states: 'The purpose of education has always been to every one, in essence, the same – to give the young, the things they need in order to develop in an orderly, sequential way into members of society.' Similarly, in his address 'On Education', Einstein (1936, p. 1) suggests:

Sometimes one sees in the school simply the instrument for transferring a certain maximum quantity of knowledge to the growing generation. But that is not right. Knowledge is dead; the school, however, serves the living. It should develop in the young individuals those qualities and capabilities which are of value for the welfare of the commonwealth. ...[T]he aim must be the training of independently acting and thinking individuals, who, however, see in the service of the community their highest life problem.

In contrast to Einstein's aims, many academic staff today continue to focus on conveying content knowledge as their main priority in teaching (Lattuca & Stark, 2009), which resembles the concept of 'banking' applied to education in which teachers fill students with knowledge (Freire, 1972). However, in the 1930s, both Dewey and Einstein highlighted that the purpose of higher education should be to help individuals develop as critical thinkers who serve their community and contribute meaningfully to society.

Not dissimilarly, some philosophers and writers including Lempert (1996), Putnam (2000), Kreber (2002, 2007, 2014), Sullivan and Rosin (2008), and Brooks (2015) have re-invigorated the debate about the importance of developing in individuals a sense of moral commitment, social responsibility, and civic responsibility. The literature on universities' 'third mission' – going beyond the primary two missions of teaching and research – also highlights the aim of higher education contributing to social progress through civic engagement (Pinheiro, Langa, & Pausits, 2015b; Predazzi, 2012; Rinaldi, Cavicchi, Spigarelli et al., 2018). For example, Pinheiro, Langa, and Pausits (2015a, p. 227) describe the third mission and state: 'In the last decade or so, calls for a re-engagement of the university in helping to tackle the great challenges facing societies and local communities have propelled the third mission to the forefront of policy discussions–this time under the mantra of "relevance" and "social impact"'.

Barnett (1992) suggests that the quality of higher education is ultimately associated with individuals' fundamental values and views about the purposes of higher education. He outlines four dominant views of the purpose of higher education as: 1) development of qualified employees, 2) training for research careers, 3) efficient management of teaching, and 4) extending opportunities for those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Barnett, 1992, pp. 18-19). In 1992, Barnett suggested that universities in the UK were principally associated with purpose 2 (or perhaps 1 or 3), and that polytechnics were associated with purposes 1, 3, or 4. Around the same time, Astin (1993) cited trends in the US of students believing that the purpose of higher education was to increase earning power, but he also found that, after studying at higher education level, fewer students maintained this notion. Drawing on his theory of student involvement, Astin (1984a) previously suggested that the purpose of higher education is students' talent development, which could be associated with purposes

1 or 2 above. Barnett (1992) highlights that each of these four purposes of higher education can be measured relatively easily through quality assurance processes that analyse universities' quantitative inputs and outputs.

By contrast to these first four purposes of higher education outlined above, Barnett (1992, pp. 20-21) also outlines four 'alternative conceptions' that are meant to develop in students: 1) autonomy and intellectual integrity, 2) general intellectual abilities and perspectives, 3) personal character, and 4) competence as citizens who think critically about the society in which they live. These alternative views about the purposes of higher education have not traditionally been included in quality assurance processes since they focus on educational processes that take place within students and are associated with their development. However, these four aims generally include the development of students as individuals and their moral and civic responsibilities as members of society (Barnett & Coate, 2004; Baxter Magolda, 1999; Brooks, 2015; Dewey, 1938/1998; Einstein, 1936; Kreber, 2014; Lempert, 1996; Putnam, 2000; Sullivan & Rosin, 2008).

Furthermore, Trowler and Trowler (2010, p. 8) summarise trends in the literature on student engagement focused on improving the following 'desirable outcomes' of higher education: developing students' general abilities and critical thinking skills; practical competence and skills transferability; cognitive development; self-esteem, psychosocial development, productive racial and gender identity formation; moral and ethical development; student satisfaction; and accrual of social capital. Developing students' knowledge, skills, and authentic *being* tend to be a concise way of describing these 'alternative' purposes of higher education; furthermore, as emphasised in Western universities, 'Critical thought... invokes all three domains of knowing, acting and being, and does so simultaneously' (Barnett & Coate, 2004, pp. 54-55). Therefore, within these alternative aims of higher education is students' transformation as they develop their identity, critical thinking skills, and self-authorship to engage in and strengthen their graduate attributes of knowing, acting, and *being*. In addition, Johansson and Felten (2014, pp. 1-2) suggest:

What higher education can do, what we must do, is prepare students for a life of continuing change and development. Our purpose is to help students both transform themselves and understand the process of transformation so that they are well-equipped to embrace change and flourish after they graduate.

Bryson (2014a, p. 1) states similar views: 'The goal of HE being about enabling the individual to learn and develop in powerful and transformative ways.'

Liberal arts education expands many of these alternative aims of higher education and reconnects with the original aims in the Scottish system (Morgan, 1933). Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, p. 164) list many different aspects of the liberal arts education:

That broader mission has defined education to include increased self-understanding; expansion of personal, intellectual, cultural, and social horizons and interests; liberation from dogma, prejudice, and narrow-mindedness; development of personal moral and ethical standards; preparation for useful and productive employment and membership in a democratic society; and the general enhancement of the quality of graduates' postcollege [and post-university] lives.

Therefore, the purposes of a liberal arts higher education encompass individuals' intellectual, moral, and civic growth and development which benefit not only the individual but also society at large. Kuh (2008, p. 14) elaborates on this broad concept by outlining essential learning outcomes from a liberal arts education as including: knowledge of human cultures and the physical and natural world, intellectual and practical skills, personal and social responsibility, and integrative and applied learning development.

Themes in 21st Century Higher Education

This section covers key themes of 21st Century higher education research including: the massification of higher education; student development; 21st Century learning for a quickly changing world; student-centred learning, creativity, and the student experience; Third Spaces in higher education, and notions of teaching excellence.

Massification of Higher Education

Since the 1960s and 1970s, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students attending university, which some call the 'massification' of higher education (Barnett & Coate, 2004; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). In addition to the shift from educating small numbers of elites to educating large numbers of diverse students, Barnett (1992, p. 5) highlights other key changes in the sector including the shift in higher education being intrinsically valued as a cultural apparatus of society to becoming part of its economic apparatus, and the shift towards a global society which is strongly influenced by the development of public and strategic policies.

Furthermore, as I found in my Master's dissertation research (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2011), the diversification and internationalisation of higher education can promote the possibility of cosmopolitanism by intentionally facilitating students' globally-oriented, open-minded attitudes and providing opportunities to excel in their personal and professional lives in a globalised world.

Student Development

Since the 1960s and 1970s, several theories have been advanced regarding university students' psycho-social development (Chickering, 1969; Erikson, 1968; Perry, 1970). Theories of student development provide frameworks for understanding the growth of their self-understanding, self-awareness, and appreciation of their own views and those of others (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). Furthermore, higher education researchers such as Heath (1977) and Baxter Magolda (1999) drew on Kegan's work (1982) in constructivist developmental psychology to explore university students' self-actualisation and self-authorship. Baxter Magolda (1999, p. 10) suggests that 'Self-authorship is simultaneously a cognitive (how one makes meaning of knowledge), interpersonal (how one views oneself in relationship to others), and intrapersonal (how one perceives one's sense of identity) matter.'

While Baxter Magolda comes from an American, psycho-social-developmental tradition of student transformation, Barnett independently developed a complementary, existentialist concept of *being* from a European, philosophical perspective. Barnett (2004, p. 523) believes that *being* includes an individual's human qualities, dispositions, attitudes, and sense of identity or self: 'Neither knowledge nor skills are enough to prosper in the contemporary world, confidence and other senses of being are needed (a sense of the student's self and the world around them).' Whilst self-authorship and *being* are each intricate aspects of an individual's identity, they have nuanced differences since self-authorship is a particular form of authentic, critical *being*.

21st Century Learning for a Quickly Changing World

Both Baxter Magolda and Barnett highlight that, in the 21st Century, individuals need to develop self-authorship and a sense of authentic *being* to cope with an ever-changing, unknown future which is characterised by supercomplexity. For instance, Baxter Magolda (1999, p. xxi) suggests:

Survival in the 21st century requires flexibility, adaptability, the capacity to negotiate between one's own and others' needs, and the ability to cope with rapid change, ambiguity, diversity and complexity. If we expect our graduates to be leaders—in their work, personal lives, and communities—they need to achieve self-authorship.

Similarly, Barnett (2004, p. 247) states: '...learning for an unknown future has to be a learning understood neither in terms of knowledge or skills but of human qualities and dispositions.' Both Baxter Magolda and Barnett stress the importance of students developing self-authorship and authentic *being* since they encompass attitudes, qualities, dispositions, and graduate attributes (rather than solely knowledge and skills that can become outdated) which help graduates to excel as individuals and as members of robust societies (Kreber, 2014). Furthermore, Kreber (2014) shows that students who develop authentic *being* exhibit three different graduate attributes including (1) an openness to new experiences, uncertainty, and risk which Barnett shows that students develop as individuals; and also (2) moral commitment and (3) social responsibility which help students develop as members of society. The latter two graduate attributes are elements within curricula that are often influenced by the implicit beliefs of staff and which are not fully acknowledged. My work is strongly influenced by these concepts since I believe they highlight the importance of higher education in helping students develop as individuals, as professionals, as citizens, and as members of a global community.

Student-Centred Learning, Creativity, and the Student Experience

In the past half century, there has been a shift (in theory but not always widely in practice) away from teacher-focused methods of teaching in higher education towards 'student-centred' teaching and 'active learning' in the 1990s (Astin, 1993; Gibbs, 1995; Lempert, 1996), then towards 'student engagement' in the 2000s (Kuh, 2008, 2010; Lattuca & Stark, 2009), and 'student-staff partnerships' and 'co-creation of the curriculum' in the 2010s (Advance HE, 2019; Bovill, 2013a; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). Furthermore, now, more than ever, knowledge is widely available not only via books and journals but especially online.

The themes of imagination, play, and creativity are becoming increasingly prominent in the literature with respect to their contributions to students' problem-solving skills (Keevers, 2016; Lille & Romero, 2017; Marquis, Radan, & Liu, 2017). For example, Brown (2010, pp. 17-18) describes key aspects of play: it is pursued for its own sake with inherent interest and decreased self-consciousness, within its own boundaries of

time and space, and with increased potential for improvisation and improved socialisation. He suggests that play advances learning and development through exploration, anticipation, emotional engagement, adaptability, innovation, and resilience since 'It is about bending the rules of thought, action, and behavior' (Brown, 2010, p. 193). Blatner and Blatner (1988) also describe how play encourages individuals to take on different roles in different realms, encouraging attitudes and practices of play on different levels as equals when individuals are reminded of subjective and emotional aspects of experiencing play as a process. A 'pedagogy of play' is a particular approach to learning and teaching that is underpinned by 'creating a culture that values the core tenets of play: taking risks, making mistakes, exploring new ideas, and experiencing joy' (Mardell, Wilson, Ryan et al., 2016, p. 2). In addition, creativity can reframe and enhance current educational practices to engage students who learn in different ways (Eisner, 2004; Gee, 2003) and help them learn about differences while drawing new connections (Chappell & Craft, 2011). Developing empathy, compassion, and care are also noted as important aspects of higher education (Bozalek, Mitchell, Dison et al., 2016; Chappell & Craft, 2011; Martin, 2018; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018) as well as the recognition of the role that emotions can play in more creative forms of learning and teaching that also embrace the productive struggles embedded within academic challenges (Felten, 2017; Hill, Healey, West et al., 2019; Lennon, Riley, & Monk, 2018; Marquis, Redda, & Twells, 2018). As Albert Einstein said, 'Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited; imagination encircles the world' (Einstein as cited in Calaprice, 1996). The role of the 21st Century university is not only to provide students with knowledge; its role is to help students use their imagination and apply the knowledge, skills, and sense of authentic *being* that they develop by becoming part of a university's academic community.

At the same time that higher education is increasingly seen as influential in supporting students' development as individuals and as the key innovators who will shape the future of the global society, higher education funding has also been challenged. Although undergraduate tuition fees are subsidised by the Scottish Government, students still face high living costs to invest time in their university studies. With the introduction of higher tuition fees of £9,000 per year for students from the rest of the UK (RUK) – England, Wales, and Northern Ireland – and ever-increasing tuition fees for international students, there has been increased discussion of 'students as

consumers' (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Hanesworth & Millar, 2014). Economic pressure has forced governments, higher education funding bodies, as well as individuals and their families to examine how university affects students, especially in developing their knowledge, values, behaviour, and employability (Astin, 1993). As a result, researchers including Pascarella and Terenzini (1991), Astin (1993), and Kuh (2010) have each conducted large-scale, quantitative research studies in the United States focusing on the impact of the student experience. Now what is needed is a more nuanced understanding of how student engagement and co-creation of the curriculum can help students achieve the intended aims of 21st-Century higher education, which is what I investigate in my research.

Third Spaces in Higher Education

The pioneering work of Bhabha (2004, p. 2) on Third Space is now being used in a variety of social sciences to draw attention to valuable 'in-between' spaces that can challenge traditional forms of power to foster equity and social justice. One key area of Third Space in 21st Century higher education is in online learning environments that develop virtual learning spaces that can present different spaces for discourse and community (Marshalsey & Sclater, 2018; Potter & McDougall, 2017). Furthermore, Potter and McDougall (2017, p. 85) suggest that students and staff can push against traditional hierarchies when there is an exchange of 'porous expertise' in a Third Space 'between students' mediated cultures and the culture of the classroom... [when] the epistemological frames of reference for "what counts" as knowledge are genuinely co-constructed.'

The Third Space can facilitate what others have referred to as a *zone of proximal development*. For example, Vygotsky (1978, p. 86) used this term to describe the distance between an individual's actual development and their potential development when learning with guidance from others in problem-solving. Later, Gutierrez (2008, pp. 148-149) used this term to highlight the intentionality of creating a Third Space with a particular social environment for pedagogy that fosters development, equity, and social justice by drawing out individuals' sense of shared humanity whilst celebrating difference through meaningful exchanges within a learning community.

This type of learning environment has strong synergies with co-creation and partnership work, and there is growing discussion in the literature of how this work

can be characterised as operating within, further developing, and embracing Third Spaces in higher education. For example, Hill, Thomas, Diaz et al. (2016, p. 375) discuss 'borderland spaces for learning partnership... [that] are novel, challenging, permissive and liminal, destabilising traditional power hierarchies'. These liminal spaces can present new ways of working, open up vulnerabilities, and challenge pre-concieved notions but they also present opportunities for individual transformation as well as cultural change for universities (Barrineau & Anderson, 2018; Hill et al., 2016; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018). A new special section of the *International Journal of Students as Partners* – which I contributed to – has also made a significant contribution to the literature on how students-as-partners work can represent Third Spaces in higher education (Barrineau & Anderson, 2018; Burns, Sinfield, & Abegglen, 2019; Kligyte, Baumber, van der Bijl-Brouwer et al., 2019; Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019b).

Teaching Excellence

During the course of my doctoral research, the UK Government has introduced the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in England (with the option for universities in Scotland and other nations to adopt this). The introduction of the TEF has increased debates by staff and, to a lesser extent, students across the UK about the definitions of and assumptions behind the notion of teaching excellence as well as approaches to its evaluation (Greatbatch & Holland, 2016). There is a wide body of literature on academics' conceptions of teaching excellence, academic quality, and indicators of student success in higher education (Astin, 1984a, 1993; Barnett, 1992; Johansson & Felten, 2014; Kreber, 2007; Kuh, 2008, 2010; MacFarlane, 2007; Percy & Salter, 1976; Skelton, 2007). Student perceptions of teaching quality, as measured through the proxy of the UK National Student Survey, are core metrics used in the TEF, although there is a lack of research on student perceptions of teaching excellence with exceptions including research by Bradley, Kirby, and Madriaga (2015), Jensen, Adams, and Strickland (2014), Foster and Southwell-Sander (2014), and my recent co-authored research (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019). It is clear that teaching excellence is a contested concept with various definitions and conceptualisations (Bradley et al., 2015; Madriaga & Morley, 2016). For instance, Barnett (1992) explores many different perspectives on what high quality academic experiences can be and Kuh (2008) highlights indicators of high-impact educational practices.

Like Skelton (2007), I make the assumption that: teaching excellence is a 'good thing' which promotes excellent learning, different forms of teaching excellence can coexist and benefit different students, and all teachers have the capacity to improve their teaching and work towards teaching excellence given the appropriate support. Whilst it can be difficult to know exactly what factors in higher education prove to be transformational in helping students develop their abilities – as compared to other experiences outside of higher education that could also do the same (Astin, 1993; Percy & Salter, 1976) – focusing on students' perspectives can help us to learn what – in their view – helps them learn, improve their abilities, and excel in higher education and beyond (Bron et al., 2016; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Gannon-Leary, Dordoy, McGlenn et al., 2011).

Skelton (2007; cited in MacFarlane, 2007) outlines four perceptions of teaching excellence: traditional excellence emphasises mastery of knowledge and logic within a disciplinary area; performative excellence highlights individuals' abilities to excel in employment; psychologised excellence focuses on students' development of deep learning skills; and critical excellence empowers students to participate as critical thinkers who question time-honoured knowledge. Some scholars such as Kreber (2007) and MacFarlane (2007) suggest that the dominant discourses of teaching excellence highlight the purpose of higher education to be a means of benefiting the government or the economy; however, they suggest that the discourse of teaching excellence should shift to emphasise critical excellence and a fifth form – moral excellence – to place our focus rightly on students who are at the heart of the higher education sector. Kreber (2007, p. 237) describes moral excellence in teaching as the authentic motivation of teachers 'to do what is good' and, first and foremost, 'to do what is in the best interest of learners'.

While drawing on the theoretical work by Skelton (2007), MacFarlane (2007) and Kreber (2007), I previously found that student engagement work including curriculum co-creation and student/staff partnerships were often seen by students as ways of exemplifying teaching excellence by advancing student-centred practices that respect students' agency (Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019). In a smaller-scale analysis of teaching award nominations at another university, Foster and Southwell-Sander (2014, p. 150) also found that:

Outstanding teachers are enthusiastic tutors who communicate well and who set challenging learning. They care about their students and help to

develop or provide a sense of belonging. Outstanding teachers are guides through the HE environment who are also experts in their subject. Similar findings are advanced by Bradley et al. (2015) who highlight three main themes of student perceptions of inspirational and transformative teaching as: student engagement (including engaging teaching style, passion for the subject area and enthusiasm); rapport with students (including consistent support and approachability); and vocation (including being inspiring, professional and well organised). Co-creation practices often value students' input at a higher level as compared to other forms of student engagement by prioritising moral excellence in teaching and developing strong rapport and an ethic of care between students and staff. My research explores the extent to which this is the case by analysing how conceptualisations of co-creation relate to student and staff aims in higher education.

Student Engagement

Definitions of Student Engagement

The wide-ranging literature on student engagement shows how broad this concept is, varying by researchers' schools of thought and context. Trowler (2010) describes how researchers use many different definitions for student engagement, although many avoid defining the term because they assume a shared understanding. The work of John Dewey (1938/1998) in the early 1900s is an important starting point for examining student engagement; he provides the initial claim that educational experiences depend on both external and internal conditions, with students' attitudes and external learning environments both affecting their learning experiences. Astin (1984b, p. 518) defines the similar term *student involvement* as the 'the amount of physical and psychological energy that the student devotes to the academic experience' which can take many forms including academic and extracurricular engagement. Similarly, Shernoff (2013, p. 12) defines student engagement with formal and informal learning as:

...the heightened, simultaneous experience of concentration, interest, and enjoyment in the task at hand... [M]ost importantly, the definition is based completely in the experiences of students, so that engagement may be considered as a learning experience, one to be valued in its own right.

Shernoff does not explain how to measure student engagement if it is situated in the experience of different learners, although he describes various benefits of engaging. While Shernoff does not prescribe how students should behave, Astin (1984b) suggests behaviours demonstrating higher engagement and claims that greater levels

of students' energy and investment in their learning lead to greater student development.

Astin (1984a, 1984b) and Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) were some of the pioneers in researching and theorising student involvement in their learning. Astin (1984b, p. 522) claims:

...the theory of student involvement argues that a particular curriculum, to achieve the effects intended, must elicit sufficient student effort and investment of energy to bring about the desired learning and development. Simply exposing the student to a particular set of courses may or may not work.

Therefore, staff need to engage students in their academic experience so that students are motivated to devote the time and effort required for meaningful learning and growth. From his subsequent large-scale quantitative research of student involvement, Astin (1993) suggests that student satisfaction (and, by extension, greater student involvement and development) are strongly affected by creating a sense of academic community and a high level of interaction both with academic staff and other students. Astin found that student-student interaction is the strongest individual influence on student growth and development, followed by student-staff interaction. Similarly, Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) suggest that student engagement and staff accessibility to, and interaction with, students were associated with effective teaching. However, large lecture classes often don't allow for enough student interaction with their peers or with staff to create a sense of academic community and, consequently, lectures don't foster the student engagement which is correlated with students' satisfaction and their intellectual and personal growth at university.

Whilst it is important that student engagement is based in students' own experiences, I agree with Coates (2006), Kuh (2010), and Bryson (2014a) that both students and staff should be responsible for fostering student engagement. Coates (2006) suggests:

...the concept of student engagement is based on the constructivist assumption that learning is influenced by how an individual participates in educationally purposeful activities. Learning is seen as a 'joint proposition,' however, which also depends on institutions and staff providing students with the conditions, opportunities and expectations to become involved. However, individual learners are ultimately the agents in discussions of engagement.

Perhaps because students are named in the term 'student engagement', the onus of engagement is often placed upon students but it is important to highlight the responsibilities of staff in facilitating engagement. Kuh (2009, p. 683) defines student engagement as '...the time and effort students devote to activities that are empirically linked to desired outcomes of college [or university] *and* what institutions do to induce students to participate in these activities'. Unlike others who place the onus on students, I believe it is essential that staff actively facilitate opportunities for students' engagement with their learning experience, and that they are supported by structures and processes within their institutions to do so. For me, effective student engagement suggests a partnership between students and staff to develop a learning community that facilitates students' learning and success.

Forms of Student Engagement

Trowler (2010) highlights that it is important for those researching student engagement to pay attention to how students are engaging. Drawing on what has come to be known as Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom, 1956; Krathwohl, Bloom, & Masia, 1964) Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) provide a three-pronged framework for student engagement including behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement that can be either positive, 'neutral', or negative. Positive engagement is understood as engaging with desired learning opportunities and activities, while negative engagement is active resistance to them, for whatever reason. Krause (2005) uses the term 'inertia' to describe some students' neutral engagement – which is distinct from disengagement – and can be seen through non-attendance or non-participation in learning activities due to a failure to self-motivate.

The framework of levels and types of engagement presented by Fredricks et al. does not tend to give agency to students and focuses on helping staff assess students' engagement from without. However, it is helpful in providing another perspective: students may be engaged deeply and internally with their learning even though they may not appear (from outside) to be engaged behaviourally. Cognitive engagement with educationally purposeful activities is understandably important, deepening understanding of the academic subject and advancing learning objectives (Ashwin, Abbas, & McLean, 2014; Astin, 1993; Barnett & Coate, 2004; Kuh, 2008). However, students' emotional engagement including motivation (Baxter Magolda, 1999; Fung, 2017; Gee, 2003; Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) and a 'will to learn' (Barnett, 2007)

are equally important. Teachers' emotional engagement also has an important role to play in facilitating students' emotional engagement, since they recognise that 'The message from students is clear: if we want to engage them, then subject expertise is far less important than enthusiasm, passion, and authentic engagement' (Foster & Southwell-Sander, 2014, p. 150). Emotional engagement also appears to be correlated with feelings of belonging within a learning community since positive working relationships and feeling that others care can affect engagement (Chadwick, 2014; Foster & Southwell-Sander, 2014; Furlonger, Johnson, & Parker, 2014). In addition, the role of learning communities and relationships amongst peers and between students and staff has been increasingly recognised in enhancing behavioural, emotional, and cognitive engagement (Bryson, 2014a; Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018).

Other groundbreaking work in the literature of student engagement includes Chickering and Gamson's 'Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education' (1987, p. 3) which drew on a wide range of existing research to argue that effective undergraduate education:

1. Encourages contacts between students and faculty.
2. Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students.
3. Uses active learning techniques.
4. Gives prompt feedback.
5. Emphasizes time on task.
6. Communicates high expectations.
7. Respects diverse talents and ways of learning.

These seven principles are some of the most widely used indicators of student engagement. For example, Kuh and colleagues have drawn heavily on them to develop the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) which was piloted in 1999 and has been implemented widely since 2000. Its variations which are now used widely in the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa. Despite this widespread use, critiques of these surveys are that: they can only be a proxy for levels of student engagement; the closed survey questions do not give voice to students and limit their agency; and the standardisation of questions can obscure the richness and diversity of students' different experiences in higher education (Bryson, 2014a).

Kuh (2008, pp. 19-21) suggests that the way to achieve student success in university is through designing high-impact educational practices that promote student engagement, including: participation in common intellectual experiences, learning

communities, undergraduate research, collaborative assignments and projects, global learning, and community-based learning. Kuh (2010) provides convincing arguments for student engagement inside and outside the classroom by describing the benefits when students are motivated to spend time and effort on their studies, participate in active learning, and excel in their intellectual and personal development. He found that the two most important factors that predict students' completion of their undergraduate degree are academic preparation and motivation. He describes (2010, p. 9) how universities have more power to affect the latter by facilitating student engagement:

...if faculty and administrators use principles of good practice to arrange the curriculum and other aspects of the college [or university] experience, students would ostensibly put forth more effort... which would result in greater gains in such areas as critical thinking, problem solving, effective communication, and responsible citizenship.

Furthermore, drawing on Kuh's previous work and large-scale analysis of NSSE data, Coates (2007, p. 122) asserts:

...engagement is seen to comprise active and collaborative learning, participation in challenging academic activities, formative communication with academic staff, involvement in enriching educational experiences, and feeling legitimated and supported by university learning communities.

Co-creation of the curriculum involves many elements of these key aspects of student engagement and high-impact educational practices, which is why I believe it has potential to engage students with excellent learning and teaching experiences.

Further Benefits of Student Engagement

Trowler (2010) – like Kuh, Astin, Pascarella and Terenzini cited above – emphasises the importance of understanding what it is that students are engaging with, and who benefits from that engagement. Trowler (2010, pp. 22-28) outlines many reasons for student engagement, including improving learning, student retention, equality and social justice, curricular relevance, and institutional benefit (reputational and/or financial). In my research, I am most interested in student engagement to improve learning and enhance curricular relevance to promote development, equality, and social justice. Ashwin et al. (2014) argue that student engagement needs to be centred on their academic subject-area knowledge. Barnett and Coate (2004) also emphasise student engagement with their academic discipline. In the sciences and in professional studies, staff tend to focus on engagement with discipline-specific knowledge and skills, whereas the arts, humanities, and social sciences emphasise

developing discipline-specific knowledge and *being* rather than skills (Barnett & Coate, 2004). My research spans across academic subjects to identify cross-cutting themes.

Many different parties benefit from positive student engagement. Trowler (2010, pp. 29-32) includes: students themselves, managers wanting information on student outcomes, the 'engagement industry' of academic consultants in student engagement, the higher education system broadly, and society in general when students are informed citizens and members of a democracy. However, Trowler omits how student engagement can benefit academic staff when it leads to personal and professional development for staff by learning from their students, and when it evidences excellent teaching. A key area of my research includes analysing how student engagement can benefit both staff and students. Moreover, Trowler (2010) suggests areas for further research, including studies of student engagement in curriculum development and students' perspectives on the benefits of student engagement. My study aims to contribute to research in these areas.

Critiques of Student Engagement

Although literature reviews of student engagement like the work of Trowler (2010) and Zepke and Leach (2010) provide many insights into the complexities of this concept, the literature they include is often restricted to the term 'student engagement'. This can omit other valuable dimensions of student engagement using related but distinct terminology. It is widely thought that the term 'student engagement' has become nebulous with many different definitions (Bryson, 2014a; Trowler, 2010; Trowler & Trowler, 2010; Zepke & Leach, 2010), with Macfarlane and Tomlinson (2017, p. 7) noting the resulting 'conceptual confusion' around the term. Trowler (2010) and Zepke and Leach (2010) highlight that the majority of the student engagement literature stems from the US and Australia, and there has been less UK-based research on student engagement. There are also distinctions across contexts with American and Australian research on student engagement tending to focus on large-scale quantitative studies of student transitions, educational effectiveness, and student success in university; however, UK-based research tends to be smaller-scale with a qualitative focus on the tools and techniques of how students engage with learning (Bryson, 2014a; Macfarlane & Tomlinson, 2017). In addition to a focus on student engagement in learning and teaching both in the classroom and online, there is also

a distinct focus in the UK on student representation in university decision-making processes and quality enhancement committees as a democratic form of student engagement which is driven by quality assurance policies and funding councils (Bryson, 2014a; Quality Assurance Agency, 2012).

Much of the student engagement research focuses on students' behavioural engagement, which suggests students living up to behavioural expectations that reflect conceptualisations of active learning, rather than passive learning (Macfarlane & Tomlinson, 2017). As opposed to emotional engagement which more easily includes student voice in assessing their internal passion and motivations for learning, staff can assess students' behavioural engagement from outwith (Macfarlane & Tomlinson, 2017). However, this often leaves evaluation of effective student engagement to staff, which can exclude students' views. Some educators do not care about students' views on teaching (Dobson & Mori, 2007) and others question students' abilities to ascertain effective student engagement or teaching (Madriaga & Morley, 2016). This said, a focus on behavioural engagement often goes hand-in-hand with placing the responsibility for student engagement with students – to choose to engage behaviourally, emotionally, and cognitively – rather than with staff responsibilities for facilitating opportunities for engagement (Macfarlane & Tomlinson, 2017; Zepke & Leach, 2010). Institutions and governments are clearly interested in the behaviours of learners that are correlated with student success (Barnett, 1992; Greatbatch & Holland, 2016). However, this behavioural focus can become a problematic, deficit model of engaging 'hard-to-reach' students (Lowe & Dunne, 2017; Shaw, Humphrey, Atvars et al., 2017) who may be considered undisciplined or apathetic (Macfarlane & Tomlinson, 2017).

Macfarlane and Tomlinson (2017, p. 11) summarise some of the critiques of student engagement in the literature that focuses on neoliberal agendas promoting engagement as marketing, or as compliance with performance indicators or student surveillance; institutions can also decrease students' freedom through engagement practices that promote infantilisation. These critiques of student engagement have serious ethical implications with respect to moral excellence – as discussed in the Teaching Excellence literature above – in teaching and learning that facilitates students' agency (Freire, 1972; Kreber, 2007, 2014; MacFarlane, 2007; Macfarlane &

Tomlinson, 2017), as well as students' freedom to learn through person-centred education (Rogers, 1996).

Co-Creation of the Curriculum and Pedagogic Partnerships

I have drawn on established processes for conducting a rapid review of the literature in a systematic manner (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006) in this key section of my literature review. To do this, I asked the question: *what is currently known in the literature about curriculum co-creation practices and outcomes in higher education?* My review aimed to minimise potential publication bias since I used the Education Information Resource Center (ERIC) database to include not only peer-reviewed publications but also 'grey literature' such as reports and dissertations conducted worldwide with at least abstracts available in English. To minimise reviewer bias, I used clear inclusion criteria as follows:

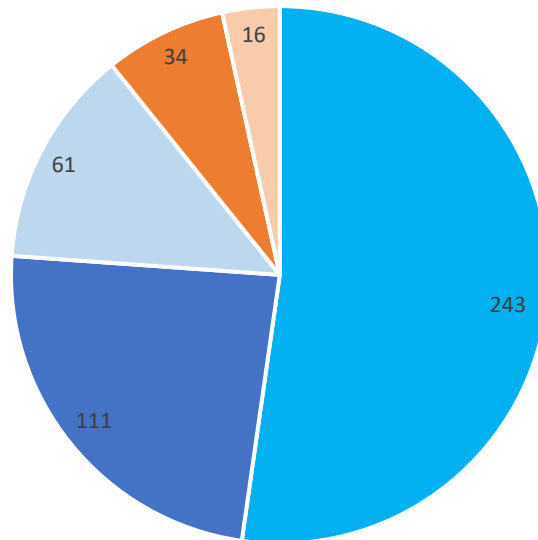
- Domain being studied:
 - All research studies, principles, and conceptualisations of all forms of co-created higher education including academic experiences and/or curricula
 - Any outcomes (academic, developmental, social, or personal) for students, staff, their universities, and/or their wider communities
- Participants:
 - Only those examples of academic/curriculum co-creation that include both students (undergraduate and/or postgraduate) and staff (academic and/or professional services staff)
- Timeframe:
 - Only literature published between 1 January 2014 and 31 December 2019 were included: I chose to start this review in 2014 when I started my PhD due to resource limitations and since two pivotal pieces – by Cook-Sather et al. (2014) and Healey et al. (2014) – were published in that year that subsequently influenced the literature

Using the ERIC database, I used the search term 'co-creat*' to include a wide variety of publications including articles, reports, and dissertations including keywords such as co-create, co-creation, and co-creating. There was a total of 556 results. Of these, I excluded 243 sources when applying the publication timeframe inclusion criteria,

and I excluded 111 further sources when applying the filter of 'higher education' to focus on this domain. Therefore, literature was excluded if it was published before 2014; on or after 1 January 2020; or related to co-creation in other domains such as governance and policy development, participatory research, healthcare, social care, business, and other levels of education studies.

I conducted a manual review of the titles and abstracts of the 132 sources that met the inclusion criteria (see Figure 2). Through this review, I excluded 61 further sources since they focused on a non-academic higher education experience; a research (including postgraduate) experience; and/or provided examples of co-creation between: staff in different departments, staff and employers, or students with other students. Of the 50 results that met my inclusion criteria, 34 provided examples of course-level, curricular co-creation and 16 provided theoretical contributions and/or analysed the co-creation of wider learning and teaching initiatives. In addition, I have reviewed titles of all articles published from 2016 to 2019 in *Teaching in Higher Education*, *Higher Education*, and the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. This review added numerous other peer-reviewed publications that were not all available via the ERIC database and covered valuable literature that was not named as co-creation but as staff-student partnerships and collaborations, assessment co-creation, participatory curriculum development, co-generative dialogues, student-generated content. These have been included in my thorough review of literature presented below relating to key themes in curriculum co-creation and pedagogical partnerships.

Rapid Review of Co-Creat* References using ERIC via EBSCOhost (2014-2019)



- Results not matching publication date criteria (1 Jan 2014 - 31 Dec 2019)
- Results not matching subject criteria (higher education subject)
- Results not matching other inclusion criteria (student/staff participants, curricular focus)
- Co-creation references: course-level examples
- Co-creation references: wider academic student experience examples and theoretical work

Figure 2: Rapid Review of Co-Creat* References on Curriculum Co-Creation using ERIC via EBSCOhost (2014-2019)

Early Work Underpinning Co-Creative Practices

Early work in education by John Dewey (1916) recognised the importance of authentic forms of education that help students connect what they are learning to the wider social and cultural environments in which they live, seeing education as an ‘idea of continuous reconstruction of experience’ (Dewey, 1916/2004, p. 86). Bovill (2013) describes how the work of John Dewey, Carl Rogers, and Henry Giroux has, in many ways, laid the foundations for critical pedagogy and co-creation of schools-based curricula, which have only more recently started to influence higher education curricula. Furthermore, despite work some time ago on curriculum negotiation and the idea of the process syllabus in Australia (Boomer, 1992; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000a, 2000b; Simmons & Wheeler, 1995) and empowerment through negotiation in experiential learning (Heron, 1992), the majority of academic discussions about co-

created curricula have occurred during the last ten years – and especially over the last five years (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Moore-Cherry, 2019).

Models of Curriculum Co-Creation and Student/Staff Partnerships

As described in the introduction, there can be strong overlap in the literature on ‘co-creation of the curriculum’ and ‘students as partners’. Different models presented in the literature attempt to clarify different dimensions of partnership and co-creation work. For example, Dunne and Zanstra (2011, p. 17) provide an initial, theoretical model along two axes characterising student/staff partnerships which they call work with ‘students as change agents’; the vertical axis ranges from emphasising the student voice to student action, and the horizontal axis ranges from the university as a driver to the student as a driver for the work. In addition, Healey et al. (2014, p. 25) present a model of different dimensions of ‘students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education’ showing how partnership learning communities can focus on learning, teaching, and assessment; curriculum design and pedagogic consultancy; scholarship of learning and teaching; and subject-based research and inquiry. This model can be considered complex, confusing, or inaccessible to those outside the community since there are various dimensions, roles, and areas of focus of partnership work that are also overlapping. Based on previous work by Advance HE and the National Union of Students, Healey et al. (2014, p. 16) describe four types of student engagement including consultation, involvement, participation, and partnership. Bovill et al. (2016, p. 198) also present a helpful, simplified Venn diagram model of ‘student roles in co-creation of learning and teaching’ including roles as a pedagogical co-designer, co-researcher, consultant, and representative. I often view examples of co-creation of the curriculum as focusing on student roles as pedagogical co-designers or consultants who focus on learning, teaching, and assessment through pedagogic consultancy or broader enhancement of curriculum design.

Many researchers, like myself, view curriculum co-creation and student/staff partnerships as a form of engagement that promotes active learning (Bovill, 2019; Marie, 2018) and high levels of both student and staff engagement (Flint & Millard, 2018; Matthews, Groenendijk, & Chunduri, 2017; Moore-Cherry, 2019). Although curriculum co-creation and student/staff partnerships are a form of student engagement, not all student engagement is partnership because it tends to promote

high levels of student agency and develop meaningful, professional relationships between students and staff (Advance HE, 2019; Bovill, 2019; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018). One way to differentiate forms of student and staff engagement is by seeing them in a spectrum of engagement. For instance, Bovill and Bulley (2011, p. 5) provide a helpful 'ladder of student participation in curriculum design' showing how student participation in the curriculum can range from no participation within a dictated, staff-controlled curriculum to significant levels of student engagement and/or control of the curriculum. They include partnership and negotiated curricula near the top of the ladder to signify significant student engagement in curriculum design. These models provided by Bovill and Bulley (2011) and the model by Healey et al. (2014) – described in the paragraph above – are helpful in visualising different types and levels of student agency and decision-making power.

Differing Motivations for Engagement in Curriculum Co-Creation

Although one strand of curriculum co-creation literature draws on work in marketing and business to work with students to enhance their university experience, another strand of literature calls for a strong critique of the marketisation of higher education and neoliberal views of students as consumers. For instance, the notion of value co-creation in learning and teaching brings together a) the co-production process of organisations working with consumers to design a value proposition and b) value-in-use stemming from the consumption of the enhanced product or service (Dollinger, Lodge, & Coates, 2018). Value co-creation in higher education has been seen to enhance satisfaction with the student experience, enhance student/staff relationships, and develop students' graduate attributes with both on-campus study (Dziewanowska, 2018; Young & Collins, 2014) and online learning (Ranjbarfard & Heidari Sureshjani, 2018), which can also increase student loyalty and promote the positive image of the university brand (Dollinger et al., 2018; Wardley, Bélanger, & Nadeau, 2017).

By contrast, many other researchers – including me – feel that viewing students as consumers can reduce higher education to a commercial exchange and can reduce the capacity of students and staff to work collaboratively to reenvision the possibilities that higher education presents (Bovill & Woolmer, 2018; Bryson, 2014b; Felten et al., 2019; Marie, 2018; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018; Moore-Cherry, 2019; Neary, 2014; Peters & Mathias, 2018). Authors on each side of the spectrum of value co-creation

and curriculum co-creation appear to be working towards similar aims of enhancing the higher education experience for both students and staff despite their differing motivations. However, Freire (1972), Fielding (1999), and Peters and Mathias (2018) highlight the clear ontological and political distinctions between what can be seen as instrumental motives that drive collaboration as compared to liberatory motives that work to promote collegiality and social responsibility.

Relationships Underpinning Co-Creation and Partnership Work

Curriculum co-creation and pedagogic partnerships promote strong professional relationships between students and staff and also between different students, which enhances their sense of belonging and community (Agne & Muller, 2019; Bovill, 2019; Marie & Azuma, 2018; Matthews, Cook-Sather, & Healey, 2018; Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018; Moore-Cherry, 2019). These practices can promote an open dialogue about meaningful best practices in teaching and learning, which helps both students and staff to understand their responsibilities and creates a more equal balance of power between them (Boomer, 1992; Kehler, Verwood, & Smith, 2017; Moore-Cherry, 2019).

Although some individuals initially assume that co-creation of the curriculum means students designing the curriculum co-creation critically involves curriculum negotiation and collaboration as opposed to full student control over curricula (Bovill & Bulley, 2011). For example, Cook-Sather et al. (2014, p. 8) state:

...designing teaching and learning in partnership with students does not mean that we simply turn the responsibility for conceptualizing curricular and pedagogical approaches over to students, nor does it suggest we should always do everything they recommend to us. Rather, it means that we engage in a more complex set of relationships involving genuine dialogue with students.

Therefore, co-creation of the curriculum is necessarily a balance of students' and staff members' perspectives. This aspect of negotiation is important because staff still take ownership over quality assurance, assessment outcomes, and other aspects of the curriculum but they can create windows of opportunity for students to share responsibility over decisions that affect how or what they are learning (Boomer, 1992; Breen & Littlejohn, 2000a, 2000b; Serrano-Sampedro, 2000). Furthermore, these opportunities not only benefit students but also staff (Bovill, 2019; Flint & Millard, 2018).

Benefits and Challenges of Co-Creation and Partnership

Benefits of students-as-partners and co-creation-of-the curriculum work have been cited widely. In co-created courses, student engagement in deep and active learning is often a key benefit for students who negotiate academic content and pedagogy (Backhouse, Taylor, & Armitage, 2019; Billett & Martin, 2018; Blau & Shamir-Inbal, 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Vaughan, Clampitt, Park et al., 2016) as well as assessment (Deeley & Bovill, 2017; Doyle, Buckley, & Whelan, 2019). These experiences tend to increase students' motivation to engage in learning (Backhouse et al., 2019; Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Fung, 2017; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Owusu-Agyeman & Fourie-Malherbe, 2019; Temple Clothier & Matheson, 2019). Other benefits include students' increased critical thinking skills (Keevers, 2016; Marie, 2018), enhanced meta-cognitive awareness (Healey et al., 2014; Moore-Cherry, 2019), attainment (Bovill, 2014; Deeley & Bovill, 2017; Dickerson, Jarvis, & Stockwell, 2016), and professional development and employability (Billett & Martin, 2018; Dickerson et al., 2016; Ranjbarfard & Heidari Sureshjani, 2018). Curriculum co-creation is also seen to increase student confidence, self-authorship, agency, and empowerment (Hill et al., 2016; Martin, 2018; Martínez-Carrasco, 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Moore-Cherry, 2019; Moore-Cherry et al., 2016).

Curriculum co-creation and partnership can promote culturally and personally relevant forms of higher education since they promote a sense of authenticity in learning and teaching (Keevers, 2016; Khasnabis & Reischl, 2018; Quillinan, McEvoy, MacPhail et al., 2018; Temple Clothier & Matheson, 2019; Towers & Loynes, 2018). (Martin, 2018; Martínez-Carrasco, 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). They have a transformative capacity for individuals who take on non-traditional roles and new identities (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Mercer-Mapstone, Marquis, & McConnell, 2018; Moore-Cherry, 2019) and for staff and institutions that work to develop a culture of partnership and try new approaches to enhance teaching quality (Bovill, 2019; Flint & Millard, 2018; Matthews, Cook-Sather, et al., 2018). Curriculum co-creation can promote inclusion of diverse students and staff of different backgrounds and ages, and it can advance notions of democratic values and civic engagement (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Miller-Young, Felten, & Clayton, 2017; Pstross, Corrigan, Knopf et al., 2017) and social justice (Cook-Sather, Des-Ogugua, & Bahti, 2018; Hussain & Wattles, 2017). In particular, calls for 'inclusive partnership' (Moore-Cherry et al., 2016) and a 'whole-class approach' to co-creation of learning

and teaching (Bovill, 2019) aim to not only engage those who are already engaged but to present more inclusive and sustained opportunities for course-level co-creation by re-conceptualising student and staff roles within learning environments to benefit all members – both students and staff alike.

There can also be challenges to curriculum co-creation and partnership work. For example, the professional relationships that are highlighted as a positive outcome could – in other cases with different individuals and contexts – be an inhibitor to partnership work if individuals are affected by power differentials or hierarchies (Marquis, Black, & Healey, 2017; Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018). Felten (2017) and Marquis et al. (2018) also notes the importance of emotion in partnerships, which differentiates this type of work from more traditional forms of learning and teaching and can also be construed as a benefit or a challenge. Furthermore, academic cultures and norms can resist change in the form of different partnership-based learning and teaching approaches (Barrineau & Anderson, 2018; Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill et al., 2016; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018). In particular, institutional structures, procedures, policies, and regulations can present challenges for those implementing non-traditional ways of working through co-creation and partnership (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Bovill et al., 2016; Wardley et al., 2017). Although some staff are worried that co-creation can take more time than designing a curriculum on their own (Billett & Martin, 2018), others such as Cook-Sather et al. (2014) and Bovill (2019) show that it may require more time initially but the reward is in deeper and more meaningful engagement of students and staff, and there are ultimately fewer questions from students about content. While considering both the benefits and challenges, I believe that co-creation of the curriculum has strong potential, and my research draws on this wide-ranging body of literature while adding new contributions that focus in particular on overcoming challenges in co-creation of the curriculum and how this academic practice may advance student and staff aims in higher education.

The Higher Education Curriculum

When addressing the topic of co-creation of the curriculum, the essential question that often goes unanswered is how to define the higher education curriculum. While there is a wide literature on secondary school curricular development and planning (Posner, 1987), the term is rarely defined in the higher education context and, even when it is,

there are many different interpretations (Crosling, Thomas, & Heagney, 2008; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Lattuca & Stark, 2009). There are obvious difficulties when individuals do not define how they are using the term 'curriculum' and when it is defined the definitions tend to be vague. Lattuca and Stark (2009, p. 3), however, emphasise the need for a common understanding of the term 'curriculum' because:

Today, demands for accountability and increased scrutiny of higher education call for greater consensus on what we mean when we say 'curriculum.' ...Overly general definitions hinder the ability to communicate the intentions of a curriculum to students, to evaluate it effectively, and to make the case for particular changes.

Furthermore, Barnett and Coate (2004, p. 6) show it is precisely because the curriculum plays an important role in helping students on their journey of developing *being* and self-authorship that we need to be clear about what it entails. These researchers have worked to clarify the issues at stake in the higher education curriculum and to encourage debate around what is to be included, and they agree that it is vastly under-studied and ill-defined. There is a need for clarity around the curriculum, and for a consensus (at least within course teams, programmes, or subject areas if not on national or international levels) on how the term is used. I intend for my research to resurface discussions about what the curriculum is, how it can be best crafted, and how it contributes to meeting some of the aims of higher education.

Contrary to Lattuca and Stark, some researchers argue that it is best to define the curriculum broadly. For example, citing Fraser and Bosanquet (2006), Crosling et al. (2008, pp. 4-5) state:

...included in our view of curriculum is curricular content, delivery and structure, action and interaction between the teacher and students, and assessment, which needs to be linked to learning and teaching.

Others believe the definition of the curriculum should include the entirety of the student experience, uniting academic learning inside and outside the classroom (Lempert, 1996). Furthermore, McInnes suggests that the 'Curriculum is the glue which holds knowledge and the broader student experience together and enables the knowledge to be used effectively by the student' (as cited in Heagney, 2008, p. 27). However, Barnett and Coate (2004, p. 6) consider that the term 'curriculum' has necessarily become 'fuzzy':

The fuzziness is explicable: in the contemporary age, the 'student experience' and 'learning' have come to occupy the high ground of interest in the public debate – such as it is – over learning and teaching. This has implications for our contemporary understanding of curriculum for the term

is widening in meaning to embrace pedagogical acts and to encourage such teaching styles as engage the student.

While the higher education curriculum was previously rarely defined and tended to focus on planning what was taught, the curriculum now extends to cover how content is taught, how it engages students, and how it prepares students for the future. These definitions of the higher education curriculum position it as a flexible, dynamic, and an almost intangible process and set of activities and spaces. However, as Barnett and Coate (2004) highlight, that is precisely why it is so worrying that so few individuals in the higher education sector define the curriculum, let alone debate how it can be most effective in achieving different purposes of education.

Lattuca and Stark (2009) have developed one of the most comprehensive definitions of the curriculum. They characterise the curriculum as an academic plan with clear areas where decisions need to be made about students' academic experience and outline eight aspects which need to be addressed in an academic plan: educational purposes, subject content, sequence of experiences, addressing specific groups of learners, instructional processes and resources, evaluation, and adjustment to enhance future learning and teaching (Lattuca & Stark, 2009, pp. 4-5). This academic plan helps to show clearly where explicit or implicit decisions are made about what is taught, why, how, when, and with what aims. While it focuses on staff as key decision-makers, this view of the higher education curriculum emphasises meeting the needs of particular cohorts of students with subsequent evaluation and adjustment. Although students' assessment and course evaluations are often viewed separately, in Lattuca and Stark's model it is beneficial that assessment is one aspect of evaluation since they emphasise that students' understanding of desired curricular outcomes is key to evaluating the efficacy of the curriculum itself. Lattuca and Stark's definition of an academic plan is also helpful because it shows where internal and external influences affect the higher education curriculum. These diverse influences include: staff members' personal backgrounds and beliefs about the purpose of higher education, institutional influences, governmental and/or cultural influences, and influences from the students' expectations and abilities (Lattuca & Stark, 2009). It is important to show where implicit influences are affecting the curriculum, including the hidden curriculum (Barnett & Coate, 2004). All too often, it appears that academics fail to address intentionally each of the aforementioned eight components, and the influence of their implicit aims on higher education is therefore not fully acknowledged. In many respects, curriculum design is highly influenced by the personal preferences and

beliefs of academic staff (Barnett & Coate, 2004; Lattuca & Stark, 2009) although these implicit preferences and beliefs are not often explored as I have done in my research.

Like many higher education theorists and researchers (Barnett & Coate, 2004; Crosling et al., 2008; Entwistle, 1992; Lattuca & Stark, 2009), I believe that the university curriculum should be dynamic and adapted to each cohort of students so it is engaging and relevant to their needs. However, this does not appear to be happening often in practice. Dewey (1938/1998, p. 33) stresses the importance of student-centred teaching at all levels of education: he states that the teacher must ‘...have that sympathetic understanding of individuals as individuals which gives him [or her] an idea of what is actually going on in the minds of those who are learning.’ Furthermore, Kuh (2010, p. 205) states that ‘Recognising students’ talents and preferred learning styles empowers them and also makes it possible to raise standards for academic challenge’. Drawing on the work of Boud (2004), Crosling et al. (2008, p. 5) state:

[A curriculum with] a responsive approach acknowledges the developmental nature of student learning, and includes the notion of accepting and beginning action from where students are in their thinking and learning and what they ‘say they want’, but also leading them into areas that they could never have envisaged.

I also believe that the higher education curriculum needs to respond to socio-cultural events and advancements of knowledge so that it is up-to-date and relevant to the prior learning experiences and aims of diverse students whilst expanding their understanding of topics in new ways. This student-centred approach helps the curriculum to be more authentic and relevant to the evolving challenges of the 21st Century.

Barnett and Coate (2004, p. 3) frame the curriculum as promoting engagement and creating spaces for that engagement to take place:

...we propose that curriculum design should be understood as the imaginative *design of spaces as such*, spaces that are likely to generate new energies among students and inspire them, and so prompt their *triple engagement* – in knowing, acting and being.

Therefore, Barnett and Coate argue that the higher education curriculum needs to help students engage with and develop their knowledge, skills, and sense of *being* which are each dynamic and changing constantly in the 21st Century. They also suggest that the curriculum needs to be both ‘design-in-advance’ and ‘design-in-

action'. They rightly show that the curriculum needs structure with carefully considered decisions ahead of time, but it also needs space for adapting to needs that arise and letting students draw out their own understandings – potentially giving space for co-creation of the curriculum. However, this space is not prevalent in practice in fast-paced, short university semesters. The imaginative aspects of designing space into the curriculum are important as well. Drawing widely on the literature of creativity in primary education, creative pedagogy can encompass and further promote curiosity, imagination, play, exploration, ownership, innovation, and connection-making for both learners and teachers (Craft, Cremin, Hay et al., 2014; Grainger, Barnes, & Scoffham, 2004; Jeffrey & Woods, 2009). Creativity can be autonomous but it is often a collaborative effort within a learning community (Craft et al., 2014).

Despite the aforementioned literature emphasising the importance of higher education curriculum planning, many researchers lament the lack thereof (Barnett & Coate, 2004; Lattuca & Stark, 2009) which is concerning since curricula may not be achieving the intended purposes of higher education. Yinger (1979, p. 165) characterised curriculum planning as 'decision making about the selection, organization, and sequencing of routines'. Similarly, Powell and Shanker (1982) highlight a reliance on routines developed during previous teaching experiences, which implies that curricula may not be customised for each cohort of students. Furthermore, the routine of presenting the same curriculum can have an impact on not only student engagement but also staff engagement since it can lead to staff members' 'boredom' with teaching (Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 117). Lattuca and Stark (2009) suggest that the lack of curriculum planning of university courses could be because staff receive little or no training at all for how to plan a curriculum. They state (p. 117):

...a step-by-step or rational planning model does not seem to describe their actual planning behaviour. Instructors, who are usually well-versed in and enthusiastic about the principles and concepts embodied in their fields, tend to start planning by considering content, rather than by stating explicit course objectives for students as design theorists might hope.

Academics may focus on content because of their expertise, and also because they may have little confidence in students' abilities to understand and organise correctly subject content that is important to their discipline (Thielens, 1987, cited in Lattuca & Stark, 2009, p. 117). Over thirty years after Thielens' study took place, it is beneficial to revisit in my current study the questions of academic staff members' conceptions

of the purpose of teaching to see in what ways they influence staff perceptions of curriculum planning and students' abilities to co-create curricula.

Bovill and Woolmer (2018) rightly emphasise that different conceptualisations of the higher education curriculum can influence how staff and students are able to create opportunities to co-create the curriculum. Fraser and Bosanquet (2006, p. 277) identify four categories of staff conceptualisations of the higher education curriculum ranging from a product-focused, teacher-directed view of the curriculum as the content and structure of A) a course or unit or B) a programme of study to a process-focused, student-centred view of the curriculum relating to C) students' practical learning experiences or D) staff and students' collaborative, dynamic, and emancipatory experiences of teaching and learning. Furthermore, Boomer (1992) describes the creative process of curriculum design as 'curriculuming', emphasising the active, iterative nature of the curriculum which is continually negotiated and adjusted to meet students' needs. Although there can of course be a gap between the intended and the enacted curriculum, Bovill and Woolmer (2018) note that conceptualisations A and B limit opportunities for co-creation to student representative roles where staff retain power over curricular decision-making, but C and D provide greater scope for co-creation of the curriculum (usually in advance) and co-creation *in* the curriculum (within and usually during a course or programme). They point out that both generally and specifically regarding the curriculum, 'The teacher's attitude, motivations and outlook are critical to co-creation' (Bovill & Woolmer, 2018, p. 3) since these often play a key role in creating both the space and the opportunity for co-creation within the curriculum.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have summarised the predominant aims of higher education that primarily include: developing and enhancing individuals' civic responsibility, employability, research training, teaching efficiency, widening participation, intellectual autonomy, general intellectual abilities including knowledge and skills, and personal character including authentic *being* and self-authorship. I then identified key themes in 21st Century higher education including massification, student development, learning for a quickly-changing world, student-centred learning, creativity, Third Spaces, and philosophies of teaching excellence. In particular, I problematise conceptualisations of student engagement, breaking down definitions

and forms of engagement as well as benefits and critiques. Based on these foundational concepts, I then conducted a rapid literature review to synthesise key elements of co-creation of the curriculum and pedagogic partnerships, positioning them as forms of learning and teaching that promote high levels of engagement from both students and staff and differentiating these practices from other forms of engagement. I finished this chapter by focusing on conceptualisations of the higher education curriculum itself, since how the curriculum is viewed can influence the ways in which it can be co-created. My research contributes to this body of literature by exploring the ways in which co-creation of the curriculum may advance different aims of higher education.

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Chapter 3: Methodology

From methods to methodology to theoretical perspective and epistemology, then... Speaking in this vein sounds as if we create a methodology for ourselves – as if the focus of our research leads us to devise our own ways of proceeding that allow us to achieve our purposes. That, as it happens, is precisely the case.

– Crotty (1998, p. 13)

I start this chapter by introducing my epistemology, ontology, and theoretical perspective to show how they informed my research questions. I then go on to describe my methodology, including how my choice of methods supports my research strategy. After describing in detail each of the methods underpinning the three phases of my data collection as well as my approach to data analysis, I am transparent about my research stance and ethical considerations for my study. I then reflect on the strengths, limitations, ‘generalizabilities’ (Smith, 2018), and distinctive areas of my research including photo-elicitation and co-inquiry methods in co-researching co-creation of the curriculum.

Epistemology and Ontology

I view the development of knowledge through a constructivist lens, along with others who study themes related to student engagement (Baxter Magolda, 1999; Bryson, 2014a; Gannon-Leary et al., 2011; Trowler, 2010; Trowler & Trowler, 2010). I believe that knowledge is constructed through the interaction between individuals and the world around them or, as Crotty suggests, ‘What constructivism claims is that meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting’ (1998, p. 43). Similarly, Jones, Torres, and Arminio (2006, p. 18) suggest that constructivism aims to interpret and understand aspects of the world around us ‘from the perspective of those who experience it... [with the view that] all knowledge is dependent on its context’. Similarly, I believe that meaningful reality is not objective since human beings interpret and place meaning on the world around them as they construct knowledge.

I take a social constructivist approach since I believe that culture has a strong role to play in influencing individuals’ interactions with the world around them as they construct a sense of reality and knowledge. Greenwood (1994, p. 85) speaks about this by stating that: ‘Social reality is, therefore, a function of shared meanings; it is

constructed, sustained and reproduced through a social life.’ In my work, I respect individuals who have different perspectives that are constructed through their personal interaction with objects and the world around them, but I also recognise that their culture has a strong influence on their constructions. Crotty states that: ‘Social constructivism is at once realist and relativist’ (1998, p. 63). In accordance with this view, I recognise the objective reality that exists whether or not human beings make sense of it. Therefore, I reject the idealist stance that what is real can only become so through interpretation by the human mind. Constructivism brings together the objectivity of the world around us and the subjectivity of individuals as they interact with the world. I believe that knowledge is created through a social constructivist interaction between this reality and human beings’ different cultural and personal constructions of it, I also recognise the relativist aspect of social constructivism which is not the same for all individuals.

Theoretical Perspective

The wide range of literature with which I became familiar through my literature review has provided valuable theoretical perspectives on which I have drawn in my research. In addition, Lapan (2012) suggests that qualitative researchers usually approach their research from an interpretivist or a critical theory perspective. An interpretivist perspective aims to understand and analyse individuals’ intentions and the motivations behind their behavior and goals (Cousin, 2009). I believe that individuals create their own meanings based on and through interactions with the world around them, including their socio-cultural background, race, and gender. I think that power dynamics and hierarchies – for example, with respect to control over decision-making – are at play within individuals’ relationships with others around them, and principles of social justice underpin my work to promote equity of opportunities. Although I draw heavily on critical theory, I do not think that my perspective fully draws on all its aspects since I do not focus on how power is embedded in society and my research does not focus on the specifics of how language is used to oppress people and give others autonomy (Lapan, 2012). Although power dynamics within student/staff partnerships are important to recognise, my approach is more inductive, building meaning from different individuals’ perspectives and interpreting trends in how they conceptualise the meaning of co-creation of the curriculum. Like most qualitative researchers, I draw on both a realist perspective to the extent that I want to accurately portray participants’ perspectives about the reality that exists around them, and I draw

on the constructivist perspective of analysing participants' perspectives through their eyes and their multiple socially and culturally constructed realities (Gibbs, 2007).

When suggesting the differences between interpretivism and critical inquiry, Crotty (p. 113) states:

It is a contrast between a research that seeks merely to understand and a research that challenges... between a research that reads the situation in terms of interaction and community and a research that reads it in terms of conflict and oppression... between a research that accepts the *status quo* and a research that seeks to bring about change.

In this way, I have aimed for my research to be more than a deep analysis of co-creation of the curriculum as it exists in one context, and I feel that my research goes beyond interpretism into the realm of critical inquiry. I analyse conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum but also aim for my work to go further to challenge the status quo and explore how a better understanding of co-creation of the curriculum can bring positive changes to improve higher education outcomes for students and staff alike. In this way, I adopt some aspects of a critical inquiry theoretical perspective which draws on the work of Freire. For Freire, there is no distinction between human beings and the world around them, and reality is the combination of the objectivity of the world and humans' subjective perceptions of the world around them (Crotty, 1998; Freire, 1972). His aim was to foster individuals' consciousness about themselves, the world with which they interact, and the potential of what their shared reality can be (Crotty, 1998; Freire, 1972; Peters & Mathias, 2018). Crotty (1998, p. 150) states that Freire suggests how, 'In constantly transforming their environment, women and men are shaping the very conditions for their existence and their life'. Therefore, Freire sees human beings as continually engaging with their environment to transform themselves and their reality. Freire (1972, p. 28) calls this *praxis*, which is 'reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it'. In this same way, I see co-creation of the curriculum as a process that promotes both reflection on what is taught and how it is taught, as well as dialogue and action to continually improve the curriculum to meet the shared needs of students and teachers.

The connections between Freire's work and wider students-as-partners work has been acknowledged elsewhere (Bovill et al., 2009; Kehler et al., 2017; Peters & Mathias, 2018). Dialogue is key to Freire's work in uniting reflection and action to promote critical analysis and awakening of individuals in perceiving the world around

them, and the possibilities for change (Crotty, 1998). Crotty (1998, p. 153) explains Freire's view:

The teacher is no longer merely the one who teaches, for the teacher is also taught in dialogue with the students. And the students, while being taught, also teach. In this way, teacher and students become jointly responsible for a process in which all of them grow.

Therefore, Freire's conception of dialogical education in which students and teachers become partners has strong connections with co-creation of the curriculum. Although students and staff are bringing different forms of knowledge and experience, their dialogue, respect, and reciprocity help unite them in working towards shared aims while both students and staff become at once learners and teachers.

Research Questions

Drawing on my epistemology; ontology; theoretical perspective; and the aforementioned theories of student development; student engagement; and effective development of teaching, curricula, and partnerships, my research seeks to contribute to the emerging literature on how co-creation of undergraduate curricula can benefit both students and staff. After conducting an extensive literature review of student engagement, Trowler (2010) recommends more robust and integrated research on student engagement including: a) student perspectives of student engagement and b) the effect of including 'student voices in curriculum-shaping'. Furthermore, following a systematic literature review of students-as-partners work in higher education, Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) suggest the need to research generalisable implications of students-as-partnerships initiatives across disciplines and institutions, and to expand on the student-centric focus of partnership outcomes to analyse benefits for staff partners. It is particularly beneficial for new research to understand the outcomes of inclusive partnerships and whole-class co-creation across different disciplines (Bovill, 2019; Moore-Cherry et al., 2016) and to illuminate mistakes, failures, and/or negative outcomes of co-creation since reporting tends to focus on positive outcomes and it is important to understand these challenges and how to overcome them (Healey et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017).

My research seeks to address aspects of each of these recommendations. Therefore, my principal research question is:

In Scottish universities, how do undergraduate students and staff conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum, and how do these conceptualisations relate to their aims for students within higher education?

The following sub-questions will help me to unpack this research question:

- How do students and staff conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum?
- How do students and staff view their respective roles in co-creation of the curriculum as compared to other forms of student engagement?
- Why do students and staff want (or not want) to co-create the curriculum?
- How does co-creation of the curriculum help students and staff work towards achieving their aims in higher education?

Drawing on the work of Jones et al. (2006) and Crotty (1998), my aim in this chapter is to explain how each level of my methodology informs the next level, and to justify the choices I have made in my research.

Methodology

Returning to the quotation with which I started this chapter, Crotty (1998, p. 13) suggests that ‘the focus of our research leads us to devise our own ways of proceeding that allow us to achieve our purposes’. Drawing on my epistemology, ontology, and theoretical perspective, I have crafted a methodology for my research design ‘linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes’ (Crotty, 1998). I have chosen not to adhere to any one established methodology, but I have drawn on aspects of different methodologies to facilitate the use of a wide range of methods which help me explore a complex topic and to answer my research questions.

My research questions lend themselves to qualitative methods of investigation and taking a heuristic inquiry approach to learn about the nuanced nature of student and staff conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum. As Punch (2006) shows, explanatory studies set out to explain and account for different senses of reality, and interpretive studies explore meanings for informants. In my research, I aim to provide both an explanatory account of co-creation of the curriculum and an interpretivist account of how co-creation of the curriculum may help participants to achieve their aims in higher education. I also adopt elements from a critical inquiry approach focusing on problem-posing and reflective skepticism to invite further inquiry about co-creation of the curriculum, analysing a wide variety of different perspectives and using systemic thinking to deconstruct the complex co-creation processes

(Bermudez, 2015). Because of the nature of my study, qualitative methods were appropriate to answer my research questions since they provided detailed, nuanced, and thick descriptions (Geertz, 1993; Schofield, 1993) of student and staff conceptualisations of the aims of higher education and the nature of co-creation of the curriculum.

I note that methodological issues have a strong influence on what researchers can conclude about the impact of the university experience on students (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991). As such, I provide brief overviews of my choice of methods in the next sections to show how they fit into my wider research strategy. Later in this chapter I go into detail about each phase of data collection and analysis, and I subsequently reflect on the strengths and limitations of the methods used in my study.

Choice of Methods

In this section, I explain briefly why I chose to employ a range of data collection methods to answer my research questions, including: semi-structured interviews; traditional focus group discussions; focus groups including arts-based methods; and co-inquiry and deliberative democratic methods.

Semi-Structured Interviews

Cousin (2009) describes how 'Semi-structured and unstructured interviews attempt to grapple with complex experiences... [to] get at more layers of meaning' (p. 72) since 'the aim of the active interviewer is to think *with* the interviewees in order to extend understandings' (p. 74). I agree that semi-structured interviews help researchers gain rich empirical data by working in a dialogic, responsive manner to co-develop a sense of understanding while participants share in-depth accounts of their relevant experiences and views (Cousin, 2009). Furthermore, semi-structured interviews should not be used merely to extract information from participants, since they can help us ask richer questions and delve into deeper meanings when they are seen as a collaborative space albeit one 'where views may clash, deceive, seduce, enchant' (Schostak, 2006). Therefore, semi-structured interviews with co-creation of the curriculum practitioners – both staff and students – helped me to explore the nuances of their experiences and perspectives.

Focus Group Discussions

Collecting data from focus groups – rather than individual interviews – helps individuals think through, vocalise, and discuss with peers their thoughts about the purposes of higher education and their participatory roles in learning and teaching. In the focus group setting, participants are listening to different perspectives and ‘...transforming the contents of our consciousness into a public form that others can understand’ (Eisner, 1997). Traditional focus group discussions could be too restrictive for exploring with participants concepts about which they may not have previously thought at great length (such as their aims in higher education and the potential of co-creation of the curriculum). Therefore, like Eisner (1997), I included an arts-based element to my data collection methods to ‘open up new ways of seeing and saying...’ (p. 4) since it is a ‘conception of how meaning is made and what shall count as knowledge, or to use a more felicitous phrase, how understanding is enlarged’ (p. 7).

Arts-Based Approach using Photo-Elicitation Methods

Arts-based research has been used in a wide range of disciplines to draw on the creative processes and artistic outputs – such as photography, painting, collage, poetry, drama, dance, and music – to enhance data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Burge, Grade Godinho, Knottenbelt et al., 2016). Rose (2001, p. 3) describes a ‘critical visual methodology’ as one arts-based approach that helps researchers to consider how visual artefacts can reflect wider cultural and social significance, including ‘thinking about the power relations that produce, are articulated through, and can be challenged by, ways of seeing and imaging’. Furthermore, Burge et al. (2016, p. 730) describe how ‘Not only the products and processes, but also the assumptions and concerns of the arts are apparent in their research: they bring into play imagination, subjectivity, creativity and voice.’ An arts-based approach also helps participants to articulate complex meanings and express abstract ideas relating to identity and culture (Eisner, 1997; Harper, 2002; Rose, 2001), enabling them ‘to question commonplace educational or social phenomena, to perceive these from a different perspective, and to reflect deeply’ (Chappell & Barone, 2012, p. 271).

I drew on the wider philosophy underpinning an arts-based approach as a heuristic way of helping participants to discover and/or articulate their perspectives whilst using images as a metaphor for their beliefs (Chappell & Barone, 2012). More specifically,

I incorporated photo-elicitation methods into my focus group design. Photo elicitation has been used effectively in education to empower university students to contribute complex insights (Kurtz & Wood, 2014), and a key benefit is 'the collaboration it inspires. When two or more people discuss the meaning of photographs they try to figure out something together. This is, I believe, an ideal model for research' (Harper, 2002, p. 20). In these ways, photo-elicitation methods very much complement my research topic of curriculum co-creation since they facilitate an engaging, democratic, inclusive, and yet complex approach (Butler-Kisber, 2018). Beyond using photo-elicitation simply as a tool for provocation, the photo-elicitation activity I designed helped me to co-create rich qualitative data with participants since the arts engage individuals in meaningful ways through emotions and 'are uniquely suited for challenging the status quo' (Leavy, 2015, p. 26) in similar ways to curriculum co-creation. Furthermore, the arts facilitate reflection, self-expression, active participation, dialogue, and imagination (Malchiodi, 2005) which are also key aspects of co-creation of the curriculum.

Co-Inquiry Methods

It was important for my methodology to be congruent with the values and practices of co-creation. To incorporate an important dimension of partnership into my methodology, I worked with student co-researchers by drawing on co-inquiry methods to gain new perspectives on part of my data collection and analysis. Co-inquiry can promote empowerment through negotiation in experiential learning (Heron, 1996), and these methods helped me experience and gain a greater understanding of what co-creation practitioners experience when co-creating curricula with students. Moreover, deliberative democratic co-inquiry 'involves key stakeholders in the study, promotes dialogue with and among researchers, and enhances deliberation about research findings' (House, 2012, p. 451). The role of student co-researchers was to work with me to co-analyse the phase 2 qualitative data and co-lead the phase 3 focus groups with staff. Since students traditionally have less authority than staff in the classroom (Barnes, Goldring, Bestwick et al., 2011; Brew, 2007; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Dobson & Mori, 2007), I worked with student co-researchers to facilitate inclusive deliberation that emphasised dialogue to understand each other's views.

Summary of Research Strategy

My strategy was to conduct three different phases of data collection, with each phase informing subsequent phases and contributing in different ways to answer my research questions. Phase 1 consisted of identifying and speaking with individual staff and students in Scotland who have participated in co-creation of the curriculum initiatives to learn from these practitioners about their experiences across different disciplines and universities. In subsequent phases of my data collection, I led focus group discussions at one research-intensive Scottish university which included photo-elicitation as an arts-based method with students (in Phase 2) and with staff (in Phase 3). Since I wanted to explore perspectives not only of those who had participated in co-creation of the curriculum but also perspectives of those who may be skeptical about or not interested in engaging in these learning and teaching processes, my aim for Phases 2 and 3 was to speak with those who had not participated in co-creation projects. In preparation for and during Phase 3 I also implemented co-inquiry and deliberative democratic methods to incorporate co-creation of research with undergraduate students into my methodology. Figure 3 shows my strategy for approaching data collection, including how different methods are incorporated.

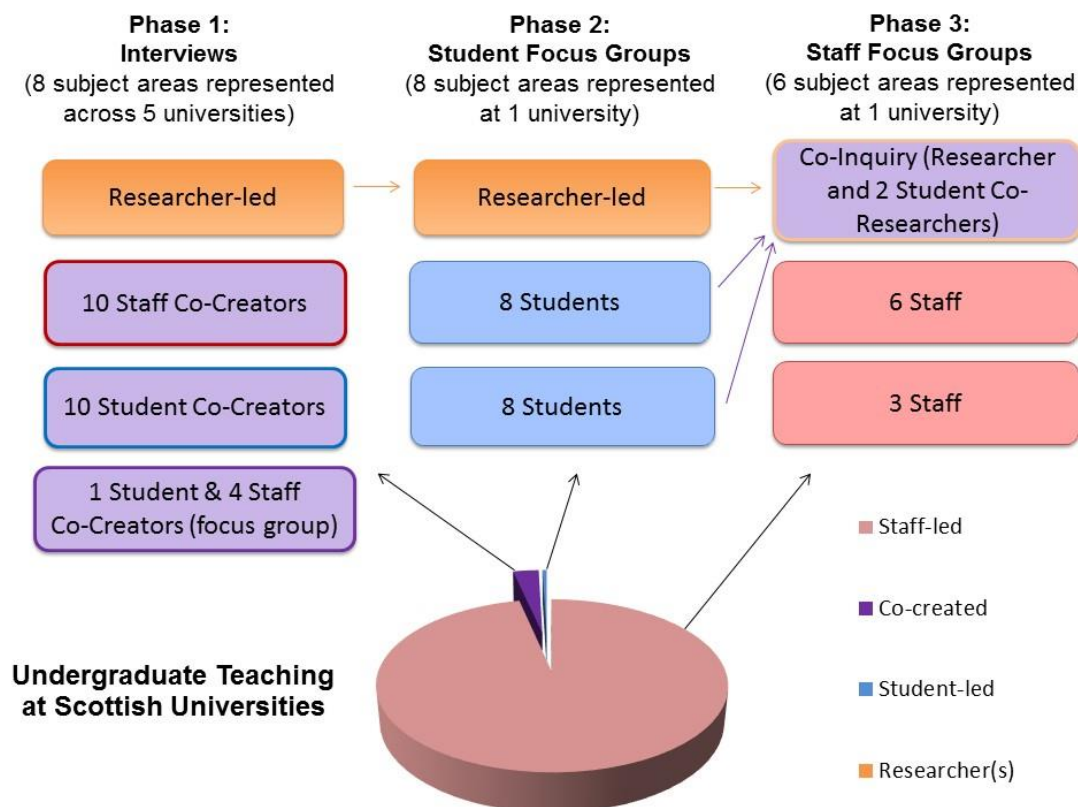


Figure 3: Strategy of Three Phases of Data Collection (Indicating Co-Created Teaching Compared to Predominant Staff-Led Undergraduate Teaching at Scottish Universities)

Methods: Phase 1

Sampling of Staff and Student Co-Creation Practitioners

In Phase 1 of my data collection, I researched individual staff at Scottish universities who facilitate opportunities for co-creation of the curriculum with their students. The individuals I identified through criterion sampling (Punch, 2006) included staff from five Scottish universities who had previously worked with student co-creators fitting one of the earliest definitions of this concept: 'Co-creation of curricula implies students and academic staff working in partnership to create some or all aspects of the planning, implementation and evaluation of the learning experience' (Bovill, Cook-Sather, et al., 2011, p. 137). All cases also fit the definition of pedagogical partnership '...as 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 et al., 2014).

I identified staff co-creation practitioners through their presentations at conferences such as the 2015 Quality Assurance Agency Enhancement Themes Conference and the 2015 Student Participation in Quality Scotland conference, work being featured as case studies in publications such as *Engaging students as partners in learning and teaching: A guide for faculty* (Cook-Sather et al., 2014), and by word-of-mouth. Since even today co-creation and pedagogical partnership are considered by some to be niche activities (Moore-Cherry, 2019) and those who do enact these practices behind their classroom doors may not share their work widely, it was difficult at the time of my data collection to find many instances of co-creation of the curriculum taking place during the 2014-15 and/or 2015-16 academic years.

I aimed to identify staff working with whole student cohorts as pedagogical co-designers since I agree with those who have subsequently published on the importance of inclusive partnerships that provide these opportunities to the whole class (Bovill, 2019; Moore-Cherry et al., 2016). I initially identified nine different staff-led examples across a wide variety of subject areas (see Figure 4) with eight of these examples of whole-class co-creation and one an example of staff working with selected student co-creators. Many of the staff leading these co-creation initiatives also led other projects that could be classified as other types of co-creation work with students, which led to my study including a total of 15 examples of co-creation. Figure

4 shows how these 15 examples are classified according to the different roles students can hold in co-creation of learning and teaching as consultants, co-researchers, pedagogical co-designers, or representatives (Bovill et al., 2016). Table 1, presenting all fifteen co-creation projects included in this study appears on pages –60-61.

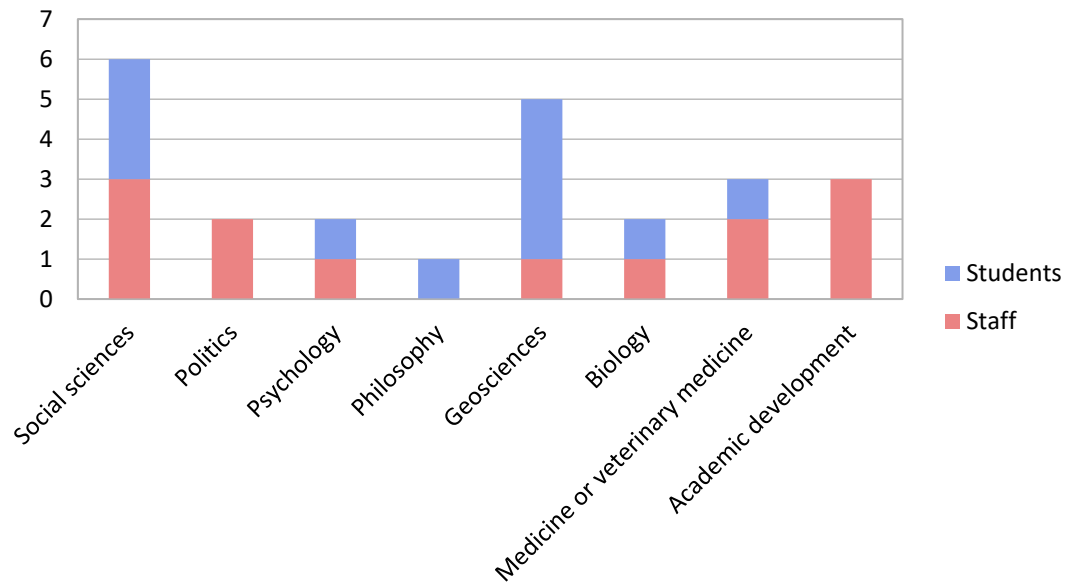


Figure 4: Participants' Range of Subject Areas

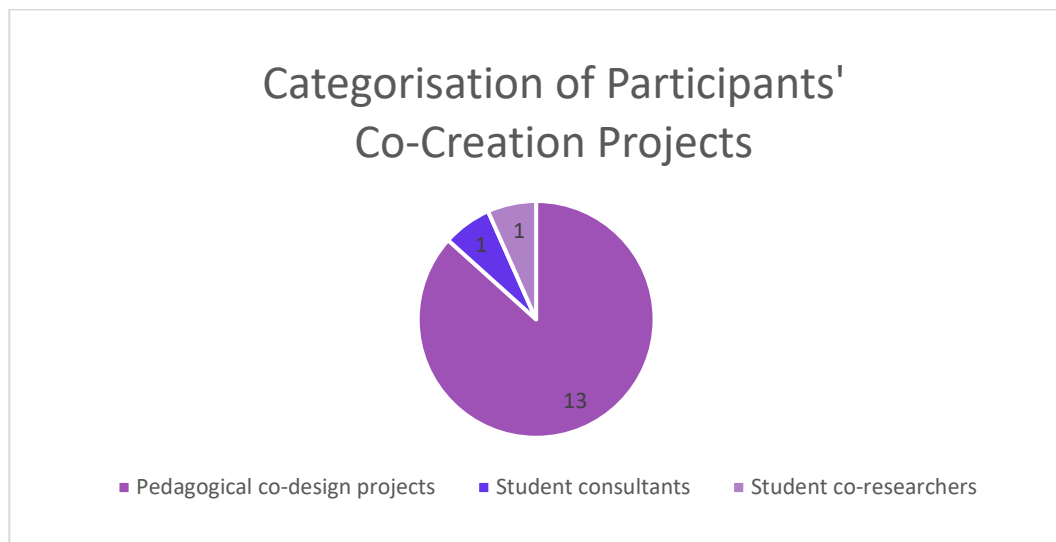


Figure 5: Categorisation of Participants' Co-Creation Projects

Table 1: Participants' 15 Co-Creation Projects

	Co-creation project	Co-creation type	Participants	Staff- or student-led	Students (reward)	Staff
1	Co-created aspects of a course	Pedagogical co-design	A1	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
2	Co-created aspects of a course	Pedagogical co-design	A2, B2	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
3	Co-created research	Student co-researchers	A2, B2	Staff	Selected (altruistic reward and development)	Academic
4	Student learning and teaching consultants	Student consultants	A2, A3, B3, B4	Staff	Selected (altruistic reward and development)	Academic and academic developer
5	Staff-supported peer teaching (across years) embedded into courses	Pedagogical co-design	A4	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
6	Co-created educational resources	Pedagogical co-design	A4, B1	Staff	Selected (payment)	Academic
7	Co-created course with community projects	Pedagogical co-design	A5, B5, B6, B7, B8	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
8	Co-created aspects of a course including marking criteria	Pedagogical co-design	A6	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic

	Co-creation project	Co-creation type	Participants	Staff- or student-led	Students (reward)	Staff
9	Co-created community projects with co-assessment by staff and student	Pedagogical co-design	A6	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
10	Co-created aspects of a course including marking criteria	Pedagogical co-design	A7	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
11	Co-created aspects of a course including co-development of resources for a new course	Pedagogical co-design	A8, A9, B10	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
12	Co-created assessment	Pedagogical co-design	A10	Staff	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
13	Co-created educational resources	Pedagogical co-design	A10	Staff	Selected (payment)	Academic
14	Co-created aspects of a course	Pedagogical co-design	B9	Student	Whole cohort (course credit)	Academic
15	Co-created aspects of a course	Pedagogical co-design	A11, A12, A13, B11	Staff	Selected (altruistic reward and development)	Academic and academic developer

The 15 co-creation projects varied considerably along different variables when asking: a) who leads the project?; b) which students participate?; c) which staff participate?; and d) how are students primarily rewarded? This information was included in Table 1 above and a summary is outlined in Table 2. Trends from this data can be seen in Figure 6, showing that staff tend to lead within this dataset of co-created projects; students tend to engage as a whole cohort or as selected, previous students; academic staff tend to participate rather than academic developers, support staff, or managers; and students tend to benefit from course credit from these projects.

Table 2: Co-Creation Project Variables

Co-creation projects	Who leads?			Which students participate?			
	Staff-led	Jointly staff- & student-led	Student-led	Selected student previously on course	Selected current student	Whole cohort of students	Other student participants
Aspects of a course co-created	9	0	1	3	0	7	0
Whole course co-created	2	1	0	0	0	3	0
Student consultants	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Student co-researchers	2	0	0	2	0	0	0

Co-creation projects	Which staff participate?		How are students rewarded?		
	Academic staff participants	Academic & support staff participants	Altruistic rewards	Payment rewards	Course credit rewards
Aspects of a course co-created	9	1	0	2	8
Whole course co-created	2	1	0	0	1
Student consultants	1	0	1	0	0
Student co-researchers	2	0	2	0	0

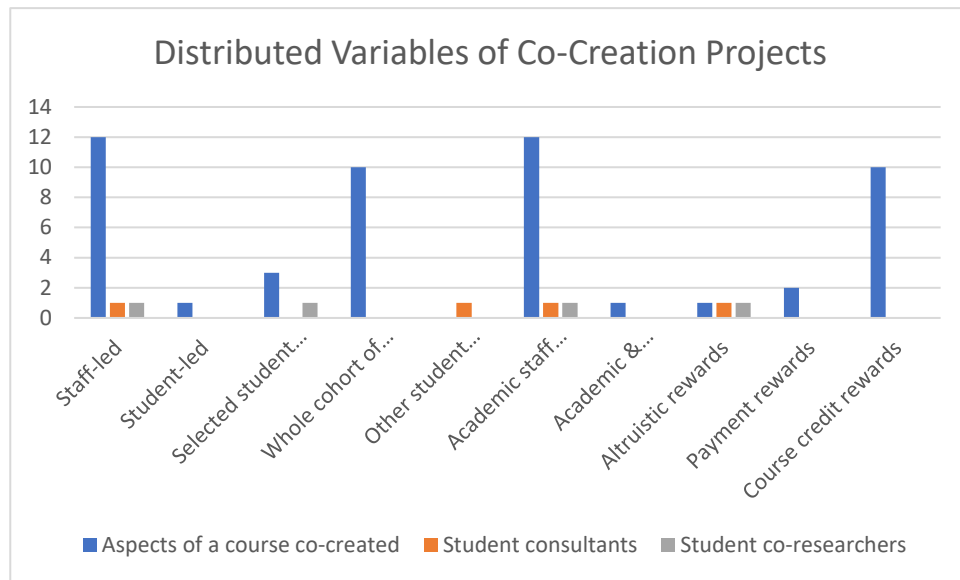


Figure 6: Trends in Distributed Variables of Co-Created Curriculum Projects

The identified instances of co-creation projects include pedagogical co-design with student involvement in decision-making about the content, pedagogy, and/or assessment. Examples include students developing their own multiple-choice exam questions to be used in veterinary exams, or students not in the course who applied and were trained as volunteer student consultants. The latter acted as peer reviewers to aid staff in curriculum enhancement activities by providing feedback on how to improve student engagement in the classroom and the virtual learning environment. Other examples include peer teaching embedded into the curriculum, such as when fourth-year medical students who – as part of their own honours level coursework – prepared and taught a class for second-year students. Another example here is experienced students who excelled in a course subsequently taking part in a summer internship to work with staff to co-design educational materials that would be used by a future cohort of students. In other co-creation projects, students took ownership over their own service-learning or other community-based project and worked in partnership with staff to deliver it during a semester or throughout an academic year.

The staff I identified through criterion sampling (those who engage in an identified co-creation project and have valuable information relevant to my research questions) comprised a sample of 19 individuals at Scottish universities. Whilst trying to avoid over-sampling staff co-creation practitioners in terms of their subject area, gender, or institution, I invited 15 of them to take part in a semi-structured interview. Thirteen of

these staff participated. I had previously met six of them at events prior to interviewing them, and I introduced myself via email to the other staff participants. Therefore, they were aware of my interests in student engagement and co-creation of the curriculum.

Table 3 provides an overview of staff co-creation practitioners including participants A1 – A10 who participated in individual interviews, and participants A11 – A13 who participated in a focus group discussion. In one instance in which staff and paid student pedagogical co-designers had co-created the curriculum and presented their work together at several conferences, I deemed that it was appropriate and effective to hold a focus group with staff A11 – A13 and a student co-creator (B11) together. These individuals had worked closely together and already had a strong understanding of each other's values and views on student engagement, and a shared vision for co-creating the curriculum across their university – especially since this student was a full and equal partner in the project. Also, since I had seen the group present at two conferences previously, I felt that there was not a strong risk of staff dominating the conversation. Therefore, I believed I would co-develop richer data during a focus group discussion in this case rather than through individual interviews.

Table 3 – Phase 1 Participants: Staff Co-Creation Practitioners

Participant	Co-Creation Variables	University	Subject area	Stage in Career	Length Engaging in Co-Creation	Gender
A1	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Education	Later career/ experienced	1 year	M
A2	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select previous students, co-researchers; 3) select students, not on course, consultants	University 2 (post-1992)	Environmental Biology	Later career/ experienced	5 years	M
A3	select students, not on course, consultants	University 2 (post-1992)	Education	Younger in career	1 year	F
A4	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select previous students, pedagogical co-designers and co-researchers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Medicine	Later career/ experienced	7 years	M

Participant	Co-Creation Variables	University	Subject area	Stage in Career	Length Engaging in Co-Creation	Gender
A5	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select current students, co-researchers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Geosciences	Mid-career	4years	M
A6	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 3 (Russell Group)	Service Learning	Later career/ experienced	10 years	F
A7	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 4 (post-1992)	Psychology	Later career/ experienced	20 years	F
A8	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Politics	Mid-career	1 year	F
A9	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Politics	Later career/ experienced	1 year	F
A10	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select past students, co-researchers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Vet School	Later career/ experienced	5 years	F

Participant	Co-Creation Variables	University	Subject area	Stage in Career	Length Engaging in Co-Creation	Gender
A11	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select students, past students, co-researchers	University 5 (post-1992)	School of Media, Culture & Society	Later career/ experienced	3 years	M
A12	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select students, past students, co-researchers	University 5 (post-1992)	School of Media, Culture and Society	Later career/ experienced	3 years	M
A13	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select students, past students, co-researchers	University 5 (post-1992)	Effective Learning Team	Later career/ experienced	3 years	F

As seen in the previous table, staff participants who are co-creation practitioners work at five of the six Scottish universities where I had identified co-creation of the curriculum activities taking place in the 2014-15 and/or 2015-16 academic years. The demographics of the staff participants show that most are experienced teachers but there is great variation in their experience in co-creating the curriculum with students (between one and twenty years). They came from diverse subject areas including: medicine and veterinary medicine, the sciences (e.g., geosciences and environmental biology), and social sciences (e.g., education, psychology, political science, media and culture, and service learning). Although in my sampling I had aimed for a variety of co-creation project types, a balanced gender split, and a variety of subject areas represented, I did not know staff participants' experience levels with teaching or with co-creating the curriculum until meeting them and making an informed judgement based on the information provided during the interview. It is also worth noting that seven staff had participated in more than one type of co-creation of the curriculum project, demonstrating strong initiative and interest.

At the end of the staff interviews, I used snowball sampling (Punch, 2006) to ask staff to recommend a few student co-creation practitioners with whom they had worked. Although I was worried that some staff would not want to pass on this information to me, they provided me with the contact details of fourteen students who I contacted. Eleven agreed to participate (see Table 4, including participants B1 – B10 who participated in interviews, and participant B11 who participated in the focus group). In one instance, a staff member was reluctant to choose only a few students from her class to refer on to me, so she forwarded information about my research to twelve students to encourage anyone interested to participate. However, since none of them responded, this turned out to be an ineffective method of recruiting student participants.

Table 4 – Phase 1 Participants: Student Co-Creation Practitioners

Participant	Co-Creation	University	Subject area	Stage in Student Journey (at time of Interview)	Mature Student?	Gender
B1	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select students, previous students, pedagogical co-designers and co-researchers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Medicine	4th year undergraduate	No	M
B2	1) whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers; 2) select students, previous students, co-researchers	University 2 (post-1992)	Marine Biology	Graduated two years ago	No	F
B3	select students, not on course, consultants	University 2 (post-1992)	Career Guidance	Postgraduate Taught student	Yes	F
B4	select students, not on course, consultants	University 2 (post-1992)	Psychology and Sociology	Postgraduate Taught student	Yes	F
B5	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Geosciences	4th year undergraduate	No	F
B6	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Geosciences	4th year undergraduate	No	F

Participant	Co-Creation	University	Subject area	Stage in Student Journey (at time of Interview)	Mature Student?	Gender
B7	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Psychology and Environmental Studies	3rd year undergraduate	No	F
B8	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Geosciences	4th year undergraduate	No	M
B9	select students, previous students, pedagogical co-designers	University 3 (Russell Group)	Geosciences	3rd year undergraduate	No	M
B10	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 1 (Russell Group)	Philosophy	4th year undergraduate	No	F
B11	whole-class, current students, pedagogical co-designers	University 5 (post-1992)	Social Science	4th year undergraduate	No	F

Whilst all student interviewees had participated in co-creation projects as undergraduate students, when they were interviewed two were third-years, six were fourth-years, two were taught Masters students, and one was an alumna. There was a gender imbalance with eight female and three male student participants. Nine student participants were below age 25 and two participants were mature students, with a rate of participation in these co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects that appears to be significantly higher than that of mature students participating in Scottish higher education generally.

Semi-Structured Interviews and Focus Group Methods

The interviews with staff lasted between 45 and 157 minutes (with a median of 56.5 minutes), whereas the interviews with students ranged from 35 to 75 minutes (with a median of 47 minutes). It was apparent that staff participants were proud to share

their co-creation work, and many felt flattered that I showed interest in their teaching more broadly. In two instances, staff were extremely keen and elaborated vastly on the interview questions. For example, prior to the 157-minute interview this participant invited me to a coffee meeting and lunch along with a Students' Association Sabbatical Officer during my day-long visit to that university. This participant remarked that it was an indulgence to spend the day with me to reflect on her teaching, and that she saw the interview as a therapeutic activity to give advice to anyone considering engaging in co-creation of the curriculum. While staff had previously reflected more about their co-creation work and had more they wanted to share with me, the student participants were very happy to share their experiences of co-creating the curriculum with staff. They tended to see participating in an interview as a way of giving back to the teacher and their university whilst also advancing academic knowledge about this area of study.

During the semi-structured interviews with co-creation of the curriculum practitioners and their students, I learnt about their perceptions of effective teaching and student engagement, how they conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum, why they engage in it, and what purposes of higher education they believe it will achieve. The interview questions for staff and students were similar but slightly modified and tailored to each group (see Appendices 1 and 2). The focus group discussion with co-creation practitioners covered the aforementioned key areas with a reduced list of questions (see Appendix 3). The staff participants tended to highly value and enjoy teaching, facilitating student engagement, and promoting student-centred learning. The student participants tended to be highly engaged and self-motivated; they valued opportunities for personal and professional development.

Methods: Phases 2 and 3

Sampling with Non-Practitioners of Co-Creation of the Curriculum

As seen above, the Phase 1 data collection focused on a wide variety of co-creators' perspectives (including participants in the vast majority of the limited number of known examples across the Scottish sector); my aim in Phases 2 and 3 was to learn about the perspectives of other students and staff who were not involved in curriculum co-creation. Since this type of partnership work can still be considered a niche activity (Moore-Cherry, 2019) and, as explained above, one of my research aims – based on a critical inquiry theoretical perspective – was to explore how co-creation of the

curriculum can improve higher education outcomes for greater numbers of students and staff. There are approximately 23,000 academic staff and 189,000 undergraduate students across the Scottish sector (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2019) and I was not aiming to gather representative data from the sector as a whole but, rather, wanted to focus on in-depth accounts from a more limited sample of participants within reasonable resource restrictions of the time available during my part-time PhD research. Therefore, I decided to focus Phase 2 and 3 data collection at one Scottish university, whilst recognising that this large, research-intensive institution often competitively recruits staff who conduct internationally-recognised research and full-time undergraduate students who are under 21 years of age who are from Scotland, the rest of the UK, Europe, and abroad. Although I recognise important connections and benefits provided by the nexus of research-led learning and teaching (Brew, 2007; Jenkins & Healey, 2007; Marie, 2018), research-intensive universities can also struggle to balance excellence in both research and teaching (Conroy & Smith, 2017; Dobson & Mori, 2007; Nixon, 2007; Percy & Salter, 1976). Therefore, I felt it could be especially valuable to explore the perspectives of students and staff at a research-intensive university to learn about the challenges they face in academic engagement and teaching enhancement, and whether they would find curriculum co-creation to be valuable in the context of these challenges. I appreciate that teaching-focused universities may face very different challenges in implementing curriculum co-creation, which would be a strong area for further research.

During Phase 2 data collection, I conducted two focus group discussions, each with eight students from the selected Scottish university. Using criterion sampling of wanting to speak with engaged undergraduate students who were interested in learning and teaching but who had not participated in identified co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects, I promoted the focus groups to student representatives since I thought they might be most interested and willing to participate. Student representatives tend to be democratically-selected student leaders who are involved in the university community, and their role often draws on similar principles to co-creation of the curriculum. In some instances, student representatives may work in partnership with staff to improve the quality of the student experience. Furthermore, through my work within a Scottish students' association, I could promote the focus groups easily to student representatives via newsletters.

The Phase 2 focus group participants are shown in Table 5. Students who participated benefitted from an opportunity to discuss and reflect on excellence and engagement in higher education. They were not compensated for their participation but were offered a free lunch and the ability to use workshop participation as a skills development session which helped them work toward a professional development award for student representatives.

Table 5 – Phase 2 Participants: Student Non-Practitioners of Co-Creation of the Curriculum

Participant	Focus Group	Subject area	Stage in Student Journey (at time of Interview)	Mature Student?	Gender
C1	Focus Group 1	Informatics	2nd year undergraduate	No	M
C2	Focus Group 1	International relations	2nd year undergraduate	No	F
C3	Focus Group 1	Neuroscience	4th year undergraduate	No	M
C4	Focus Group 1	Literature	4th year undergraduate	No	F
C5	Focus Group 1	Economics and politics	4th year undergraduate	No	M
C6	Focus Group 1	Neuroscience	4th year undergraduate	No	F
C7	Focus Group 1	Geography	4th year undergraduate	No	F
C8	Focus Group 1	Neuroscience	3rd year undergraduate	No	F
C9	Focus Group 2	Psychology	3rd year undergraduate	No	F
C10	Focus Group 2	Economics and finance	1st year undergraduate	No	F

Participant	Focus Group	Subject area	Stage in Student Journey (at time of Interview)	Mature Student?	Gender
C11	Focus Group 2	Health studies	1st year undergraduate	No	F
C12	Focus Group 2	International relations	1st year undergraduate	No	F
C13	Focus Group 2	Social work	1st year undergraduate	No	F
C14	Focus Group 2	Philosophy and politics	1st year undergraduate	No	F
C15	Focus Group 2	Chemical physics	3rd year undergraduate	No	F
C16	Focus Group 2	Psychology	Taught Masters student	No	F

In Phase 3 of data collection, I focused on recruiting academic staff (or, in a few cases, professional services staff who work closely with students) from the same research-intensive Scottish university as Phase 2. I promoted the focus groups to staff who were working towards earning a Higher Education Academy Fellowship with Advance HE, and to staff who had been nominated for a student-led Teaching Award. I used criterion sampling to speak with staff who were interested in improving learning and teaching practices and engaging students. I aimed to learn about staff perceptions of co-creation of the curriculum regardless of whether or not they had engaged in these practices previously, and (as was the case in the previous data collection phases) regardless of their academic subject area. As in Phase 2, individuals were not compensated for their participation but staff were offered a free lunch and the opportunity to discuss teaching excellence and student engagement with others interested in these topics. The Phase 3 staff participants are shown in Table 6.

Table 6 – Phase 3 Participants: Staff Non-Practitioners of Co-creation of the Curriculum

Participant	Focus Group	Subject Area	Academic or Professional Services	Stage in Career	Gender
D1	Staff Focus Group 1	Social sciences	Professional services	Early career	F
D2	Staff Focus Group 1	Literature	Professional services	Early career	F
D3	Staff Focus Group 1	Social sciences	Academic tutor	Early career	M
D4	Staff Focus Group 1	Informatics	Academic tutor trainer	Early career	F
D5	Staff Focus Group 1	Arts	Academic tutor	Early career	M
D6	Staff Focus Group 1	Biology	Postdoc	Mid-career	F
D7	Staff Focus Group 2	Mathematics	Academic tutor	Mid-career	M
D8	Staff Focus Group 2	Nursing	Academic	Later career/ experienced	F
D9	Staff Focus Group 2	Education	Academic	Mid-career	F

Focus Groups Including an Arts-Based Approach Drawing on Photo-Elicitation

Methods

As was discussed briefly in my description of the choice of methods in my methodology, an arts-based approach expands the possibilities of traditional qualitative research since it makes new connections to reach participants and helps them articulate their views in new ways (Burge et al., 2016; Leavy, 2015). Leavy (2015, p. 19) describes how ‘The arts simply provide researchers a broader palette of investigative and communication tools with which to garner and relay a range of social meanings’ (Leavy 2015, p. 19). Furthermore, an arts-based approach recognises that individuals have different perspectives and that there are multiple versions of reality (Chappell & Barone, 2012), and this approach helps researchers sensitively portray different participants and their circumstances when they focus on creative self-reflection, the expression of abstract ideas, and empathy (Harper, 2002; Pain, 2012).

The full plan for Phase 2 data collection with students is provided in Appendix 4, including the images used in the photo-elicitation activity and the focus group discussion questions. I began each focus group with lunch and informal discussions. I had planned for student participants to share confidentially on paper their aims in higher education when they started their degree, and whether this was the same as their current aims. This was intended to be a quiet activity for students to work on as they arrived at the focus group. When I began the focus group with the photo-elicitation activity, I asked students to choose one image from a selection of ten real or mythical animals representing how they wanted to feel at the end of their university degree and what dreams they hoped higher education would help them achieve as a successful graduate. However, the first student who shared during the focus group conflated the two activities and chose one animal to represent how he felt when he started university and another animal to show how he wanted to feel at the end of his degree. Although this was unexpected, I encouraged other participants to follow suit to be consistent, and the comparisons and descriptions the students provided yielded richer discourse than incorporating the writing activity. In subsequent focus groups with staff, participants chose one image of an animal to represent how they generally described their students at the beginning of their undergraduate degree, and a second image to describe how they hope students will be as they complete their studies.

The photos were varied intentionally to allow participants to interpret them in different ways. Whilst as a researcher I selected the set of images, I wanted participants to use the figurative and symbolic photos to articulate their own views since the variety of animals, expressions, and attributes could be interpreted subjectively. Like in the arts-based work of Leavy (2015), this photo-elicitation activity helped participants think about and reflect on their views, create critical awareness, raise consciousness, and promote dialogue that evoked emotion-based responses that provided more full and complex accounts than simply a group discussion about these abstract concepts.

After this initial activity, I led a focus group discussion about participants' perceptions of effective teaching, student engagement, and – once the concept had been introduced based on initial findings from Phase 1 – perceptions of benefits and challenges of co-creating the curriculum. Key aspects of these discussions were introducing the topic of co-creation of the curriculum (with which many participants were not familiar), exploring interest in engaging in it, and examining what support

would be needed for individuals to feel comfortable participating in co-creation projects. The focus group discussion questions were similar to those used in Phase 1 of the data collection so they could be compared, but the number of questions was decreased for the focus group format. I audio-recorded each focus group discussion for transcription, noting the students' chosen images from the photo-elicitation activity.

The Phase 3 focus group discussion with staff had a similar format, with the exception that I worked with two student co-researchers to collaboratively lead the photo-elicitation activity and discussions with staff (see Appendix 5 for the full plan). This aspect of co-inquiry with student co-researchers was introduced in this phase to advance my experiential learning of partnership work and add depth to my research, which I explain more fully in the next section. Like in Phase 2, the Phase 3 focus groups began with the same photo-elicitation activity but the student co-researchers suggested adding two photos which had not been used with the students: a proud lion and a tired puppy (see Appendix 5). Interestingly, the staff participants commented on these images but did not choose them to reflect their aims for students in higher education. As before, this photo-elicitation activity helped participants introduce themselves to one another and articulate their aims in higher education for students. After this initial activity, the student co-researchers and I led the focus group discussion and we concluded with the student co-researchers sharing initial co-analysis of Phase 2 data (from the student focus groups) with staff. This provoked interesting discussions with staff participants and helped them learn more about student views, since many of them had not previously discussed these topics with students.

Co-Inquiry and Deliberative Democratic Research Methods

I applied for and received a University of Edinburgh Innovative Initiative Grant to gain funding for lunches during the Phase 2 and 3 focus group discussions, for transcribing this data, and for compensating two student co-researchers for their contributions in Phase 3. I recruited the student co-researchers from the group of student participants in the Phase 2 focus groups, with five applicants emailing me with reasons why they would like to take on this role. I wanted to incorporate co-inquiry methods to experience co-creation of research, provide opportunities for students to become co-researchers, and learn together from these experiences. I chose two students based on their statements about what they felt they could contribute to the role and why they

wanted to become involved in this project. Each student co-researcher was expected to participate in approximately 10 hours of work over the course of two months.

It was important that I retained ownership over the project since it contributed to my PhD research and I had planned the activities in which student co-researchers would participate. During the Phase 3 focus groups with staff, the co-researchers helped ask discussion questions and, at the end, summarised our initial joint analysis from the student focus groups to lead a discussion with staff comparing staff and student responses. It was beneficial that the student co-researchers helped to explore with staff how co-creation practices could be implemented at a research-intensive university to enhance learning and teaching. They received £50 Amazon vouchers for their time, and they were invited to co-present on the project at the Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland international conference held in March 2017. It was significant to me that they were compensated financially for their contributions and that they had professional development opportunities to contribute to academic research, gain research skills, and present at a conference.

The two selected student co-researchers were each undergraduate, female, and international students. While one was a first-year student, the other was a third-year. Both also studied social sciences, with one studying health and the other studying psychology. They were each proactive, thoughtful, hard-working students who had experience with student representation roles and contributed actively to the project. Working with the two student co-researchers was a rewarding way to incorporate elements of partnership working into my research by sharing ownership with two students over a project. I reflect on the use of co-inquiry research methods in my discussion chapter.

Methods: Data Analysis

Transcription

After each interview and focus group, I took field notes to record initial observations and reactions about the context, proceedings, and content. With permission from each participant, I also had the audio recording from each Phase 1 interview and the focus group transcribed over a period of eight months (January to August 2016). I transcribed eight interviews but, due to the part-time nature of my research and the time-consuming nature of transcribing, I then employed individuals to transcribe the

other interviews and focus groups. During summer 2016, a student entering university transcribed eight student interviews and a professional administrator transcribed two staff interviews, one student interview, and the focus group with co-creation practitioners. Funding from the Innovative Initiative Grant helped pay two students (one of whom was also a co-researcher) to transcribe the four focus group discussions from Phases 2 and 3.

Gibbs (2007) highlights that transcripts are representations of reality at one particular time and context, and that different approaches to transcription may affect the qualitative data. Although five individuals including me transcribed the 25 audio recordings, I checked all transcripts to help ensure accuracy and consistency. My research questions did not necessitate verbatim transcripts (capturing verbal tics, pauses, or repetitions) because I was not focused on linguistic analysis. Therefore, the transcribers captured what was said in a manner that was understandable to readers, minimised repetition, and portrayed participants favourably (by removing superfluous words such as 'um' and 'like') yet in a way that was faithful to the data collected. I felt employing other transcribers was also beneficial for speeding up the transcription process which was already lengthy alongside other academic work including coding and further reading of relevant literature throughout this iterative process.

Constant Comparative Analysis

I have drawn on aspects of constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012) to analyse my data. This was beneficial because it is an 'inductive, iterative, interactive, and comparative method geared towards theory construction' (Thornberg & Charmaz, 2012, p. 41). These methods helped me to answer my research questions by enabling me to identify grounded, core concepts that emerged from my data about participants' conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum, and whether it advances participants' views on the aims of higher education.

I used the NVivo qualitative data analysis software to facilitate coding and analysis of the large quantity of over 223,000 words of text-based data I had collected. Based on the constructivist grounded theory work of Charmaz (2006), I initially tried line-by-line, 'in vivo' coding for one interview. However, after developing over 250 codes and

finding it too unwieldy to categorise them as well as subsequent in vivo codes from the 25 data sources, I abandoned this form of coding. I then focused on creating data-driven, descriptive, and thematic codes whilst using the constant comparative method across all of the interview and focus group data (see Appendix 6 for details of all codes and code hierarchies developed). This helped me explore my data in new ways and develop more manageable code hierarchies. Unlike classic grounded theory that advocates exploring the data before reading any related literature, I agree with Charmaz (2006) that the more flexible, constructivist grounded theory approach of conducting a literature review first is appropriate for minimising trivial findings or repeating others' findings. After using NVivo to create initial codes and code hierarchies, I then examined relevant codes (usually including several hundred entries) more closely using Microsoft Word to create clearer, nuanced sub-categories. This helped me better understand and articulate the themes arising from my data.

Research Stance and Ethical Considerations

I have followed the guidelines set out by the British Educational Research Association (2001) throughout my research. Furthermore, Mertens (2012) highlights the ethical principles of beneficence, respect, and justice. Throughout my research, I have tried to maximise benefits to participants and minimise risk to them. I applied for and received level 1 ethical clearance which was approved by my research supervisors and the Moray House Ethics Committee. Furthermore, by making the aims of my study and the aspects of voluntary participation transparent through using participant information sheets and consent forms (see Appendices 7 and 8), I respected participants by allowing them to choose to participate through a clear process. I also worked towards fair, non-exploitative participation that minimised the intrusiveness of the research and tried to maximise benefits for participants reflecting on their practices and learning about co-creation of the curriculum.

Furthermore, just as I believe it is important to describe my positionality and research assumptions, I believe it is important to be reflexive throughout my constructivist research process (Mertens, 2012). Like Pillow (2003, p. 176), I used 'reflexivity as a methodological tool as it intersects with debates and questions surrounding representation and legitimization in qualitative research'. As in critical reflexivity (Trowler & Trowler, 2010), I see reflexivity in my research as being conscious and transparent about my assumptions, biases, and views of the world as well as how the

research data was constructed including participants' social, cultural, and political constructs. As an insider working in the higher education sector, reflexivity has helped me to provide readers with insight about how I approach my data collection (including co-production of the qualitative data with participants and elements of co-inquiry with student co-researchers), data analysis, and presentation of my research findings.

As described above, I have certain assumptions and beliefs about aims of higher education, student engagement, and co-creation of the curriculum. During the semi-structured interviews and focus groups, I made every effort to avoid influencing participants' beliefs in order to facilitate transparent discussions, co-create the data, and tease out participants' views on specific subjects. Like White (2002) and Cousin (2009), I understand that there is a political nature to knowledge; therefore, I felt it was important to be open about my positionality when asked by participants and in some cases I interjected additional questions which revealed my beliefs about higher education but allowed us to have uninhibited discussions to explore some topics in new ways. White (2002) recognises the presence of academic hierarchies which can affect interviews, especially with respect to staff researchers developing reciprocity with undergraduate students. Whilst this is an ethical consideration, I feel I mitigated this through my PhD student role, collegial approach to valuing students' contributions, and working with student co-researchers to empower them to participate in partnerships.

I consider that, alongside participants in my research, I co-created the qualitative data that was produced. I played a leadership role by designing the interview questions, sometimes reordering them, and asking follow-up questions according to the flow of the conversation and the topics raised by the participants. Therefore, since I tailored the data collection as appropriate, I was not going through a rigid set of structured interview questions to mine data on participants' perspectives. By working together to explore topics relating to learning and teaching, we worked together to develop new perspectives and knowledge. For instance, within an exchange with Staff Participant 6, I helped provoke her reflection on confidence in teaching experience and how that may be an important aspect for some teachers who lead co-creation projects. While she first stated that teaching experience may not be an important factor, my asking for clarification led the participant to reflect more on her own development as a teacher

leading co-creation of the curriculum in her classroom. Through this exchange, the qualitative data changed and became richer as she clarified her response.

I provided both students and staff participating at all stages of the research with the space and opportunity to reflect on the topics of effective teaching, student engagement, and co-creation of the curriculum. Furthermore, co-creation practitioners had the opportunity to share and show off their work and have it recognised through my research. For example, Student B1 was keen to show me the educational resource he had developed alongside staff, and at the end of the interview he logged on to the virtual learning environment to show me the new, interactive resource. Furthermore, Staff A5 said he was happy to participate in the interview since it had been interesting and useful for him to reflect on the topics discussed. Staff A7 went a step further by stating that she felt the interview validated her work and helped her reflect on developments in her teaching. Several participants commented that they appreciated the space to reflect whilst participating in my research and, especially for staff who had thought quite a lot about introducing new pedagogy into the classroom, the interview was beneficial for articulating what worked well and also what challenges they overcame to run successful co-creation projects. It was particularly rewarding for me to feel that participants benefitted and that there was reciprocity in my research.

Whilst, as Pugsley (2002, p. 19) states, 'it can be argued that all social study is intrusive and invasive', I aimed to minimise the invasiveness of my research to participants. I appreciate that both students and staff gave me precious time to participate in interviews and focus groups. Whilst I was not able to compensate interview or focus group participants, where appropriate I did purchase refreshments. Most interviews in Phase 1 with staff took place in a participant's office for their convenience. Most interviews with students took place at a café and I bought participants coffee to compensate them in a small way for their time. In Phases 2 and 3, I provided lunch for the focus group participants and shared initial findings from earlier stages of the research to help them learn more about co-creation of the curriculum. As described above, the student co-researchers were also compensated with vouchers provided through funding from the Innovative Initiative Grant.

My relationship with participants differed in each phase of the research. I viewed both staff and student participants in Phase 1 as experts in their own experiences of co-creation of the curriculum. In Phases 2 and 3, I was both working with participants to learn their views of best practices in teaching and student engagement and also helping them learn about co-creation of the curriculum whilst exploring their initial thoughts about this practice. Throughout these research phases, I was aware that I was guiding and influencing our discussions but, ultimately, I tried to share control with participants. When I was working with the student co-researchers, I was especially conscious that I had set the framework and aims of the project and was attempting to create a space to work in partnership within the confines of the pre-established project. Whilst I valued and respected the student co-researchers' views as equal to mine, I recognised that they were not equal in designing the project or in the time I could ask them to contribute.

Throughout the research process, I ensured all participants' confidentiality; I stored all data securely on a password-protected computer and backed up all data on secure University of Edinburgh servers using Datasync. I also ensured the confidentiality of the higher education institutions within which participants work and study. Once the Phase 1 interviews with staff were completed, I emailed participants with the transcript from their interview. In some cases, I was only able to follow up with them several months after the interview had taken place because of the part-time nature of my research and the time-consuming nature of transcribing the extensive qualitative data. I received very few responses from individuals but those who responded thanked me for following up, albeit without providing any specific feedback on the text. The only exception to this was in the case of Staff A3 when, unfortunately, the audio recorder did not function properly so I had to reconstruct the interview from my notes. In this instance, the participant's clarifications to the text were extremely valuable. In part due to the delay in the transcription work, the timing of transcripts being completed over the summer after some student participants had graduated, and the low response from staff, I decided not to email student interviewees with transcripts of their interviews. I also did not feel this would be effective for focus group participants in Phases 2 and 3 since I had anonymised them. Although Cousin (2009) suggests that confirming correct analysis of the data with participants can be more helpful to them than confirming the written transcript, I decided not to do so because the thematic, constant-comparative analysis of triangulation across data inputs did not

lend itself to analysis on an individual level. Furthermore, there was a time lag of over a year between conducting the first interviews and beginning the analysis phase.

Pillow (2003, p. 181) describes 'four reflexive strategies – reflexivity as recognition of self; reflexivity as recognition of other; reflexivity as truth; reflexivity as transcendence...'. I used reflexivity in these four ways to 1) recognise my background and assumptions, 2) acknowledge different forms of power in my working relationships with participants whilst promoting their own agency, 3) strive to achieve a sense of validity for my conclusions, and 4) corroborate how I present my findings. Above, I have aimed to be transparent about my positionality, stance, and assumptions. I have acknowledged power with different cohorts of participants and, through co-production of the data, promoted their agency in the research process. Through my approach to data analysis and presentation of research findings, I have made every attempt to be truthful to the data and establish validity. In these ways, using reflexivity has helped me in 'attempting to account for how their [researchers'] selves interact and impact the research process' (Pillow, 2003, p. 182) to ensure that my research would be legitimate and robust.

Reflections on the Methodology

In this section, I start by reflecting on the strengths, limitations, and – drawing on the work of Smith (2018) – 'generalisabilities' of my methodology. I then turn to reflect in particular on my data collection methods to explore how they provided valuable contributions to my methodology.

Strengths, Limitations, and Generalisabilities of the Methodology

My careful focus on a small sample brought advantages as well as disadvantages. The number of authentic co-creation-of-the-curriculum initiatives in Scotland was limited at the time of my data collection and examples were difficult to identify. Many more instances of curriculum co-creation may have been taking place behind closed classroom doors, but I thoroughly reviewed topical Scottish publications and attended relevant conference presentations, events, and meetings that helped me to identify as wide a range of curriculum co-creation examples as possible. These examples tended to be grassroots-led by passionate, individual academics except in two cases that were inspired by top-down, institutional initiatives at these universities. The lack of diversity in the selection of student co-creators and partners has been identified

already as a challenge across the wider, global landscape of students-as-partners initiatives (Bindra et al., 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017); the same also appears to be the case in this study with highly engaged students and staff often self-selecting to engage in co-creation projects.

As detailed earlier in this chapter, it was also important to explore the rich perspectives of those not involved in curriculum co-creation, although resource limitations and the scope of my PhD research meant that I focused this data collection at one particular university. I also anticipated that those who are not interested in learning and teaching did not choose to participate in my research. Despite these limitations, I generated a large amount of data and the following results from engaged students and staff provide an interpretivist account of co-creation of the curriculum, with the aim of facilitating dialogue about the benefits of upscaling these initiatives to become more prevalent and inclusive.

My qualitative research methodology is consistent with my epistemology and ontology described at the beginning of this chapter, and I have drawn on the framework provided by Daniel (2019) to demonstrate rigorous methodology in the key areas of trustworthiness, auditability, credibility, and transferability. Of course transparency does not guarantee trustworthiness; however, I have worked to evidence trustworthiness and auditability by transparently describing my positionality, being clear and consistent within each of my data collection phases, and taking a systematic approach to my data analysis including my coding. Although the provision of direct quotations does not necessarily demonstrate auditability and credibility, I have worked to demonstrate these attributes by providing a wide range of direct quotations throughout my findings chapters as well as my original interview questions and NVivo coding in the appendices. The provision of the interview questions in written form necessarily has limitations as a way of demonstrating credibility, since the reader is not privy to the interviewer's tone of voice, facial expressions, gestures and posture which form important part of the interview. In addition, I have demonstrated credibility through ensuring my research design is appropriate for my research questions, and by showing that my findings are congruent with student co-researchers' analysis for Phases 2 and 3 data. Furthermore, I have exhibited both credibility and transferability by providing detailed descriptions of my sampling and methods.

Like Smith (2018), I do not apologise for my qualitative research since I want to avoid positioning it as inferior to quantitative research and, instead, show its benefits and the opportunities available to carefully generalise from this work. The notion of statistical-probabilistic generalisability is not congruent with the epistemology underpinning my qualitative research; by contrast, transferability is more consistent with my social constructivist epistemology in that it empowers others to explore how findings from my particular research context may be applicable in other contexts (Smith, 2018). Furthermore, in my discussion chapter I provide a robust analysis of many findings that I have already published (and which have, therefore, been judged to be of good quality within international peer-review processes and deemed to be relevant and useful to international researchers and practitioners). My work also demonstrates analytical generalisation through both A) concept generalisation showing how my findings relate to certain concepts such as creativity and Third Space and B) theoretical generalisation showing how my results relate to established concepts and theories of curriculum co-creation, student/staff partnerships, student engagement, and student development. Drawing on critical inquiry to challenge the status quo, my research may also provide opportunities for provocative generalisability where readers may be inspired to think in new ways about the possibilities that curriculum co-creation could offer in different contexts.

Reflections on Data Collection Methods including Photo Elicitation and Co-Inquiry for Co-Researching Co-Creation of the Curriculum

While interviews and focus groups tend to be commonly accepted and used qualitative research methods, they facilitate the collection of rich, in-depth accounts of participants' experiences and perspectives (Creswell, 2009; Henwood & Pidgeon, 1993; Lapan, Quartaroli, & Riemer, 2012). Like in the work of other qualitative researchers (Janesick, 1998; Measor, 1985), it was particularly important for me to develop rapport with participants in order to gain their trust and develop authentic communication with them. During semi-structured interviews, this rapport facilitated focused discussions that helped me work with co-creators to 'attempt to grapple with complex experiences' (p. 72) and 'support an explicit, dialogic meaning-making direction' (Cousin, 2009, p. 74) when exploring participants' conceptualisations and experiences of curriculum co-creation. Following Phase 1 data collection with co-creators, the experiences of using focus group, photo-elicitation, and co-inquiry methods were extremely valuable aspects of my research methods during the data

collection in Phases 2 and 3. Like in other higher education research described by Cousin (2009), focus groups in my study provided valuable spaces for interactive, exploratory discussions with groups of students and staff to understand difficulties in traditional curricula as well as the opportunities and challenges that curriculum co-creation could present. Throughout all aspects of data collection, I saw myself as co-creating qualitative data with participants by recognising my positionality and interests, but I was also able to experience more of the benefits as well as the challenges of partnership when working with undergraduate student co-researchers. In addition, co-inquiry and photo-elicitation methods were particularly congruous with the topic of my research since I was putting into practice the values that underpin co-creation of the curriculum which helped add a sense of authenticity to my research and triangulate my data analysis.

Like in the work of Levy, Little, and Whelan (2011), Burge et al. (2016), and Malchiodi (2005), using photo-elicitation methods embedded within an arts-based approach complemented my helped participants reflect on their aims, make new connections, and articulate their views. Eisner (1997, p. 4) suggests that arts-based methods 'open up new ways of seeing and saying'. For Burge et al. (2016, p. 735), using arts-based research activities with tutors and academics helped them re-examine previously held assumptions, which 'encouraged fresh ways of thinking and gave rise to new insights'. Similarly, drawing on imagery in my research helped participants articulate their perspectives whilst going beyond metaphors to reflect and describe in new ways their aims in higher education. Furthermore, there were no right or wrong selections of photos, and what was important was for the images to stimulate a connection which would help participants articulate their views about aims in higher education that are often challenging to describe beyond clichés. Arts-based work can facilitate 'productive ambiguity... [since] the material presented is more evocative than denotative, and in its evocation, it generates insight and invites attention to complexity' (Eisner, 1997, p. 8). For participants, it also appeared that the productive ambiguity of the photos stimulated a variety of perspectives, including different ways of interpreting the same image. This provided rich qualitative data, which will be discussed further in Chapter 4 where I describe findings relating to participants' aims for higher education.

Experiencing co-inquiry methods by working with student co-researchers also facilitated my own new perspectives and insights into the co-creation experience that helped me relate to and better understand the experiences of student and staff co-creators. In practice, our collaborative project meant developing a partnership as co-researchers by having an open dialogue, constructively exploring joint analysis of the Phase 2 qualitative data and learning from students' different perspectives. Co-inquiry proved beneficial and relevant to co-creation since it facilitated a deliberative democratic approach that 'involves key stakeholders in the study, promotes dialogue with and among researchers, and enhances deliberation about research findings' (House, 2012, p. 451).

There were many benefits from our work as co-inquirers, but there were also challenges. We each found it difficult to balance the time this work required with our many other obligations including studies, paid work, and extracurricular activities. It was also challenging to work fully in partnership when I had led on decision-making to initiate and gain funding for this part of the work, including decisions relating to the: research questions, project focus, and amount of time undergraduate co-researchers would be paid. Participants in my study and in the research by Deeley and Bovill (2017) have also questioned the extent to which partnerships can provide fully equal decision-making opportunities when one partner – usually staff or more experienced student leaders – needs to retain ownership over some areas of co-created projects despite working to promote equity and democratic decision-making as much as possible. However, Bovill (2014) highlights how both staff and students recognise 'that there are some important preliminary design decisions' that are necessary before involving students in co-creation projects. Since this experience of co-researching was one part of my wider PhD data collection, I planned the research processes and was ultimately responsible for the project through reporting to my research supervisors and university funders.

I recognised that I needed to retain ownership over the aspects of this project that are part of my PhD research, but I was also concerned that taking too large of a leadership role in steering the project could detract from the research partnership. Therefore, it was challenging at first to give up some control to the undergraduate co-researchers. Our partnership grew throughout the project and the student co-researchers often surpassed my expectations through providing outstanding contributions, choosing to

co-present our work at an international conference, and even going on to publish a reflective essay describing our combined work. Students surpassing staff members' already high expectations is a finding I return to in the discussion chapter.

For the undergraduate co-researchers, it was the first time they were involved in a research project. We reflected on the valuable experience they gained, as well as the communication and teamwork skills they developed. For me, working with undergraduate co-researchers was also an extremely positive experience. I was keen to see whether their analysis of the data triangulated with mine. We generally shared similar perspectives on themes arising from the data, and it was beneficial – and felt validating – to talk through them. The co-researchers' contributions to the staff focus groups also changed the dynamic positively and led to vibrant discussions with the staff asking follow-up questions directly to the undergraduate co-researchers. It was sometimes particularly difficult for the undergraduate co-researchers to not over-influence staff focus group discussions when discussing areas about which they are passionate. We all would have liked to contribute our own perspectives earlier in the discussions but refrained until the end, when we allowed ourselves to have a more open conversation with participants after presenting the summary of themes arising from the student focus groups. Since students traditionally have less power than staff in the classroom (Cook-Sather et al., 2014), this experience recognised student researchers' expertise and understanding of student perspectives. We, as both postgraduate and undergraduate student co-researchers, also learnt from staff and vice versa, which modelled the partnership approach that we were examining.

Throughout, I reflected on terminology and the difference between student consultant and co-researcher role, since I originally referred to the role as 'student consultants' in the Innovative Initiative Grant funding application. Bovill et al. (2016) present a model of four student roles in co-creation including consultants, co-researchers, pedagogical co-designers, and representatives. They define the student consultant role as 'sharing and discussing valuable perspectives on learning and teaching' and the student co-researcher role as 'collaborating meaningfully on teaching and learning research or subject-based research with staff' (2016, pp. 197 - 198). During the student focus groups, I considered all participants to be consultants sharing and discussing valuable perspectives on learning and teaching that contributed to my research. However, I considered the two, selected student co-creators as co-

researchers since they shared ownership over some aspects of the work by drafting the presentation of our research findings and presenting them to staff at the end of the staff focus groups to lead further discussion.

I felt pleasantly surprised at the new ideas I gained from co-creating aspects of my research, and I particularly enjoyed learning from one of the student consultants about her discipline of health studies where co-production in healthcare is growing and becoming important to give patients agency. Partnerships in healthcare can improve outcomes for patients just as there are many benefits for students and staff who co-create the curriculum. Often in the healthcare sector, the term ‘co-production’ is used instead of ‘co-creation’ to highlight the behaviour or intervention tool that is produced in partnership with patients to increase their buy-in and potential to have a positive outcome. For example, clinicians used co-production to increase patients’ understanding and decision-making power whilst tailoring lifestyle changes to their abilities and motivation levels (Realpe, Wallace, Adams et al., 2015). Their work identifying 22 different co-produced health behaviours – that shifted power and mindsets in healthcare settings – resonated with the work of Mercer-Mapstone et al. (2017) and Cook-Sather et al. (2014) who show the wide range of ways to implement co-creation and partnership work in higher education. I saw strong parallels between patient/user/student-centred methods that facilitate shared decision-making, creative solutions, and – in some cases – transformative learning in different sectors.

Chapter Summary

Drawing on the work of Freire (1972), I take a theoretical perspective including interpretivism and critical inquiry, informed by a social constructivist epistemology. My theoretical perspective, ontology, and epistemology informed the development of my research questions about the nature of co-creation of the curriculum in the Scottish higher education sector, and the aims of higher education that co-creation may help students and staff achieve. I chose not to adhere to any one established methodology, but, instead, I incorporated aspects of different qualitative methodologies to answer my research questions. During a multi-phase approach, I used a variety of methods including interviews with co-creation practitioners, focus groups including photo-elicitation methods with non-practitioners, co-inquiry with student co-researchers, and constant comparative analysis drawing on constructivist grounded theory.



Chapter 4: Findings: Values and Aims for Higher Education

*I want to be ready to fly and follow the field and the path
that interests me the most.
– Student C10*

Introduction

In this chapter, I present some student co-creators' and many staff co-creators' aims for students in higher education along with the vibrant descriptions of other student and staff aims evoked by the arts-based research methods during the focus group discussions. This chapter and subsequent chapters include the voices of: A) staff co-creation practitioners (in Table 3 in Chapter 3), B) student co-creation practitioners (in Table 4 in Chapter 3), C) student representatives who participated in focus group discussions (in Table 5 in Chapter 3), and D) other engaged staff who participated in focus groups (in Table 6 in Chapter 3). Participants are labelled with respect to these four categories so that it is apparent that Staff A5, for example, is the fifth staff co-creation practitioner and Student C11 is the eleventh engaged student without co-creation experience who participated in a focus group discussion. During the interviews in Phase 1 of the data collection, I discussed with staff co-creators their long-term aims for students in higher education, and I asked student co-creators why they chose to attend university as opposed to pursuing other options. These prompts influenced the type of responses I received, but the extensive qualitative data shows co-creators' wider aims in higher education that, in some cases, may motivate and inform their choices to become involved in curriculum co-creation projects.

It is worth noting here that some students and staff do not frequently reflect on their aims in higher education. Seven out of the eleven student co-creators state that they didn't have clear aims when starting university. This may be the case particularly for Scottish students since, as Student B2 describes, 'it's free to go to university, you don't really think anything of it and you just go. You get a loan [for living expenses] and the fees are paid for you.' Furthermore, many student participants like B9 reflect that '...there was a very big focus on "if you are intelligent, you go to Uni"; it was the successful option'. Similarly, Student B5 describes that '...it was just the next step, and we kind of shuffled forward to it'. In addition, Staff D3 shares that the aims of higher education are often not discussed, but they can have a strong effect on choices in teaching and learning:

I think we have a wide variation of goals... The difficult thing is that we're not really having this conversation of 'what is this for' in the first place and

I think all of these questions about methods approaches, and practices really link back to that question.

Although this participant goes on to suggest that more engaged and reflective teachers discuss their aims, he astutely points out the lack of discussion of aims and values in higher education despite their significant influence on teaching.

In Phases 2 and 3 of the data collection, the arts-based methods incorporated during the focus group discussions elicited more rich and nuanced responses than equivalent interview questions used in Phase 1. Using images helped participants describe how they want students to feel when graduating and what dreams they hope higher education will help achieve in the future. Below, I initially present reflective analysis of how these methods contributed to the study, followed by thematic analysis of students and staff aims elicited using these methods. While this chapter does not focus on co-creation of the curriculum, it provides a foundation for introducing subsequent results to help answer the research sub-question 'How does co-creation of the curriculum help students and staff work towards achieving their aims in higher education?'.

[Using Arts-Based Methods to Learn about Aims for Higher Education](#)

The animal images in the arts-based activity (see Appendix Items 4 and 5) fostered fascinating, reflective accounts, particularly when different participants used the same image to describe divergent perceptions. It is helpful to reflect on the depth of the qualitative data resulting from incorporating arts-based methods. For example, many staff chose the duckling image to describe their aims of nurturing students who were regarded as vulnerable at the start of their university studies. Staff D8 reflects:

They come in and, like the duckling, they are very enthusiastic, very motivated. They want to fly before they can walk, and they look for role models... I see my role as one of nurturing and supporting, wanting to recognise early any dangers, looking out for the fox in the trees waiting to poach them... It's about letting them go out to spread their wings but sort of gathering them back in... to protect them from the foxes; it's finding that balance...

It is particularly striking how this staff member speaks about the fox representing dangers to students that she tries to avoid so they can continue to grow, but then she goes on to state her aim for students to become foxes, describing them differently:

I see the fox as being resilient, able to change with the seasons, cope with the times, respond to their environment. I want them to be prepared... but I want them to do more than survive: I want them to be able to flourish...

This participant provides a reflective account that includes depth as well as powerful imagery while reflecting in different ways on the representations of the animals. However, it is interesting that some students conceptualise this same duckling image in a contrasting way. Student C4 says:

I think this is what I'm going to end up as: a little duckling. I've noticed the importance of staying afloat. It's good staying afloat, it's an achievement and I'm still young!

While both staff and student participants use the duckling image to describe survival, the student suggests that learning to cope and balance various aspects of engagement at university is a form of flourishing in and of itself.

Staff D9 provides a fascinating account that draws on various images to illustrate almost all of the themes that emerge amongst participants' reflections. She states:

My two central aims of everything that I'm teaching is that the students understand the concepts and also that they understand learning as a collaborative process. The duck/horse is saying they may come in uncertain of what's going to come, uncertain potentially about what their identity is in the class... They're bringing, obviously, a mixed background of knowledge and experience so I see myself as trying to sort that out with them. This interesting picture of a tiger/eagle was to say that I hope that they have the focus of the tiger and understand what it is that they want after graduating, how they're going to use the theoretical notions to critique practice if they're going to become educators which a lot of them are going to be. Combining that with the bird image is also seeing the experimental aspect of their attitude that in my mind they should come out with in terms of being flexible, open to new possibilities, and willing to explore. Then I had to combine it with the two lizards [with one hanging off a branch and holding another lizard dangling below] because one of my aims is that they see learning as a collaborative process.

This complex account of this educator's values and aims in higher education sheds light on many of the themes that arise throughout this chapter, which will be presented more fully below.

The themes that arise in participants' aims in higher education focus on the development of students' skills and attributes including: a) personal and professional development; b) confidence; c) critical and independent thinking skills; d) employability and/or career direction; e) passion for lifelong learning; f) civic engagement; and g) character and values. The sections below draw on but do not focus on the images themselves while attempting to bring together a wide range of staff and students conceptualisations of their aims of higher education. Perhaps

because of the way questions were asked, participants focused on students' development of skills and attributes as their key aim, and they strikingly do not emphasise content knowledge or subject expertise. I describe each of the sub-themes below to show how they might contribute to individuals' choices to engage actively in higher education, and in co-creation of the curriculum in particular.

Personal and Professional Development

Many participants speak about the importance of students' personal and professional development as aims which, in some cases, can be transformational for them. Student C15 describes 'general growing' through scaffolded learning 'that makes me realise all the opportunities'. Similarly, Student B7 says:

I think a big part about going to university is not just what you learn but it's an environment where you can develop personally and intellectually and that is not solely something done by yourself. That is a very socially learned thing. ...All the good professors I've ever had were ones that really helped me grow personally.

This student emphasises the holistic learning environment with peers and staff working collaboratively and sharing responsibility for students' learning to contribute to their development. Furthermore, Staff A13 speaks about leaving school without any qualifications and her experience as a mature student returning to education. She reflects on her own transformative experience in higher education and describes her aims for current students:

...it is that aspect of that transformational experience that students undertake. ...It is life skills, working with others, understanding yourself, being able to communicate, being able to problem solve, being able to understand and navigate your way in the world...

This participant describes a variety of important skills and suggests that they can contribute to transformational personal and professional development experiences for students.

Other participants such as Students B6, C2, C3, and C8, describe the importance of students exploring their university community to learn about others and themselves as they develop enjoyment of learning and of the wider university experience. For example, Student B6 speaks about his aim 'to explore different things' by learning skills and attributes:

I think they're very much trying to teach a way of thinking... Especially as we have come to the end of the degree, it's less about what content you're learning and more about how you approach research and writing up. ...I

don't really know what I want to do now. I think it's changed a lot, and that's probably one of the best things about it – it challenged a lot of the ideas I already had.

It is important that this student highlights the aim developing authentic *being* and self-authorship whilst also challenging pre-conceived ideas, since these attributes will help students cope with supercomplexity within and beyond university.

Like the students above, staff also speak about how it is not subject knowledge but skills and attributes which are most important for students to learn at university. These aims motivate some staff such as A6 to engage in co-creation of the curriculum. She states:

It's not just learning academic work. It's more holistic than that and I think if that's what happens and they develop as individuals, that's what education should be about. ...I want to encourage them to be independent, self-regulated learners. The idea of trying to get them to self-assess their [co-created] work is part of that.

Staff D3, who does not currently engage in co-creation of the curriculum, shares similar views on the aims of higher education:

...it is not just learning for the classroom, it's not just learning for exams or essays, or the subject material itself – it's developing as a person. ...Can a traditional [teaching] structure do that?

This participant and others question some traditional teaching and learning practices such as lecturing, and their ability to have a significant positive impact on students' personal and professional development.

Confidence

In addition to students' general personal and professional development, a wide range of participants highlight the importance of students developing confidence in particular. Student B5 describes how his aims have changed from focusing on increasing knowledge about the world to aims of getting involved at university, gaining experience, and increasing her sense of confidence. Psychology Student C9 also emphasises a similar theme of wanting to develop:

...strength and confidence... I came into Uni with very little of either those things... We do a lot of statistics which doesn't feel like it's building my character in any way besides in getting through statistics. Mostly the goals I have don't come up in my courses directly.

Furthermore, philosophy Student B10 says:

I wanted to gain confidence... knowing how to articulate myself logically... [and] structure arguments very well. By the end of my degree I wanted to be a confident speaker and a confident arguer, which I have ended up

being – but not because of my degree I would say. It was because of the extracurricular things that I've been involved in.

While these students each emphasise different aspects of wanting to develop confidence, they strikingly share thoughts on how their academic experience does not further these aims.

Staff participants in this study also emphasise the theme of students' confidence, particularly with respect to maintaining a passion for learning and gaining a sense of direction in life. Staff D1 says:

I want them to feel more confident and like they've grown and achieved something over their time at university, but still retained that curiosity. I don't want us to be producing students who are repeating the same old information they've heard and have lost their interest or excitement for the topic they came here to study.

In addition, Staff D7 describes aims for students to become '...strong, self-confident... mature, wise maybe... [and] finding purpose'. These participants emphasise aspects of students' development that have a wider impact on their ability to work collaboratively with others as they gain added value from higher education.

Other staff participants discuss different aspects of helping students develop the confidence to deal with complex problems in life and in the wider world. Staff D4 states 'I want them to feel confident and ready to tackle any problems in life...'. Staff D3 also describes the importance of helping students to become more confident and mature:

The world out there is a bit chaotic, it's quite free, it's quite open; there's a lot of ways which they could go. Actually, to have this continuity of who they are, into who they're becoming, but they also morph into something slightly different and certainly someone who has the confidence, capacity, and ability to get around in a world which is like that...

Participants reflect on the aim for higher education to respect the individuality of different students whilst also facilitating their development of confidence that, in some cases, can be transformational in helping them learn to deal with a complex world.

Critical and Independent Thinking

Both student and staff participants emphasise the importance of students developing critical and independent thinking skills whilst in higher education, which motivates some to be highly engaged in co-creating the curriculum. For example, Staff A1 says:

...if we think about one of our primary aims that we might have in undergraduate teaching, it is helping people be critical, reflective, and independent. ...Co-creation in a scaffolding way is to start building up a

sense of confidence and agency. ...And how do they gain these abilities?
It's probably not by being told stuff. It's by doing stuff more independently...

This staff member describes how aims in higher education can shape the implementation of co-creation of the curriculum. Furthermore, Student C14 reflects on her courses that do – and those that do not – further her aims:

I think that one of my aims was to stay curious and not lose my drive to explore social sciences and humanities. ...That curiosity was not satisfied last semester... [because there was] a lot of spoon-feeding... [However, in a course this semester] it is not so much a reiteration of the general consensus that can be read in the internet but decoding that and problematising the interest behind these mainstream discourses.

These participants each show how they value teaching that goes beyond content knowledge to support students to become curious, independent, and critical adult learners.

Other staff share reflections on their aims to challenge students in their thinking and learning. Staff D7 argues:

...if you start this whole process of growing up earlier then you don't get these little ducks starting at university but maybe you get already little foxes starting university, and then at the end they are lions. But this is not what's happening. ...If you protect too much, then in the end they will still be little ducks.

Staff A9 also aims to support and challenge students to think critically:

It's about providing support and an enabling environment but also a challenging one because actually we're about taking your views and then looking at them in 360°, imagining different perspectives. ...It's about enabling students to let their voices be heard but giving them the skills so that what they're saying is evidenced and critical.

Therefore, staff need to get to know and understand their students' learning needs whilst providing the right balance of support and challenge to each cohort to support them to become independent learners who will thrive.

Some student participants also describe wanting to develop critical and independent thinking skills. For instance, Student C5 states:

I'm much more independent and able as an individual, but nevertheless aware that there's limitations to what I can achieve and some uncertainty regarding the future as well.

This student is reflective and aware of the challenges and unpredictability within and beyond university, and how he has grown as an independent thinker. Similarly, Student C4 speaks about higher education opening her eyes to what she doesn't

know in the wider world, and Student C1 hopes that independent thinking will help him become more competitive in applying for jobs. However, Student B2 speaks about how effective teaching such as co-creation of the curriculum helps students to gain skills and attributes:

...to think critically about things and also think on your feet when you have a question thrown at you in class, which is a really good skill to have that a lot of science subjects don't really concentrate on.

These students value learning experiences that challenge them to grow as individuals.

Employability and/or Career Direction

Only three student participants shared with me that they knew what career they wanted to pursue when starting university, and many other students describe the value of exploring their interests and future career direction throughout the higher education experience. Two of the three 'decided' student participants describe how a gap year helped them focus, prepare for, and decide on a particular programme at university. They appear to have the clearest view of the career they want to pursue, and how higher education will help them work towards those dreams. For example, Student B2 reflects on negative experiences in high school which led her to not complete her final year and think that she did not want to attend university. Her gap year helped her 'to think about what I want to do with my life' and she decided to study animal biology. Similarly, for Student B1, his work experience in medicine during a gap year 'confirmed things for me... ultimately feeling that the world's your oyster' as a doctor. For these students who have clear career goals, higher education develops important employability skills for their sector.

A number of other students speak about their aim in higher education revolving around employability, although they are unsure of their exact career direction. Student C1 reflects on 'the competitive side' of the job market and Student C12 speaks about getting a good job and leading a good life, stating: 'In order to do that, I need to finish university and be competitive'. Furthermore, several students describe how many young people in their generation go to university because they want to stand out to employers. Student B10 says:

People are learning to get a job or they're learning to make their money's worth, which means your relationship to what you're learning is going to be different. ...[M]y learning revolved around doing well to get a job... I need to do well for the next step.

Similarly, Student B4, a mature student, states:

I was working at the time in jobs I didn't like so I had to do something. ...I came back to get a better job really.

A nervousness comes through in these students' statements describing their future employment prospects and aim for later career fulfilment. They see higher education as providing them with a competitive edge as they enter – or re-enter – the job market.

Other students speak more generally about employability and how higher education can provide them with experiences to explore their interests and understand what career they would like to pursue. Student C10 describes her aspirations:

...by the end of my study I want to be ready to fly and follow the field and the path that interests me the most. ...I want to have all the required equipment, I guess, that I get from university to be able to face the labour market and workplace.

Furthermore, Student B9 reflects on the role of the teacher in supporting a student's career development:

I think the most effective student/teacher relationship would be one that can take a student's current interests, help them develop further interests and finally project that into a career that is going to help them achieve what they want to achieve...

Like these students, Staff D4 uses a metaphor of giving students wings to help them become more employable through developing breadth and depth in their subject area:

...so they are open to discussion with people from other areas and have empathy and enthusiasm about collaboration which is very important for innovation...

This individual describes the importance of students' personal and professional development to enhance their transferrable skills and employability. She also highlights an aim to develop students' openness and curiosity that motivates continual learning and innovation, which is explored more in the next section.

Passion for Lifelong Learning

Both staff and student participants highlight how higher education should, in their view, inspire students to enjoy and develop a passion for lifelong learning. Student B3, a mature student who had started a successful career without attending university, speaks about higher education as 'unfinished business for me' since she 'wanted to do something interesting and challenging'. She continues:

And obviously being a very mature student amongst undergraduates, I wasn't looking for kindred spirits or anything. I just wanted to immerse myself in study.

Furthermore, Staff A10 describes her enjoyment of learning and reflects: 'I think you want them to be similarly enthusiastic about the subject'. Staff who share a passion for their subject area with students can help them enjoy learning.

Other students and staff, particularly those who participated in the arts-based activity during focus group discussions, describe their aim of higher education as developing curiosity and a sense of lifelong learning. In particular, Students C1 and C15 describe their eagerness to learn new things and desires to pursue careers in academia or research. Chemical physics Student C15 says:

I have chosen my degree because I wanted to start my career in research... because I want to fuel my curiosity... This is very difficult because the more I learn, the wider the opportunities are... [and] the more I want to know.

This student reflects on how academic challenge can fuel her curiosity as she recognises what she does not know and consequently seeks to learn more. Staff D6 shares similar reflections, since fuelling students' curiosity and enjoyment of learning are important aims for him.

Other staff participants in subjects including health studies, medicine, and education reflect on the significance of developing students' capacity and willingness to pursue lifelong learning as an important aspect of their professions' requirements. Staff D8 highlights creativity and enjoyment of learning within health studies:

I personally think we could be a lot more creative in how we teach and in how we expect them to learn, and how we help them to create knowledge. Not necessarily the factual knowledge (the physiology and the anatomy is what it is – you can't change that) but in how they process that and how they then might use that in terms of health promotion or teaching others.

Enjoyment of creative learning processes can benefit not only health professionals, but also those with whom they work. Similarly, Staff A4 from medicine describes how lifelong learning contributes to doctors' evaluation of their 'fitness to practice', and states:

...it's certainly not all about firing gobbets of information at students. It's also about *inspiring*, taking the students to areas and thoughts that you don't get in textbooks. *That's* the reason for teaching. ...One of the things that we need to do is not just to teach students facts. ...We need to teach students how to learn and how to teach themselves, and then give them the room to do that.

These participants reflect on how enjoyment of learning is key to helping students become independent learners who will engage in lifelong learning to advance their own practice and their discipline's development.

Civic and Democratic Engagement

Helping students to become critical, active, and global citizens is a strong theme that emerges for many staff who aim to help students to have a positive impact on their local and wider communities through civic and democratic engagement. Here, the concept of a learning community is important, which I define as an inclusive environment that staff and students develop to work towards shared academic aims and attitudes. Staff A4 believes that his students contribute to the learning community by not only inspiring their peers but also their teachers. Similarly, Staff A1 describes how his aim is for his students to have a positive impact on their community to help others both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, Staff D9 summarises her aims to promote civic engagement since she wants students in her classes to ‘...always see themselves as part of a community that they’ve contributed to creating’. This staff member explains how she helps students to develop and participate actively in their learning community within her classes, and how she models active citizenship skills to help students enact these skills beyond the university.

Staff A12 describes how he wants students to be ‘active informed citizens’ who take responsibility for their learning within their courses but also take ownership over their actions in wider society. Participants such as Staff A8 and A9 also describe how they are motivated to address gender inequalities through their work in higher education and beyond. Staff A8 reflects on how she wants to disrupt hierarchies by teaching students how to become part of a positive culture change:

I am a feminist so I believe quite strongly in encouraging students to become global citizens who are aware of wider social and political issues and inequalities. I am interested in strategies for change, so I am working with students on those kinds of issues in terms of how they should be tackled, addressed, challenged. ...I hope what they come out with is a sense of being global and engaged citizens, a sense of being part of something bigger than themselves, a sense of empowerment where they have some ownership over their own learning. ...But overall the sense that they have been challenged, that they have been stretched and they feel that they are global and engaged citizens.

By modelling civic engagement and providing students with opportunities to deal with social and political issues in the classroom, this co-creation practitioner challenges students to develop key ways of thinking and acting in the world.

In addition to the theme of global citizenship, various staff participants such as Staff D3 and D8 highlight an aim of developing students’ resilience as future leaders who

contribute to democratic society. Resilience is also important in reflecting the global challenges of the 21st Century. Staff D3 argues:

...this is actually about you developing as a person... [and] when you're in Whitehall – or you're in Westminster, or you're working for a Fleet Street newspaper, or whatever it is you want to do – you can actually think about the world differently to make the world a different place. To me that's engagement.

For this staff member, students' engagement in university is associated with his aims to support students to become responsible leaders who change society for the better.

Values, Social Justice, and Character

In the sections above, we have seen various themes arise as participants describe their aims for students' personal and professional development, confidence, critical thinking skills, employability, lifelong learning, and ability to have a positive impact on their academic community and wider society. Throughout these themes, values are implicit. Various staff reflect on how their aims in higher education are linked to reducing forms of economic, intellectual, social, and political inequalities within the university and in wider society. Some staff participants reflect on the importance of including diverse students from different backgrounds, cultures, and abilities like Staff A7 who describes:

We have a very big range of ability because we're a wider access university. There are lots of people with quite profound learning needs. ...That's quite inspiring as well because you see people who began with nothing and they might just get a third [degree] but that third is worth so *much* more, and that's very humbling.

Similarly, Staff A11, A12, and A13 each share their personal stories of coming from 'not very much' (as Staff A12 describes). Later, as mature students, each had university experiences that had a strong positive impact on them; now they aim for others to benefit from higher education as they did. Staff A11 states:

I think my interest was always a political interest and it is my belief in community and participation and an equity of experience, if not equality of experience, that drove me to work in these areas... It is about being a citizen, a critical citizen. Students can articulate transferable skills but those citizenship skills are not being articulated because they are not feeling as if they are partners of the institution or partners in their learning.

I think that has to be the focus for us.

Along with the resurfacing theme of democratic engagement, equity and social justice are important aims for higher education.

Only two staff reflect specifically on students' development of character and values, including Staff A2. He explains a:

...desire as a pedagogue, which is usually to enthuse and energise people [with learning]... It's interesting isn't it, because we don't teach character do we, at least not explicitly at universities. ...I think particularly in sciences we've always been very careful about value distinctions and so on, but I think if you're in an applied science area like this, it's incumbent on you to deal with these issues.

Through pedagogic choices to inspire and motivate students, staff often cannot avoid sharing their values and developing students' character – even if these areas are not often acknowledged. Staff A7 reflects on how she feels that the most salient aspect of higher education is not the content knowledge that students learn but the character and values that students develop:

Realistically, in a place like this, what they're going to take away with them is *not* really subject-based knowledge; it's going to be the characteristics of degrees that change you as a person. ...One would hope they're non-judgmental, ethically aware, aware of issues of race and gender. ...I think they should go away with having their own authentic voice, being able to communicate to *everyone*, and some sort of moral/ethical call...

These feelings are also reflected in other participants' views shared above.

Although student participants do not highlight the themes of values or character development in their aims for higher education to the same extent as staff participants, many student participants do appear to demonstrate the ethical, compassionate leadership qualities that the staff above seek to foster. Some students in the second focus group highlight the theme of social justice, and it is notable that many who did so are pursuing degrees that support them to enter professions such as social work, counselling, and health studies. They describe how their career aims will require them to develop the skills and capacities to help others in their communities. For example, Student C16 says:

I hope I will be able to fight mental disorders with the children I'm going to work with. ...I think it will require lots of strength, definitely, and skills and knowledge.

Similarly, Student C9 describes career aims of 'helping and supporting other people' through social work and mental health support. These participants as well as Students C11 and C13 speak about how they will be helped by others, both students and staff, during their university experience as they develop the academic, intellectual, and emotional strength as well as compassion and resilience which will enable them to help others throughout their career.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, we see how students and staff highlight how their aims in higher education often centre around fostering students' skills and attributes including: a) personal and professional development; b) confidence; c) critical and independent thinking skills; d) employability and/or career direction; e) passion for lifelong learning; f) civic and democratic engagement; and g) values, social justice, and character. They emphasise the skills and competencies – rather than the knowledge – that they hope will contribute to students' flourishing within and beyond university. Many participants describe how this focus on skills and attributes provides added value in higher education – compared to the content that students can learn on their own. Many argue that universities play an important role in helping students become socially just leaders and active contributors who have a positive impact on their communities. This chapter sets the scene for what follows by describing participants' visions for the impact of excellent teaching and learning. These visions often inform participants' choices relating to how they may participate and take responsibility for engagement in higher education, including co-creation of the curriculum, which we will explore in the next chapters.

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Chapter 5: Findings: Conceptualisations of Student Engagement

*'The engagement process is really student and teacher engagement...
we're in this together.'*
– Staff D9

Introduction

This chapter synthesises the results from all participant cohorts' conceptualisations of student engagement, which is often seen as the broad category that encompasses co-creation of the curriculum. I begin by highlighting participants' dominant viewpoint that students and staff should take shared responsibility for student engagement. I then go on to analyse the key practices of staff and students in their different roles to advance forms of effective engagement. As expected, both co-creation practitioners and other engaged students and staff share their perceptions of student engagement, but co-creation practitioners elaborate more on their conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum because of their broader experience with this practice. Participants delineate what staff do and what students do to promote effective student engagement, and I have labelled these sections by drawing on the work of Bryson (2014a, p. 18) who suggests 'two distinct spheres: "Engaging Students" and "Students Engaging"' respectively.

Shared Responsibility for Student Engagement

The majority of participants state that they believe that learners and teachers should share responsibility for student engagement, although they recognise that they have responsibilities for different aspects of engagement. Indeed, responsibilities also vary or change throughout learning experiences as they develop. This view of shared responsibility for learning is clearly held by many staff and student participants, including both co-creation practitioners as well as other participants. However, several student representatives in the first focus group place the onus of responsibility more squarely with students themselves and this will be explored further below. In terms of sharing responsibility, Staff D9 says powerfully:

...the engagement process is really *student and teacher engagement*. ...I think that part of the task of creating the ethos of the discipline and the course is ensuring that people want to engage, that it is interesting in some way. At the same time there is responsibility on both sides – we're in this together.

This participant aptly notes the terminology used to denote engagement tends to imply it is students' responsibility and if, as many participants suggest, the responsibility is

shared then perhaps 'student and teacher engagement' is a more appropriate term than 'student engagement'. However, for clarity, I will generally continue to use the established term of student engagement below.

Staff co-creation practitioners also emphasise shared responsibilities by equating student engagement to a partnership. For example, Staff A9 states:

I think it's a partnership, isn't it? As educators, you've got a responsibility to try to be engaging. ...I think if you're enthusiastic about your topic and you deliver things to create that space in which people can interact, that's your responsibility to create that environment in which students can be engaged when you're trying to be engaging. ...I think they [students] have a very big responsibility to turn up every week, be a responsive audience, build a sense of a learning community.

The critical aspects of staff facilitating a learning environment conducive to learning and students' professional manner and initiative come through here in showing shared but different responsibilities for engagement.

Similarly, the majority of student co-creation practitioners also believe that responsibility for student engagement should be shared, with it being led initially by staff and then with responsibility falling to students. Student B10 comments:

I think it should be a shared responsibility. I think it's our responsibility to show up to class and try and make the best out of the situation. But at the same time, if a student is feeling... like giving up on it all and can't be bothered, that is a bigger issue than just the student's own motivation – that's to do with [staff responsibilities like] the assessment styles and the classroom techniques and things.

Student B5 also reflects on the balance between student and staff responsibilities:

I think you can't have one without the other. I guess too if they [teachers] have the same concerns and interests, students are more likely to gain more or be engaged.

Here, staff are recognised as having a role where they can greatly influence students' levels of engagement and motivation to delve into the academic subject.

Other participants speak about the give-and-take of student and staff engagement whilst also demonstrating care and respect for each other. Student B9 shares:

The staff are there much longer than any student will be so it is their responsibility to create an environment where a student can get active and engage, but after that I think it is all down to the student. The staff have got to provide good teaching and everything. Beyond that it is the responsibility of the student to show an interest. Bringing it back to the

staff, the third thing would be the responsibility of the staff member to respond proactively to a student showing an interest.

This is a more nuanced description of a cycle of student engagement responsibilities moving between staff and students, emphasising the importance of closing the loop with staff listening and responding to students' views. If staff omit the last step of responding to those students who actively engage or show an interest in taking their studies further, students' motivation to engage can dwindle rapidly. Similarly, Staff A8 states:

I think [there is responsibility] for mutual respect. I think they [students] need to take responsibility for their own learning (which is not to say we shouldn't give help, we should) but then ultimately they have to take the initiative in terms of what they need, when they need it, how to engage with peers and with staff. ...I think we have a responsibility to engage students, and... if you engage them in what they are interested in, in part on their terms... I think that they will engage.

The importance of relating to students' interests is clearly apparent again here, as well as students understanding and articulating their needs to feel supported in their engagement. The theme of mutual respect will be revisited below.

Staff Engaging Students

In considering the influence of staff on student engagement, three inter-related themes of effective teaching practices emerge from the data. The first theme relates to basic notions of valuing students and having high expectations of them, which fosters engagement. Next, the ethos of the learning environment that staff facilitate is important, including creating inclusive learning communities. The next two themes focus on offering opportunities to students and closing the loop by listening to them. Each theme is explored below.

Valuing Students and Having High Expectations

The theme of staff valuing students and having high expectations of them surfaces some very basic ideas of respecting students as individuals. Students often say that they are more willing to engage when their teachers are approachable, engaging, and not boring. For example, Student B6 shows the impact of staff attitudes towards working with students:

I think it's someone who is still interested in teaching. I know sometimes they have to fulfil their teaching quota or whatever, but someone who actually has put some thought into why and how they're teaching something... [and] makes it a bit more interactive. Sometimes we have to

work harder as students with it, but I think that you get more out of it at the end of the day, just remember a bit more. Someone who is enthusiastic, and wants to teach I suppose.

This student shares how she is more willing to engage when she feels staff are approachable, care about teaching, and challenge her. This is demonstrated by Staff D3 who shows that teaching is important by treating students as individuals who matter:

Actually, I know my students by name. ...It's this personal stake... to get engaged with them as people.

Furthermore, several staff appear to value their students and promote engagement through having high expectations. Staff A9 says:

I try and push students, so I'll assume from the beginning that they're hugely motivated, will go the extra mile, and be interested in advanced reading, etc. You often find that if you go with that assumption a good few of them will decide to do that.

Staff can engage students by valuing them and inspiring them to live up to high expectations.

Students also speak about value for money and wanting to feel respected by staff in order to engage with learning. Although undergraduate tuition fees are subsidised by the government for Scottish students and currently for EU students, those from the rest of the UK outside Scotland pay £9,000 tuition fees and international students can pay around £20,000 per year. In addition, all students incur living costs. Students' financial investment in higher education can have an impact on student engagement if students feel staff are – or are not – respecting them as individuals. For example, Student B10 argues:

If you had a presentation in the class, you'd go to it because you've got the presentation to do. But if you know that you can get away with not talking and nobody will notice if you're not there, then it's quite easy to have another hour in bed. You want to do a good job but also feel important, like someone is going to miss you. ...I pay £9,000 a year and so it is quite easy to see yourself as a consumer just wanting to get your money's worth, to be able to be in a classroom and be seen as a human being, that's quite a rare thing now.

It is striking how this student reflects on feeling apathy to engage when she does not feel respected as 'human' rather than an object in a lecture theatre, especially when she sees herself as a consumer who should receive not only basic levels of respect but also a high-quality educational experience. Additionally, Student B4 is a Scottish student who works two part-time jobs to support her living costs throughout her full-time studies. For her, staff promote student engagement by respecting students' time

and challenging them to work independently. She is also quite critical of some teachers:

...you are providing a service so you need to try. ...If things are going well, it's enjoyable and doesn't feel like time is wasted. It feels worth it. I don't really have any classes in the current modules like that. ...[It should] not to be spoon-feeding.

Several other students also speak negatively about staff 'spoon-feeding' students and share the view that, instead, staff should have higher expectations of students' abilities by facilitating engaging classes that value their time and effort.

Creating Learning Environments that Facilitates Engagement

The majority of participants suggest that staff should take the initial responsibility for engagement by creating a learning environment that will facilitate student engagement. Staff co-creation practitioners describe these responsibilities more frequently than other participants. For instance, Staff A10 says:

I think it is part of my job, not only to teach or help them to learn, but it is part of my job to engage them.

Staff A4 also shares:

...if their eyes are glazing over, they're not getting the message and that's my fault and not theirs. ...One of the things that really annoys me is that for most of my fellow teachers, if something goes wrong or doesn't quite work, it's always the students' fault. It's actually never the students' fault, in my view: it's the fault of the teacher. ...Teachers need to be inspirational. It can be learnt.

Interestingly, unlike other staff participants, this individual suggests that staff have a higher degree of responsibility than students for promoting engagement.

Others highlight the staff role to facilitate a learning environment where students will take responsibility for their learning. Staff A1 states:

...the teaching staff have a clear responsibility for promoting engagement because we can put people off by what we do and we should recognise that. ...I think it's about being welcoming and helping people understand that, yes, this is their space too. ...I would hope they would feel a responsibility to partake in it but I'm very aware what I'm saying is: I've decided on this framework and I expect them to accept it and take part in this thing I've designed to my implicit rules.

This is an interesting reflection as it highlights that often staff take the lead in creating teaching and learning spaces, and some staff – like this participant – do so with the aim of fostering shared responsibility for student engagement. However, staff are

usually considered to have overall responsibility for the classroom environment and assessment.

Many co-creators emphasise that student engagement, for them, means creating a learning environment where students feel comfortable participating. Respondents frequently contrast examples of engagement as compared to passive learning, such as Staff A1 who says:

It's not really a question of 'we tell them, they listen and write it down'; it's space, ideally, where things are constructed. ...I always think of students as people that we work with, not people that we do stuff to...

This staff member emphasises working together to construct knowledge and understanding. Furthermore, Staff A10 reflects on how she knows student engagement is working:

It is talking to them in practical classes and having opportunities for dialogue. ...I always say there is no such thing as a stupid question... basically creating a safe environment.

It is important to create learning communities where students do not feel threatened by power dynamics or other issues affecting their learning, and Staff A7 expands on this:

I'm responsible for creating a facilitatory environment – that's my job to create the sort of place where things can happen. I think it's my responsibility to do the best I can to draw from students what they're capable of. I'm responsible for referring whether it's a personal issue I hear about or whether it's something to do with estates or any issue that impacts on their learning. If I hear about it, then I should pursue it and get the right person to sort it out. That is a responsibility, and it would be wrong not to do to that.

This participant has high expectations of herself to create a learning environment that helps students engage and reach their full potential. By describing how she takes responsibility for referring other issues affecting student learning to appropriate colleagues, this individual perhaps goes above and beyond in supporting students. However, unlike other participants, she indicates the many factors both inside and outside the classroom that affect the learning environment and can have an impact on student engagement.

Staff A2 shows how he creates spaces within large classes with 150 students to help them feel comfortable engaging and having a dialogue at scale. He gathers anonymous feedback on paper and via instantaneous text walls:

What I want students to do is to ask silly questions, ask them even if they're small things. ...So if you missed that core definition in lecture two then that's probably going to go on to cause you problems. More important than that, is creating a symbolic space where people feel comfortable asking anything.

Staff A2 shares examples of both low-tech and high-tech opportunities for engaging students by facilitating dialogue in large classes. Like Staff A10 at the start of this section, he emphasises helping students feel comfortable to make mistakes and ask 'silly questions' to promote inclusivity and facilitate learning.

Students also speak to the theme of staff engaging students by creating welcoming learning communities and using inclusive pedagogies. Student B9 feels that staff tend to place responsibility for student engagement on students; however, she points out:

If you want your students to be engaged, you have to be engaging with them.

Some students in Focus Groups 1 and 2 give examples of staff giving formal participation marks to promote student engagement or informally asking quieter students if they would like to contribute to discussions. Student C1 provides another example of using technology where students respond to questions on their smartphones:

It's a way of bringing the students into the discussion in the middle of class. ...That's quite effective because it lets you see how similar you are to people around you as well, which is quite encouraging – you're not the only one who's lost...

It is striking how staff engage students by creating learning environments in which they welcome students' participation and help them feel that they are not alone in struggling to understand difficult concepts.

Offering Opportunities to Students

Besides staff valuing students and creating inclusive learning environments, participants highlight how staff foster effective engagement by offering opportunities to which students respond. First, several students note the importance of staff presenting clear expectations of students, and Student B11 describes how staff should outline the benefits that students will reap when they do engage. Student B6 speaks about the basic necessity of course handbooks which seem simple, but she shares how students are not always provided with this key information. Furthermore, Student C9 says:

...it is also the teachers reaching out making their office hours known, sending out emails, advertising things like the class rep system and being like 'remember you can talk to these people'. I don't think it's brought up a lot throughout the year.

Other participants also mention how they feel that staff don't communicate often enough about opportunities for engagement, like Student B6 who says, 'Sometimes with student engagement, people just aren't encouraged to do it'. Similarly, Student B11 notes how students often do not engage spontaneously, even if they are confident individuals, and states: 'I think it is about the kind of opportunities that you are given'. Student participants frequently speak about the importance of staff communicating – clearly and early on – the opportunities for engagement.

Staff also reflect on the importance of clarifying expectations for students, and how rarely this happens. For example, in Staff Focus Group 2, Staff D9 says:

I think it's the lecturers and university staff's initial responsibility to communicate... what the students can be engaged in, and what their options are. Especially for international students who may not come with certain kinds of cultural capital, they might not understand 'what can I do, am I allowed to ask questions, how can I engage'?

Induction programmes help staff to communicate what opportunities for engagement are available to students at university, as well as clarifying basic expectations for all students, which can be especially important for international students. Furthermore, Student B9 reflects:

I guess student engagement is how much staff members are doing to really bring the students into the department as opposed to just giving them materials to study a course. I think those are two very different things. You can study a course remotely now and a lecture could be beneficial but you could get the same from watching a video online. ...To engage a student well you have got to make them feel part of the bigger picture...

For this student, engagement extends beyond the classroom to staff supporting students to become part of the academic department and wider university. Staff practices are key to student engagement when they explain expectations and opportunities, as well as motivate and support students who want to engage.

Participants – particularly students – also highlight how staff promote engagement by acknowledging students' interests and making learning relevant to students' lives through connecting theory and practice. For example, Student B6 says:

I think good lecturers really try to engage you, not just with their material but why it's important and of greater relevance.

Similarly, Student B10 reports that:

In my third year I did a feminism module, and it was the first time in my philosophy degree that I actually found it relevant to real life, relevant to my personal experience... Whereas before, I'd found it very abstract, a bit overly intellectual. This was the first time I felt really inspired and engaged, and it felt really applicable to real life.

When staff help students understand the wider implications of what they are learning and why they are learning it, it can motivate them to engage more fully in classes and further develop their interests in a subject area. Staff D4 says:

I think it's also a matter of making things very interesting and realistic, with real world applicability. ...I see numbers going down because some courses are just so theoretical and they don't see the benefit of attending them.

As illustrated by the examples from participants, when staff make their teaching relevant to students' interests and real-life examples, this promotes student engagement.

Other student participants highlight examples of engaging pedagogies that help students to apply theory to practice. For example, Student C16 reflects on her favourite course that uses a flipped classroom approach to problem-based learning:

We get to watch lectures at home that explain theory, and after that we meet and we formulate the case differently based on the theory we learned. ...I like that very much because it takes into account everything we learned and we get to apply it and see how it would be in real-life settings as well.

Additionally, Staff A9 shares how she gives students choice in political science essays:

...you'd have a choice of substantive topics, a choice of approaches, and a choice of countries... This form of student choice helps students connect their interests in practical examples to the theory that has been taught.

In these examples, staff give students some autonomy and help them become more engaged by applying learning to real-life case studies.

Listening and Responding to Students Who Engage

Students in particular reflect on the importance of staff listening and responding to students who do engage, since valuing their contributions will further enhance and promote student engagement. Staff A2 and A10 previously illustrated how they do this when speaking about encouraging 'silly questions'. However, it is clear from the statements below that students do not always feel their contributions are valued. Student B10 states:

I think it should be a continuous process, so feedback should be every couple of weeks or at least half-way through the course, to find out what is working and not working, and then adapting the course to cater to that rather than just feedback at the end. Also at the beginning of the course, [staff should be] talking to students about how they learn best, what their goals are, really getting people's opinions at the beginning rather than at the end.

By actively listening to student feedback throughout a course, staff can see whether they can improve the course for the current cohort, as well as future classes. Students B5, B7, and B9 also highlight the need for staff to show that they are listening when students take the time to share feedback.

Focus group participants who were formally selected student representatives also emphasise that staff listening to student feedback is an important aspect of student engagement. Several students stress that staff should ideally welcome feedback and address any issues for current students, but they voice frustrations when this does not happen. Student C8 asserts:

I think that's the disappointing part of being a class rep sometimes, because you feel like the only impact you have is maybe, if any, on later years.

This student goes on to share that he thought the course would have been 'less frustrating' if staff listened to student feedback throughout courses and not only at the end. For Student B9, it is difficult when staff 'are very attached to the courses they are in charge of' and do not receive feedback positively:

I often find that when I try to give them feedback (I'm a class rep this year so that's quite often), I get a little pushback from them and they get quite defensive. That puts me and other people off engaging with that lecturer again.

Staff willingness to listen to and enact changes based on feedback can greatly affect student engagement.

Other participants have much more positive experiences and speak about how staff listening to student feedback promotes their further engagement. Student C15 reflects on the importance of department-wide, extracurricular events that can help students at different levels of study and staff listen to each other where they 'can really interact on a very informal level where you are no longer teachers and students but a more equal level'. Engaging in such events outside of the classroom can minimise the power differential between student and staff roles by creating spaces for students and staff to listen to and learn from each other. Student C3 says:

...we had a very active course organiser who was very, very approachable, who always used to say to please give feedback at any stage... I feel like that's really good.

Furthermore, for Student C16, being a student representative can be rewarding when staff listen to feedback:

They actually told us 'It was cool that you were mentioning this because we were struggling to find a way of how to do it'... I had a feeling they are really appreciating what we are trying to discuss with them, and it was really good.

In these ways, student participants express the view that staff genuinely listening to students (and, particularly, student representatives) has a strong impact on student engagement.

Students Engaging

Participants describe various themes regarding students' responsibilities and practices that affect their engagement. These include: basic attendance and participation in staff-led activities, active learning and peer support, engagement with the academic subject, and developing confidence and initiative. Although two only staff practitioners mention student leadership as a form of student engagement, the majority student participants (including both co-creation practitioners and representatives) highlight leadership. For example, when speaking about their conceptualisation of student engagement, most student participants provide examples of extracurricular student-led societies, formal peer support initiatives outside of the classroom, and established student representation roles in the university that contribute to quality enhancement processes. Some examples of student representation have been mentioned above where relevant, such as in the sections on offering opportunities for student engagement and listening to those who do engage. However, these extra-curricular forms of student engagement and leadership are not explored more fully here unless they affect the academic experience and the working relationship between students and staff (the focus of my study), even though these other forms of engagement may have a positive impact on the wider student experience in higher education.

Attending and Participating

Within the give-and-take of student engagement, all participants speak about students' responsibilities to engage, and some mention social and behavioural factors that impact on students' choices to engage within the classroom. Previously, Student

B10 described students' responsibility 'to show up to class and try and make the best out of the situation'. Student B6 also talks about adopting an expected student role once staff set the tone and environment for learning:

I think it's important to actually do what you're expected to do, to play the part.

This statement is particularly interesting with respect to the staff co-creation practitioners' statements above (from Staff A1 and A7) concerning staff setting the 'rules' of engagement and hoping that students 'buy in' and play by these rules. Indeed, Staff D8 highlights the pressure put on lecturers to engage students, and the responsibilities of students:

...we as lecturers get put under huge expectations to encourage and engage, and improve student engagement. For me a challenge or a frustration is that I expect the students to meet me at least half way on that.

Like others, this participant is understandably frustrated when they put in effort to engage students and then students do not adequately take responsibility for their own learning and expect to be spoon-fed information.

Similarly, Staff A7 explains:

You have to bring something to the party; it's not all my responsibility. It isn't all right and wrong answers. I can't make you have an A. I can't do that – you have to make yourself hit the criteria for an A. ...But there's a feeling that it always has to be somebody else's fault, and that's pretty hard to take.

It is striking that Staff A7 shares that she can feel blamed for giving bad marks when students do not engage fully with assessment. Staff A6 suggests:

They've got responsibility for their own learning and that's what I'm trying to encourage. Still there are students I feel that are kind of imbued with this passivity... I think they are wanting me to provide them with everything... but I want to encourage them to be independent, self-regulated learners.

It can be challenging for staff to work with passive students to help them learn that they need to share responsibility for student engagement.

When asked about how they define the term 'student engagement', many participants start with basic expectations of students' attendance and participation in classroom activities or assessments which staff have designed. In Focus Group 1, students discuss attendance as student engagement:

C7: I think that the main thing's attending lectures. I remember when there was one lecture where out of about a hundred people on the course about 17 turned up...

C6: You're the one that decided to go to university to learn and do these things. If you're not taking full advantage of it then you're just not helping yourself. It is a little bit of a two-way street in that professors have to facilitate engagement, but... you have to put yourself forward still...

C3: It very much depends on the class itself because some people will want to go to lectures anyway, because you can ask questions and participate more, but some people are always just going to listen to the recording...

C1: If you go to a maths lecture, there's not much to ask. You can just watch the video, you don't have to go.

It is interesting that these students recognise the popularity of lecture recording amongst the wider student body, but they debate the incentives for them to attend lectures when some staff do not create opportunities for student engagement during lectures. It is also interesting that Student C1 seems to have the view that mathematics is a set of knowledge to be learnt, without added value in attending the lecture.

Student co-creation practitioners also set the bar low for student engagement, focusing on participating in learning activities that staff set and describing how different types of teaching facilitate or restrict engagement in class. Student B8 describes student engagement as:

...student participation in tutorials like a presentation, whatever you have been assigned, tutorial tasks, or maybe engaging with teachers' feedback sessions after exams.

Student B5 suggests that staff choices in the type of teaching they lead affect students' decisions to participate. She describes how active groupwork in laboratories promotes engagement through working towards shared aims but 'Most of it is just lectures – I don't think that's very engaging'. In addition, Student B4 says:

You're wanting people to not just stare at the material that you're providing them and slides, but be thinking about it, taking notes, asking questions, talking about it... I was frustrated at the amount of people who either wouldn't read the work in advance or when the lecturer asked them something, sat silent and didn't talk.

A large number of participants describe the impact on the rest of the class when some students do not meet even very basic levels of student engagement.

Staff co-creation practitioners highlight the theme of students' behaviour, body language, and professional conduct as important aspects of their engagement,

although this is not a theme emphasised by staff non-practitioners or either of the student participant cohorts. For some staff, students' behaviour and body language often signal that students are engaging well or – by contrast – not engaging. Staff A6 says that ideally:

There would be an element of concentration and excitement together, and involvement. Not looking at their phones!

Similarly, Staff A9 thinks:

...you can usually tell when somebody is listening intensely rather than dozing off. It's much harder to tell now that everybody has their computer open. One hopes they are not playing Candy Crush but one can't know.

For these staff, students sleeping in class, daydreaming, or being on their phones can be indicators of a lack of student engagement. However, Staff D9 states:

If you're going to be involved in this, here's what you need to do. If you don't want to do that, then there needs to be dialogue about why you don't want to do that, why are people not coming or why are people not talking in the group work. Maybe there's a real problem, so then that needs to be discussed.

Returning to the theme of shared responsibility, this participant argues that dialogue about student engagement – or lack of engagement – is important for the whole learning community.

More specifically, half of the staff co-creation practitioners suggest that students' professional behaviour is an important dimension that demonstrates engagement by taking their learning seriously and preparing for future careers. Two of these staff come from professional subjects, and three facilitate courses with applied projects where students work with university stakeholders or community-based partners. For instance Staff A3, who facilitates students' engagement in one of these projects, states:

My students are responsible for taking people seriously and working with them professionally.

Students' professional behaviour is also important for Staff A10 who reflects that student engagement, for her, means professional behaviour in respecting staff and peers by:

...behaving with courtesy to their peers in the practical classes, contributing but also giving everyone a fair chance to contribute. ...We are quite strong on building their professional identity from first year.

For these participants, students' professional conduct both inside and outside of classes shows that they are taking responsibility for learning by recognising how their behaviour impacts on others, including both clients and peers.

However, several staff participants cautioned against making assumptions that students are not engaged by simply judging their body language or even attendance.

For instance, Staff A1 reflects:

You can often tell when people are becoming disengaged. Having said that, I remember doing a talk where someone looked like they were asleep... But as soon as I finished, he seemed to wake up and ask loads of questions that seemed to suggest he was fully aware of what I'd been saying. So you can't always tell. ...Some engagement isn't obvious and that can be a bit scary.

It is interesting that this participant remarks how it can be unnerving for staff when their intuition about students' engagement is incorrect, perhaps since students are not engaging in visible ways or not in ways the staff member would have liked. Staff A7 speaks more about this:

...presence in class, I don't see that as an index of engagement per se. However, it's often associated with it because the sorts of people who make time are often the same sort of people who are engaged. I don't hold it against people, but positive attributes correlate. Since I use Adobe Connect [to livestream classes], there can be people out there who are really committing – they might be committing while they're nursing a baby which is a huge engagement.

Some students may not be as disengaged as their body language or lack of attendance may suggest on the surface. However, it can be challenging for staff if they don't feel they have made a connection with students to be able to accurately judge their level of engagement or if students seem unwilling to share responsibility for learning.

Learning Actively and Engaging with Peers

One of the most significant themes of student practices of engagement arising from the data is the theme of active learning, since it was highlighted by ten out of thirteen staff co-creation practitioners and nine out of eleven student co-creation practitioners. Like Dewey in Cross-Durrant (2001) and Freire (1972) who critique passive learning through textbooks or banking forms of education focused on memorisation, I categorise active learning as experiences of inquiry and deep approaches to learning that foster critical thinking and meaningful interaction with knowledge (Gale, 2007; Gee, 2003; Trowler, 2010). For example, Staff D8 states:

To me student engagement is about them actively engaging with the course, the material, the class. It's about showing up, being prepared, actively participating. It's about doing more than just bums on seats for that hour, and more than expecting everything they need to know about that particular topic will have been delivered by you in that 50-minute slot.

This staff member describes engagement through active learning as students interacting with the subject, the teacher, and their peers both inside and outside the classroom to contribute to their wider learning. Various participants in the two student focus group discussions describe active learning through a flipped classroom approach where students watch video lectures ahead of class and then use class time to engage in discussions. Some students focus on the instrumentality of lectures to learn content which could help them with their exams and share mixed responses to the higher time commitment of preparing for discussion-based, flipped classes. However, many students recognise that the opportunity for them to engage more actively can help them apply learning and develop in other ways beyond understanding content knowledge.

Participants highlight that student engagement often encompasses students' work as independent learners who actively contribute to the academic community and participate in discussions to extend peers' and staff members' learning. Staff A7 reflects:

[For me, student engagement is] when they don't seem to need me, except when they come and ask me very interesting questions. When we're in that situation where they're autonomous, independent researchers... [and] they've reached a level of intellectual enterprise where they're engaging me – that's when I know they are engaged.

This staff member and many others see student engagement as students becoming autonomous learners who reach a level of meaningful involvement in learning and ideally feel comfortable engaging in conversations to advance everyone's learning. Similarly, Staff A1 defines student engagement as follows:

I think they would be both challenging and willing to be challenged, people who have a reflective view of their own practice. Not expecting us to know the answers.

This relates closely to aforementioned statements that student engagement is not about memorising information but is focused on critical thinking and meaningful involvement.

In addition, the theme of students' active learning through peer engagement is a strong focus for staff co-creation practitioners in particular, with the majority speaking about the importance of students learning from, supporting, and/or challenging their peers. This sense of respect for peers and what they bring to the learning community, in addition to what the teacher brings, is important in many staff conceptualisations of

student engagement. Staff A9 suggests that students' class attendance can demonstrate a sense of responsibility to the learning community, facilitating peer engagement:

...you are not sitting there passively; you are providing feedback to your classmates you are giving presentations and that is every bit as important. ...We try and build a sense of responsibility that everybody's there for everybody else.

Similarly, Staff A2 summarises his views of student engagement as:

I'd expect students to speak, to communicate, to support each other.

Beyond motivating peers to engage with learning, others such as Staff A4 and A7 reflect on how students' engagement with their peers does not necessarily mean knowing the answers, but contributing to the advancement of discussions and shared learning. Staff A7 describes student engagement as when:

...they sit quietly in the room and they absorb things and listen to other people and then they contribute like hell. ...They maybe sit with a group and say something like, 'You said something just then. Could you say that again?' or they'll ask somebody, 'I didn't quite follow what you meant' and that is an ideal student for me.

Many staff practitioners highlight how learning from both peers and the teacher shows student engagement by supporting each other in their learning and teaching, without necessarily being a 'know-it-all'.

Students also emphasise how engagement with peers contributes to their learning. Student B1 highlights problem-based learning in small-group tutorials as an effective form of engagement that helps students learn independently but also feel responsible to the group in sharing and discussing their learning. In addition, Student B10 uses the example of:

...group work and encouraging people in the class to make friends, discuss readings and work together throughout the course. You're not just learning from the teacher and from the readings but learning from each other as well and forming your own confidence to do that.

Peer learning helps students gain confidence to share their views and face challenging learning situations.

Both students and some staff participants note the benefit of experienced students helping less experienced peers. Student C10 and Staff D4 speak about their involvement in optional, extracurricular peer learning initiatives. Student C10 describes some of the benefits of peer learning as being:

...very helpful because they are not teaching from the point of the lecturer. They're students so they have been through whatever we are going through right now so they can help form a different perspective. It is also more informal so we can ask every question without being hesitant about being judged, or having this stress of going to the lecturers.

Peer learning can be particularly beneficial in cases when students are intimidated speak directly with lecturers they see as unapproachable. Staff D7 also says that experienced students:

...might remember some of the struggles much better than me coming there after many years, thinking 'what's the problem?'

These participants emphasise that the different perspective of students as compared to staff can be extremely valuable in peer learning. Similarly, Student B1 describes:

I think why student-led education is so beneficial is because they've been through it: they know exactly what's tough, what's not tough, how you want to be taught, what to focus on.

Besides helping peers feel more comfortable in dealing with tricky concepts from different perspectives, Students C4 and C1 speak about the potential for students to crowd-source information by compiling knowledge in useful study guides or online discussion boards. These resources can be student-led but supported by staff, and they can be valuable resources that are greater than the sum of their parts.

Engaging with the Academic Discipline

Various staff co-creation practitioners speak about the importance of engagement not only with peers and the teacher, but also highlight that deep engagement with the academic discipline is key to higher education. Although staff practitioners mention this theme of engagement with the discipline – including subject-specific knowledge and wider disciplinary debates – more frequently than student participants, some students speak about how their engagement has fueled passion for their subject. Staff A1 speaks about engagement with the subject and asks:

'Engagement with what?' It's quite easy when you're doing interactive workshop stuff to stand back when it's going great; they all look kind of happy but how do you know that their engagement is qualitatively what it should be? There does have to be some kind of subject matter.

Similarly, Staff A8 cautions:

...there is a balance between the students' engagement and entertainment, right? ...[A]re you just entertaining them but not actually conveying the information that they would need to do well in this degree or in this course or in this particular unit?

Staff D9 also critiques engagement based on entertainment:

I think that it has to mean both sides, and not just the lecturer having to do all kinds of entertaining things in order to inspire engagement in some way, shape, or form.

These participants reflect on how both staff and students should take responsibility for engagement with subject-specific knowledge in higher education.

Although subject knowledge is extremely important, some participants emphasise that the curriculum should not only focus on knowledge but also on skills and attributes that may motivate students to engage with the subject content and wider discipline. Staff A11 reflects on the importance of balance between content knowledge and creating interest so that both students and staff are motivated to engage:

Can we maintain that level of excitement and engagement with the didactic lecture and that type of learning environment? ...[Engagement is] about us creating flexible and engaging learning environments but also it is about the collective activity, and that is really important... Sometimes that means you are pushing out some of the subject-based knowledge to take part in activities that are beyond that, as some might see it. But those activities are the type of engagement that you really want, the kind of things people will get out of bed for in the morning.

Staff A7 expands on the theme of student engagement with the subject by suggesting that staff need to go beyond teaching content:

I might poke them in the eye with a piece of information but something else has to happen as a result of me doing that, so it's transformational. I'm giving them content, but that's not what I'm here for. They can get the content from anywhere.

Staff A7, like Staff 11 above, argues that engagement involves creating meaningful opportunities for students to apply subject knowledge and skills in an interesting manner within the discipline. Ideally, the teaching and learning process will help students develop important skills and attributes through transformational learning, which can be seen as a process of developing confidence, self-awareness, and a capacity to question previous assumptions. Other participants discuss how students can bring wider understanding of the subject content including prior reading, lecture material, flipped classroom activities, and outside learning and experiences. Student engagement helps them apply and test their subject understanding whilst also possibly challenging pre-conceived ideas.

Demonstrating Confidence and Initiative

Many participants highlight how active learning helps students develop confidence and take initiative in their independent learning and contributions to the community,

which they also feel are important aspects of student engagement. Three student co-creation practitioners describe their views that the majority of the responsibility for student engagement lies with students themselves to take initiative, rather than having equity in sharing responsibility with staff. For example, Student B2 reflects on historical differences in student engagement in higher education:

Compared to my parents' generation, University is taken for granted a bit. ...Now everybody does it so I think we have the responsibility to go that little bit further to stand out... I think a bit of input from both [is needed for effective student engagement]: a little bit of input from the staff to make sure that those opportunities are there but nothing more than that. ...[T]he purpose of it is for the student to make those decisions themselves and realise that this is something they should be doing. When the responsibility is on the student, it benefits them a lot more.

It is interesting that this participant articulates how she tries to distinguish herself through her choices to engage, and how she feels students benefit more through choosing to take responsibility than through being told how to engage.

For many participants, an important aspect of student engagement is developing students' confidence to become involved in meaningful learning opportunities which help them take initiative for future engagement. Several participants such as Students B1 and B6 emphasise independent learning and critical thinking as forms of engagement, and the latter shares:

My ideal is that in lectures I'm introduced to a concept... [but] to really learn about it I have to go and look it up, and I have to read and do my research. ...You go away and form your own opinions about something.

Student B2 also reflects on the benefits of independent, critical thinking:

Some lecturers probe you to think for yourself... They'll give you the basic information but actually challenge you to think about things in a deeper way... It helps you to think critically about things and also think on your feet when you have a question thrown at you in class, which is a really good skill to have that a lot of science subjects don't really concentrate on.

Students thinking critically about the discipline, drawing their own conclusions, and developing the confidence and skills to articulate their views are all important aspects of engagement.

Various participants speak about how students' confidence and sense of initiative can influence their choices to engage. For example, Student B7 says:

Student engagement – the first thing that comes to mind is initiative. You know, if you're engaged with something, you will make the choice yourself

to be engaged but I think that there's room for people to learn to take initiative. ...I think there is a lot still of people who don't quite understand or haven't found that passion yet for why they're studying...

This participant views initiative as a central aspect of student engagement, noting that some students are intrinsically motivated to engage, and others can be supported to learn how to engage effectively as they develop a passion for learning. This participant goes on to discuss how the institutional culture of engagement can foster or hinder students' choices to engage. Within Staff Focus Groups 1 and 2, participants also discuss students' cultural and social capital, and their effect on Scottish and international students' confidence to engage with peers and staff, regardless of their academic capabilities.

Many staff and student co-creation practitioners associate student engagement with inclusive learning communities such as particularly supportive courses where students develop confidence which can promote their further involvement within the wider university community. For Student B11, engagement is about having high expectations of herself whilst developing confidence and initiative, and it is being fully aware of how her participation affects herself and her peers. In addition, Staff A1 and Staff A7 speak about the importance of students engaging by positively challenging staff. Student B9 speaks strikingly about working with a team of students on outreach projects within the local community:

I hope we will have made an impact. ...You should take responsibility for that and think 'what am I going to leave, what am I going to contribute?'

This student shares his inspiring motivation to engage actively, make the most of the higher education experience, and leave a legacy of positive contributions to the wider community.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, a wide range of participants describe the viewpoint that staff and students should equitably share responsibility for student engagement. However, they note different responsibilities for staff and students. For example, key themes for staff practices that promote student engagement include: valuing students and having high expectations of them, creating inclusive learning environments that facilitate engagement, offering opportunities to which students respond, and listening to and responding to students' feedback. It is also clear that students need to share responsibility for learning. Themes for how students engage focus on: attending and

participating, learning actively and engaging with peers, engaging with the academic discipline, and demonstrating confidence and initiative which can promote wider engagement. In some cases, both students and staff set the bar low for student engagement by emphasising basic student attendance and professional behaviour. In addition, students note that staff need to value students as individuals which seems like a basic expectation albeit one that is not always occurring. At the other extreme, the bar for student engagement is much higher when focusing on how staff engage students by offering effective opportunities for engagement, and how students can take up these opportunities by engaging with peers and staff while developing initiative to positively affect their learning community.

It is clear from participants that staff attitudes and actions greatly affect students' willingness and choice to engage with opportunities with learning. Participants note the need for engagement with the academic discipline by balancing subject knowledge with interactive and interesting methods of engaging with learning, as well as opportunities to apply skills and engage in disciplinary debates. These accounts counter critiques that some forms of student engagement are enacted to the detriment of learning subject-specific content (Ashwin et al., 2014). It is important that several participants highlight how content knowledge can be learnt outside of university; however, the added value that higher education provides to students is the opportunity to engage with the academic community, which can influence not only learning content but also developing valuable skills and attributes.

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Chapter 6: Findings: Conceptualisations of Co-Creation of the Curriculum

*What emerged as a theme was a feeling of ownership...
owning the knowledge, owning the product at the end...
We had a joint enterprise.*

– Staff A7

Introduction

Like Bovill and Bulley (2011) who present a ladder of student participation and engagement in curriculum design, many participants share examples of student engagement along a spectrum ranging from high staff responsibility (and lower student responsibility) to high student responsibility (and lower staff responsibility). Although many participants quoted in chapter 5 describe an idealised view of sharing responsibility for student engagement to facilitate *learning*, responsibility is often not shared in higher education *teaching* or curriculum design except in relatively rare examples of co-creation of the curriculum. Building on participants' ideal of sharing responsibility for student engagement, three key themes arise concerning their conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum. These start with the development of shared values and then focus on how co-creation of the curriculum initiatives facilitate creativity and community, as well as the process of negotiating power in the student/teacher relationship. I fully explain the different facets of each theme below.

Shared Values

Participants highlight aspects of five key, shared values that underpin co-creation of the curriculum: joint ownership and responsibility, empathy (that bridges gaps between students and staff), reciprocity in learning from each other, respect for partners, and working towards equity.

Joint Ownership and Responsibility

One of the key aspects of co-creation of the curriculum is that it promotes staff and students' joint ownership and responsibility of aspects of the curriculum. Participants in the co-creation of the curriculum focus group (including Staff A11, A12, A13, and B11) describe co-creation as sometimes being 'Where you don't know who is the teacher and who is the student' since they share responsibility. Student B11 states:

It was about how everybody would come with some skills or some knowledge and it would all go towards one goal. ...I think it's where you

know that you can learn from each other and you can move forward in creating something good for both of you, more than just your own individual use... It is about openness on both sides.

Furthermore, Staff A4 describes how he sees joint ownership in the curriculum co-creation:

We are all professionals in an area, we're actually just at different stages of the journey. ...The younger people will often ferret out information and bring it back, which enriches the knowledge for the whole team. ...It's not them and us, it's just *us*.

The process of developing both individual and collective responsibility – in not only learning but also in teaching – is a key aspect of sharing ownership. While staff and students share responsibility for different aspects of student engagement, creating a joint sense of ownership in curriculum co-creation helps increase student and staff intrinsic motivation to engage further and learn together, which will be explored further later.

Different co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects facilitate sharing different amounts of power and ownership with students. Staff A9 discusses the differences she perceives between student engagement and co-creation of the curriculum:

I guess quite a lot of the most engaged students are in that borderland anyway, but a lot of the time that's where some of that implicit co-creation would happen. If it becomes a more formal co-creation, it means it's more planned, that you would hopefully be taking students as a collective rather than what would ordinarily happen with an especially engaged student who would seek out an opportunity which would be quite individual. You'd be taking a group of students on a particular journey, wouldn't you?

Although there are various forms of curriculum co-creation that engage individual students or the whole cohort, it is helpful to identify the notion of a planned process of engaging students and leading a journey in which staff and students share responsibility for curriculum development.

Describing co-creating the curriculum with students, Staff A2 says:

I'd define it very simply actually as democratic engagement... [and the notion from Fielding (1999) of] 'radical collegiality'... Collegiality is different than just working together so I think collegiality is about creating, working together to create shared values and to reflect shared values that go beyond just your individual interests... Working with students has a prospect for being radical collegiality because it's challenging the idea that students are *not* colleagues. ...We share control... to look in a much more revolutionary way at who's controlling what happens in the classroom. Under that circumstance, I think we achieved collective responsibility in

everything we could do in the module which didn't breach University and QAA regulations basically.

These views highlight how democratically sharing responsibility can challenge colleagues' perceptions and traditional hierarchies, showing how students' knowledge and experience should be recognised and valued by staff. This participant tries to share responsibility with students in as many curriculum areas as possible, but university regulations and quality assurance policies could be seen here as an external constraint of co-creation of the curriculum. These challenges and others will be explored in Chapter 8. This participant's colleague, Staff A3, expands on the values underpinning their co-creation project:

This was all based on the principles of collegiality and trust... We wanted to see if students would enact these values. ... Generally there was great collegiality, commitment, and agreement around how the pilot project had gone, and what we would do in the future.

Staff A2 and Staff A3 emphasise the importance of trust in collegial relationships, and how they are trying to help both staff and student colleagues to develop personally and professionally as they learn to share ownership over curricula.

Students' commitment to sharing responsibility is important. Staff A8 highlights how students' preparation throughout their university degree may be an important aspect of the success of sharing ownership in some co-creation projects:

I think it has been easier to do that because they are fourth-year students... We were dealing with a particular subset of engaged and motivated students. ... You need to have a certain degree of buy-in and then you also have to have commitment, because it does require a lot of work for them. I think it also requires a certain level of experience, being able to deal with faculty and various different people, navigate different power relationships, be able to take on feedback and criticism constructively.

Students' high levels of motivation, engagement, commitment, and maturity often facilitate sharing ownership over the curriculum. Despite having different roles and responsibilities, Staff A7 feels the co-creation experience is rewarding since 'all of you are really a part of that lived experience' and reflects on what it feels like to share responsibility with students:

What emerged as a theme was a feeling of ownership... owning the knowledge, owning the product at the end of it which was wonderful. ... It is just good [as a teacher] to feel you've got somebody at your back. ... We had a joint enterprise, we could each rely on each other... The students and the lecturers were talking a similar language with a similar value system.

This is a rich description of feelings of mutual support.

Empathy

Many students and staff speak about the process of developing empathy to bridge gaps between them during the experience of co-creating curricula. As a foundation for developing empathy, participants highlight the importance of transparency and open communications about expectations, processes, and opportunities in learning and teaching. Various co-creation practitioners speak about how the experience helps students learn about teaching and see how challenging it is. For example, Student B8 says:

I think the reason it was so much work was because I've never had to do anything like it before, but I guess that's a positive thing... It made me appreciate how hard it must be to be a teacher. Making one lesson plan [to teach in a primary school] took a long time so I can't imagine what teachers must have on a daily basis.

Similarly, Student B4 states:

A lot of students panic at doing a 10-minute groupwork presentation. If they had to then do three or four two-hour presentations a day, they might understand the actual workload [of teachers]. You can memorise all the stuff and know it but I think it takes different skills to be able to teach and present.

These students gain empathy for teachers throughout the co-creation experience.

Like the student co-creators above, Staff A4 says:

Teaching is like an iceberg because students don't usually see the nine-tenths that are underwater with all the preparations. We throw the whole thing over to them and give them the tools.

This teacher highlights a co-creation experience of peer teaching that helps fourth-year students learn about the workload involved in planning and leading several classes for second-year students. In addition, Staff A8 describes the challenges that students learn to overcome when designing a two-hour seminar for her course:

...they could do whatever they wanted with it, but then what was interesting is things like time management and structuring often became very problematic. My view is you have got to figure it out yourself, because that is what we do [as teachers]. A lot of them found that very useful in the sense that I don't think they have ever had that kind of experience where they had to take ownership... We could go back and say 'well these are the kinds of things that we grapple with when we design courses'.

By gaining experience of what it is like to organise and teach a seminar, student co-creators can gain rich learning experiences in a supportive environment whilst also developing resilience and a better understanding of the challenges that staff face.

Other staff also describe how co-creation of the curriculum helps students to empathise with academics. Staff A10 reflects:

I think that the more you engage students in activities like this, the more they empathise with the role that academics play. That comes back to bridging the gap between staff and students, bringing the communities closer together. ...It gave them that insight to what it is like to see things from the other side, and to think about it from a slightly different perspective.

Furthermore, Student B7 reflects on how tackling challenging questions in the subject is easier due to developing shared values and collaborating with staff during curriculum co-creation:

They're somebody that you work with, like a peer, to develop something. ...When I took a big lecture, it would just be: you soak up the information and then you do whatever with that information on your own. But here, there was more direct figuring it out with someone else... We all recognised the challenges that we'd be facing together. To recognise challenges and be able to say that openly is a big thing. It's admitting to everybody that you're human and I don't think a lot of people like to admit that.

It is significant to note the view that co-creation of the curriculum can break down academic hierarchies in collaborative learning communities where staff and students are seen as peers who work together to tackle challenges.

Roughly one third of student co-creators speak specifically about how working together and breaking down academic hierarchies helps both students and staff see each other as 'human', acknowledging that they are all learners with vulnerabilities. For example, co-creators like Student B8 'feel like you're not just another brick in the wall' by working on in-depth projects with staff. Student B4 also says:

For especially first- and second-years, they have said their confidence has grown to be able to see lecturers as just people not gods, someone who rules over them. They can then say, 'well hang on a minute, is there another way of doing this?'. Not in a bad way but just to realise they're human too.

This is a powerful statement showing how co-creation can help students respect staff as equals rather than superior beings, whilst also recognising what students can contribute to curriculum development.

Other participants describe how co-creation develops students' metacognition skills through gaining a greater understanding of learning and teaching processes. For example, Student B3 says:

[X teacher] refers to it as the 'black box of teaching'. ...[Co-creation of the curriculum] allows the students to understand the human side of academic staff and to start to take on board some of those responsibilities and issues – and the policies that lie behind some of the things they are doing, because when they enter into the world of work they are going to come right into that themselves.

Staff and students reflect on how co-creation can enhance empathy and transparency, which can reveal vulnerabilities. Staff A3 explains how student co-creators reflect on their experiences as learners, and the resulting discussions (which do not tend to occur elsewhere in higher education) are impactful:

They would give examples and different ideas, and say 'In one class we did this, so maybe it would work well if you tried it here too.' ...One said, 'I've seen behind the magic mirror'. They are understanding that staff care and put in a lot of effort into their teaching behind the scenes. They are also seeing the vulnerability of staff and learning that everything is not fixed and figured out in teaching. They gained respect for teaching, and they learnt why decisions are made. They want to know.

By staff showing the inner workings of the university and including students in decision-making affecting teaching, there are resulting benefits of trust, respect, and empathy that develop between staff and students. Participants such as B2, B11, A11, and A12 also speak about the vulnerability both staff and students feel during co-creation of the curriculum when trying new learning and teaching methods, and when learning from constructive criticism in supportive yet challenging learning environments.

Reciprocity in Learning from Each Other

There are strong overlaps between reciprocity and empathy, and in this section I focus on student and staff co-creation practitioners' accounts of how co-creation experiences help them learn from each other to improve curricula. Student B1 describes co-creation:

It's putting student needs at the forefront of it, which is what you want. ...Openness on the part of the teacher, and willingness or being receptive on the students' front.

This openness and willingness on both sides helps students and teachers demonstrate the reciprocity in co-creating the curriculum. Student B4 speaks about working collaboratively in a co-created course:

The first time I did the project, it was completely new and the staff were also learning at the same time. That was positive, I think, because it helped to know everyone was in the same boat. Even although they were

the specialists in this area, it was nice to know there wasn't an 'us and them' divide.

This student describes the respect, trust, and sense of equity that is developed during co-creation projects when both staff and students are in new learning environments together: environments where both students and staff are learners. Similarly, Staff A11 argues that curriculum co-creation can help overcome traditional, hierarchical relations:

Certainly when we started down this track, a student asked me a question, 'how do you do that? I don't know'. My response was 'I don't know'. The lecturers didn't know the answers. It was the first time a lecturer has ever asked them for their view and basically said 'well how would you do it?' ...Not being the famous 'sage on the stage', if you like, just breaking down barriers... It is a problem, you solve the problem. Your solutions are equally as important. ...Equal partnerships don't exist: partnerships work because people are bringing different things to them.

Co-creation can help student and staff engage in shared learning and solve complex problems together. This helps students to gain a better understanding that knowledge is not fixed and to feel they have valuable viewpoints to contribute to its development. Although students and teachers bring different knowledge, expertise, and skills which are valued equitably, this participant emphasises that student and staff roles cannot be fully equal even if they share responsibility in some areas. However, their different roles can be equally valued.

Students and staff both draw attention to co-creation helping them learn from diverse perspectives to improve the curriculum. Student B4 reflects on her role as a student consultant:

Although people aren't all that different, when you become a lecturer you're seeing things from a different point of view than you are as a student. Maybe it's not always possible to see someone else's point of view so to do it together with someone to make something better. ...[I benefitted from being] able to go in and see how other lecturers do things, not just the ones I had witnessed in my degree.

Co-creation of the curriculum can facilitate both students and staff learning about different perspectives and teaching practices. Student B7 describes how this sense of reciprocity feels:

We'd sit with the teachers [in the primary school to discuss the co-created project] and they said 'you know, this is a real trouble we have with this one subject or this one group of kids' and we would all work together on that. We all recognised the challenges that we'd be facing together; to recognise that each other would have challenges and be able to say that

openly is a big thing! It's admitting to everybody that you're human and I don't think a lot of people like to admit that.

This participant suggests that student and staff co-creators working in a reciprocal manner can acknowledge challenges and associated emotions when they develop reciprocal working relationships.

Many participants highlight how co-creation of the curriculum facilitates staff and students learning from each others' diverse ideas to improve outcomes for everyone involved. Student B6 says:

I think that because we're making it together, you're going to get the best out of it for both sides. ...If you are co-creating then you're going to be gaining knowledge from the other side as well.

Similarly, Staff A8 describes how the process of negotiating the curriculum facilitates reciprocity:

For me, it was quite helpful to hear from them what they thought was a good classroom, versus what I might have thought was a good classroom. And we had some negotiation. ...Course design is a complicated thing. We tried as much as possible to let them see the nuts and bolts of the process, and how these things get devised.

This quote highlights how the negotiation process promotes reciprocity by exchanging views on excellent teaching and learning, and it resonates with those above describing their development of empathy.

Several participants focus on students' expertise that they share during curriculum co-creation. Student B11 describes the process of recognising what she brings to co-creation:

I remember feeling very afraid of why I was supposed to be there, because I felt like I was speaking to people with a lot more knowledge and a lot more titles than me. But it was about realising that you were not supposed to have that kind of knowledge or that kind of expertise; that was not your role. Your role was as the student, so you were expert in being a student and nobody could take that away from you. It was about discussing different perspectives, and what comes out of all those different perspectives is something amazing that is going to bring you forward and reach you in so many different ways.

Similarly, Staff A2 says:

You're coming with some ideas about content and... what the students said very strongly and quite legitimately was 'You're the subject expert. It's your responsibility to know what we should be studying at this level in this particular discipline' and of course by definition the students didn't know that. That's the expertise that you can't expect them to have. ...Clearly they're not peers in terms of subject expertise, but they should

be peers in terms of teaching processes because students have much more expertise actually. They obviously have much more experience knowing what it's like to be a student in our classes than we do.

These two participants show how staff bring subject and teaching expertise, and students bring valuable perspectives as learners to improve curricula. Co-creation brings together these different forms of expertise to facilitate a reciprocal learning experience.

In particular, students can enhance the curriculum through technology and content which is relevant to students' lives and interests. Reflecting on a co-creation of the curriculum project she was aware of, non-co-creator Staff D1 states:

I think it worked really well because you were bringing in students who had a lot of passion for the subject and often brought a lot of that contemporary knowledge with them, so I think the new course [we co-created] contains a lot of pop culture because it's things that the students brought... that I think staff were not necessarily aware of or wouldn't have known how to get into the course.

Furthermore, Student B9 says:

Things like social media, modern technology, smartphones, and things are a huge part of communicating. It is how I engage with a lot of things. So if you want a course that can deliver that as up-to-date as possible, acknowledge it won't come from the lecturers. They are not with a generation that are involved in these mediums so you need the students to input that as well. ...I think one of the biggest things that I have learnt from this is the interdisciplinary teamwork approach, working with different people from different backgrounds, different disciplines... [and] different age groups coming together to bring all these different skills and insights they have together to develop one project. Whatever line of work you are in, that is such a valuable lesson.

This participant highlights students' understanding of new technologies, and how he has benefitted from the interdisciplinary nature of co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects that bring together diverse perspectives. In each of the focus groups with student representatives, participants suggest implications for co-creation of the curriculum relating to inclusivity, equality, and diversity in the curriculum. Students C4 and C14 highlight in separate focus groups how they became aware that their literature and politics classes focused almost exclusively on white, male authors and political thinkers and the former says 'we're lacking this whole huge spectrum of authors'. Co-creation can help include other perspectives by becoming more inclusive to reflect students' diverse backgrounds and promote equality and diversity.

Respect for Partners

Many staff and student co-creators highlight how respect is both a prerequisite for and an outcome of effective co-creation of the curriculum. Participants highlight staff members' respect for students in particular. This could be the case since they share how staff often set the tone for the learning and teaching environment and participants sometimes describe how staff respect for students in co-creation contrasts sharply with where respect is lacking in traditional teaching approaches. Furthermore, student respect for staff expertise in the subject and in teaching are more frequently acknowledged in both traditional and co-created curricula, as seen in the sections on student engagement as well as empathy and reciprocity in curriculum co-creation. Therefore, in this section my analysis focuses on how both staff and students emphasise the responsibilities of staff to respect, support, and value students' contributions in curriculum co-creation.

Staff A3 describes respect as a key value in her curriculum co-creation work:

It was about showing students that we actually really care about teaching. Our students are often first generation to come to university, and it's great building their enthusiasm. I'm humbled by my students... I've seen a big change in them... and they feel their work is valued now.

This participant highlights how she feels a responsibility to support students and help them feel valued through the co-creation experience that empowers them. In addition,

Student B7 describes:

[X teacher] said in the very beginning when we first all got together, 'we have students who are studying something. They're a resource, why doesn't the community use it?'. I think that's a great way of looking at it, and it teaches us that we have something to offer.

By recognising that students can make important contributions to curricular decision-making and to community development projects, staff show students that they are valued.

Staff A11 focuses on how co-creation of and transparency in assessment marking rubrics improves respect in learning and teaching since students 'understand what it takes' to succeed. He disparages how some of his colleagues are not as transparent as they should be with their marking rubrics:

How do you teach people to do something when you don't tell them what the rules are?

By involving students in co-creating marking rubrics, staff enhance students' understanding of how they can perform well in their assessments. Student B7 also

speaks about transparency as an important foundation to advance understanding of teachers' expectations and how students can excel by meeting or surpassing these expectations. Transparency in learning and teaching can also promote academic achievement, which will be explored in Chapter 7.

Beyond transparency, staff co-creators demonstrate their respect for students when deciding to share ownership over aspects of the curriculum. Although some individuals may think that student co-creators may make the curriculum easier, Staff A2 explains how the contrary is often the case in genuine partnership:

...the students engaged and actually changed the assessment so it was harder. I've used that anecdote a lot because it's so common as a response to notions of co-creation that students will dumb it down, and they will but only if they are engaged in a superficial way. I think the answer and response to that is, 'Yes, if you treat them like passive consumers then that's going to happen'. But if you're genuine colleagues, if you work together, if you can commit the time, then that's not what happens or at least not in my experience.

The theme of respect and having high expectations of students comes through strongly, showing how staff attitudes towards students can influence the success of a partnership in co-creating the curriculum.

In addition to staff demonstrating that they care about students' success and respect their contributions to co-creation projects, it is perhaps even more salient that student co-creators feel respected. They speak about feeling valued as individuals, such as Student B11 who says:

Even though it is a small university, I felt valued as a student because I wasn't just one in thousands. I felt that I could make a difference and I could leave something behind for other students.

Student B8 also describes the strong working relationship he has built with staff through curriculum co-creation:

I think that the main difference between this course and the other courses is there's been a lot of like situations where you're actually getting proper feedback on your own work and you feel like the staff actually care about your project. Whereas on other courses it just kind of feels like you're going through the process really, because you feel like the lecturers have done it a billion times already. With the [co-created] course, I felt like the lecturers genuinely care about your project. They want it to work, they want you to be successful.

These participants reflect on some of the large classes and impersonal teaching at university in contrast to how participating in co-creation of the curriculum makes them feel when staff take the time to build strong working relationships with students.

Students highlight the importance of feeling listened to during co-creation of the curriculum, noting that they sometimes don't feel listened to or respected in other learning and teaching experiences. Student B6 describes individual student-led projects within a course:

Across the course I think everyone has had a very similar experience of creating it with their academic counterpart. They definitely felt like they've been listened to and their ideas have been taken on board.

Student C13 who has not participated in co-creation also feels it would be beneficial:

[With co-creation] I think in general people would be (or I know I would be) happier in the degree if you feel like you are able to take your learning in different avenues, speak with lecturers, give feedback, and feel like you are being listened to and they will put your feedback in to change something.

Although it is disappointing to see that this participant does not seem to feel respected in other courses, she associates feeling listened to with student satisfaction and sees strong potential in co-creation of the curriculum. This is the case for co-creator Student B2:

Being treated with respect gives students a kind of satisfaction from the course and know that their views are actually being listened to because they're being treated like adults. I think there's a sense of empowerment from it so you leave feeling that you can make a difference...

Feeling respected helps student co-creators feel that their work can have a positive impact during the co-creation process and beyond.

Staff also speak about the ways in which they value and reward student co-creators' time and contributions through course credit, professional development opportunities, and/or payment. Staff A5 offers course credit for whole-class co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects and reflects on high-quality and high-value learning experiences:

There's that buy-in from the students so they know they are valued and their opinions are valued as well, and I would think they would feel like they're actually getting something for the money they're paying rather than sitting at the back of a lecture theatre.

In addition, Staff A10 who works with student co-creators to produce educational resources during summer projects, says:

Paying the students, valuing their time and their input, is so important. Clearly if it was a wholesale curriculum strategy and it was part of the

curriculum to have every student create something, then you couldn't do that and it wouldn't be appropriate.

These participants help to distinguish between whole-cohort co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects and co-created summer projects with selected students, reflecting on how students' contributions should be respected in ways that are appropriate to the context.

Working Towards Equity

Both student and staff co-creators describe how they create a new space and ethos for co-creation of the curriculum to take place where they work towards developing a sense of equity in their professional relationships. For example, Student B3 describes:

I think both partners have to step into something neutral and they've got to really think about how they're doing that. There was... a willingness and positive intent that informed how everyone would do it. The very first workshop was quite critical because it set the tone and the mood. ...It was definitely a new way of doing things. Everything from the way that people were expected to sit together and communicate. ...As you sat down, it wasn't immediately obvious who was staff and who were students. ...Somehow people weren't pigeon-holed. I think that played an important part.

Staff and students' values can affect their initial mindsets and interactions in curriculum co-creation, which can set the tone for sharing power within a partnership.

Staff A1 also speaks about the importance of setting expectations about how co-creation of the curriculum is different from more traditional teaching:

...you have to be very careful not to appear as if you are requiring students to do the work that you should be doing. They have to understand why certain levels of responsibility might be expected of them, and why it's theirs and not mine.

Initial discussions about roles and responsibilities are important to set the tone for negotiating and sharing power in co-creation of the curriculum, which may be a challenge for some students at first. In addition, Staff A11 describes how he feels that relationships in co-creation of the curriculum promote equity but are not equal:

Forget about equal partnerships; equal partnerships don't exist. Partnerships work because people are bringing different things to them.

It is important to recognise that staff and students contribute different expertise, insights, and views to co-created curricula, which should be valued equitably.

In effective partnerships, both staff and student co-creators describe the importance of respecting staff expertise whilst also recognising all that students contribute. Staff A9 states:

I proudly hang on to my status as an expert, and I worked very hard to become an expert. It is a partnership but I think there has to be a respect for expertise whilst also the experts, if you like, respecting the new insights and fresh insights of looking at things that students can provide.

Similarly, Student B1 says:

I think it's a balanced mix. ...Obviously the student has to be conscientious, receptive and willing to learn from the expert, but equally the tutor or the professional has to be open to the students' ideas and willing to have their perceptions changed – willing to change their ways and not be set in stone.

These participants each reflect on the give-and-take of shifting power dynamics as students and staff negotiate aspects of the curriculum.

Students B2, B7, B8, and B11 in particular highlight how co-creation helps develop a new space where they feel more equally respected, as compared to more traditional and hierarchical relationships in academia. Student B2, for example, reflects:

You're treated more like an adult and forming more adult relationships that also help teaching as well. ...We have a very equal relationship. I don't feel that subordinate relationship that you have with the lecturer and the student.

Staff A2 also describes how he creates new spaces beyond the classroom to discuss 'political issues, ethical issues, issues about gender and sexuality [in evolutionary development] – all interesting things that we don't have time to cover in the class'. These spaces help advance student/staff partnerships by moving away from traditional, academic hierarchies. To develop a new space for co-creation of the curriculum to be successful, staff and students are open to and respect different perspectives and ways of working, and they recognise that they can develop a sense of equity through reciprocity.

Student co-creators also speak about how the opportunity and accountability of equitably sharing decision-making responsibilities with staff helps students to feel more motivated to engage with learning. For instance, Student B7 says:

I felt it was a personal thing if I didn't do a good job... I felt like somebody was relying on me to do the best I could do. Since they were doing the best they could do to help me, I should be doing the same.

Similarly, Student B4 speaks as follows about her role as a student consultant providing staff with feedback on their teaching: 'When you're there to do a job, you want to do the job to the best of your ability...'. Additionally, Student B6 points out that students' suggestions do not always need to be taken on board by staff when sharing ownership over curricula as long as their conversations are based on respect:

I think it's definitely motivated me because I'm not a very good self-motivator if I'm not interested. Because I am interested in the project, I know that if I went with an idea then I would be listened to and considered, even if they're like 'actually, maybe not'. At least a conversation is possible.

Working towards equity in the democratic relationships between staff and students is an important value and aim in curriculum co-creation, even if equality in all aspects is not always possible. These students highlight how shared ownership, respect, and more balanced working relationships can enhance their intrinsic motivation. We will revisit the theme of motivation below.

Creativity, Community, and Learning from Diverse Ideas

In Chapter 5, I presented active learning and peer engagement as important aspects of student engagement and, in this chapter, I have focused first thus far on the shared values that underpin conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum. This next section focuses on how co-creation of the curriculum is conceptualised as a collaborative process of student and staff engagement that facilitates creativity and innovation in curriculum design. We will explore how creativity and community promote active engagement that can promote curiosity, imagination, exploration, ownership, innovation, and connection-making for both learners and teachers. The sub-sections below first help us look at innovation and creativity resulting from collaborative learning in curriculum co-creation, followed by examining the connections between intrinsic motivation and creativity.

Innovation and Creativity through Collaborative Learning

Many staff co-creators and several student co-creators reflect on the creative processes of innovation fostered through dialogue that draws on their joint resources, experiences, and ideas. For example, Staff A7 highlights how meaningful learning and teaching involves discussions that help staff and students learn from each other when respecting students as individuals who co-create knowledge with staff.

Similarly, Staff A1 speaks about 'trying to get things to happen' in his dialogic teaching:

Here's the information and this is the theory, and it's also trying to make spaces for people to play with those things and think about how that might be or not be relevant to their own learning. I suppose one of my assumptions is that the biggest resource in the room is the students themselves. They're more powerful than what's in my head.

By valuing students' knowledge, experiences, and contributions staff facilitate learning experiences in which students can work with ideas to create new understandings through their interaction. Student B5 similarly highlights the creative processes of collaboration by 'bouncing ideas off each other' to advance learning. Staff A2 also says:

In terms of creating learning within a social environment, I think that can be a very constructive, imaginative, and creative process and it's around how we do that collectively...

Various staff speak about how co-creation of the curriculum helps them facilitate more vibrant learning environments by drawing on the community's collective intellectual resources and creativity.

In addition to creative learning processes for students, co-creation of the curriculum can help staff to think innovatively whilst learning from each cohort of diverse students with whom they work. Student B6 shares:

There's just more creativity because they don't necessarily know who their students are going to be.

Similarly, Staff A6 shares how she gains new ideas from her students when she acts as a facilitator rather than an instructor. The process of working together within co-creation therefore benefits not only students but also staff who learn from their students.

In addition to the collaborative processes of co-creation of the curriculum, other participants highlight the creative products which are developed. For example, Staff A7 says:

There's a symbiosis between us and things that are in the ether now that weren't there before, that's a kind of creating. ...I think I probably could squeeze it down into creating learning materials, creating learning experiences, this idea of the whole being more than the sum of its parts: it's a dialogue between the lecturer and the students, so the learning can be an emergent property of the expertise of the lecturer and the lived experience of the student.

Other participants speak about the new ideas, learning experiences, educational resources, and course sessions that are produced. These can benefit both current and future students as well as staff by improving learning and teaching.

Intrinsic Motivation and Creativity

A variety of students and staff gave examples of how sharing ownership over curriculum decision-making can increase students' intrinsic motivation for learning, which leads to more creative outcomes. Staff A2 and A13 highlight how some students are extrinsically motivated by assessment to approach learning strategically, but co-creation of the curriculum can give students more space and freedom to develop intrinsic motivation to engage with learning. For example, Staff A13 says:

...when students come to university, they behave in a functional way: 'I have to do this, and that gets me here, and now I have to do that...'. It is that gap that this particular [co-creation] project has helped. ...It is not just about the functional [tasks to achieve grades]. It is about the experiential, about the learning from that. It is about the development, and that articulation of that personal development is the bit that will make sure that you can walk out of the door at the end of your four-year degree and navigate your way in the world. That is the secret of it.

Similarly, Student B8 reflects on the difference between more traditional learning as compared to co-created projects:

It can just feel like you'd know what you've got to do then you put it in an essay. But with this course, there's almost a completely blank page and you can do whatever you want with it. I think in terms of engaging with the lecturers and the client as well, it made you feel a bit more than just a student which was nice.

The freedom and creativity involved in curriculum co-creation can be exciting and novel, and sharing ownership helps students feel empowered when seeing the impact of their work on others.

Staff A1 reflects on the different levels of intrinsic motivation and ownership over learning that he observes in students in different disciplines:

If you feel a sense of ownership of a process (think about, say, fine art students), I just noticed their proportion of firsts at the end of the final year was much higher than psychology. ...I didn't think it was because fine art is easy but I knew that they were all really into what they did, and obviously with art you have to create. ...Helping students actually make good judgements about the quality of work in their disciplines, maybe that's one of the things that helps them move towards a creator or co-creator position.

Similarly, Staff A5 shares that in projects co-created with students:

We're always amazed at some of the stuff they come up with. I think it's a pattern across the University: when you give them a bit of space and freedom, I don't know if it's intellectual freedom or what – but I do think we underestimate our students a lot. ...A lot of the time we're just gobsmacked by the kind of work they've done which is great.

Giving students freedom seems to develop their intrinsic motivation, ownership, and critical thinking skills that, in turn, can help students to become more creative and independent thinkers who are successful in higher education.

Student co-creation practitioners share their excitement for being given more responsibility over their own learning. For instance, Student B7 says:

It was amazing, I was so happy. ...They definitely gave me a lot of autonomy in what I wanted to do... Things were sometimes not in your control necessarily but the way I managed my time and my creativity were really used in this, which I really liked because those two are in my control.

By having the autonomy to design her own project and take ownership over its management and timelines, this student learns to deal with uncertainty by drawing on her creative problem-solving skills. Similarly, Student B11 shares her perspectives on co-creation of the curriculum:

To me it is definitely something about being conscious, not only about what you are doing, but what you are capable of doing and definitely to challenge staff and other students. ...It is about going to university and not being passive and waiting for people to tell you what to do. It's getting into an environment where you are able to really get your creative side out and trying to see what you can do... and be confident in what you are doing.

For this student, engaging in curriculum co-creation means being confident and aware of her capabilities and pushing traditional boundaries by being creative in her learning.

Negotiating Power in the Student/Teacher Relationship

In addition to the shared values, creativity, and sense of community that are foundational to curriculum co-creation, participants also note themes related to how they negotiate power in the shifting, non-traditional student/teacher relationship during co-creation. Participants note that staff often need to take the lead in curriculum co-creation at first; they develop joint ownership, empathy, reciprocity, and respect throughout their initiatives as they work towards achieving a sense of equity and democratic engagement. In the sections that follow, we will explore staff leadership, how students and staff navigate shifting levels of responsibility and power, and how they practice active citizenship in the classroom and beyond.

Staff Leadership

In common with conceptualisations of effective student engagement presented in Chapter 5, staff often need to take the lead initially in creating opportunities for students to engage in co-creation of the curriculum. Staff A3 speaks about reciprocity although she recognises that staff take the lead in co-creation:

I don't think that we can ever fully share power with students. I designed this project so I would always have more power in the sense that I was creating its direction and setting it up against expected outcomes. ...It's hard to know how truly equal they can be, but there is room for all voices in the discussion.

Similarly, Staff A1 says:

I think there's got to be a bit of shared responsibility but there is also a power relationship... We could declare ourselves to be terribly liberal and say that everybody has an equal responsibility in engagement. On the other hand, I am the course organiser... which requires a certain level of responsibility. ...As egalitarian as we want to be, at the end of the day we are still the teachers on a course which will have structures which are validated and can never be equally co-owned. Having said that, things can be more equally co-owned than they probably currently are.

As they try to work towards equity in co-creation, these staff wrestle with the idea of students equally sharing power and whether that is appropriate, desirable, or possible.

Student participants describe how staff need to take the lead in subject expertise and in quality assurance, although that will mean students don't fully share power. Student B10 says: 'They will have the final say... We suggest things and they can say "no".'

However, Student B9 thinks this is necessary:

Of course the staff need to lead it because it is their job, they are paid for it, they know how to do it. But I think there is definitely an element for students to come in.

Staff A2 also reflects:

...the students said very strongly and quite legitimately: 'You're the subject expert. It's your responsibility to know what we should be studying at this level in this particular discipline' and of course by definition the students didn't know that. That's the expertise that you can't expect them to have.

Co-creators acknowledge and discuss how to negotiate power in the curriculum, and they also recognise areas where staff must lead.

However, tensions can sometimes develop between the notions of staff leadership and staff/student equity in decision-making, especially within traditional, hierarchical academic structures. Staff A9 says:

I like the idea of democratic pedagogy, but I'm much more of a realist: there clearly are hierarchies. I run things quite informally and with hierarchy as flat as possible, but there are hierarchies and there are power dynamics so I think it's best to be open and honest about that. I do expect standards of achievement and behaviour, and I wouldn't apologise for that.

Staff A7 negotiates course content with students but acknowledges the differences in responsibilities for assessment in particular:

It's not quite a negotiation: it's a decision to go along with some stuff that I suggested so it's a buy-in rather than a negotiation.

This staff co-creator reflects on her responsibilities to take the lead in facilitating assessment, and her expectations for students to engage within the frameworks that she has set.

Staff A6 describes an interesting initiative where she negotiates assessment marks with students, with caveats around staff leadership:

We do tend to agree quite a lot. Some of them are very modest and perhaps won't give themselves as high marks perhaps as they should. There have been other times when students have said, 'We could just give ourselves 'A's because negotiation won't go far from that'. I think that they understand that that doesn't work and if we do disagree I retain the right to decide what their final mark is.

As in the other instances above, we see how there are times when staff need to take ownership, whilst also allowing other opportunities for sharing more equal responsibility. Staff A8 also describes the need for staff to be lead decision-makers when working democratically:

...we were getting to the point where we were too democratic and saying 'well whatever everybody thinks' but somebody has to be a kind of line manager in partnerships. That is what we had to grapple with. It is a lot of cooks, or herding cats... There was always a possibility to take back some of the control, but that wasn't ever needed.

Student C16 also speaks about the need for staff to make decisions if students provide feedback that is contradictory. These participants emphasise the need for leadership in negotiated decision-making, which tends to come from staff. However, this may be challenging for those trying to share as much decision-making power as possible with students.

Some participants who have not previously engaged in curriculum co-creation question whether this approach could restrict the breadth and depth of the curriculum if it is not adequately negotiated between students and staff. For example, Student C5 speaks about the need to learn ‘unpopular things that are difficult... [to not] dilute the actual strength of the degree itself.’ Similarly, Student C13 describes the importance of staff ensuring the high quality of co-created courses that help students gain both depth and breadth in knowledge and skills since:

...it has the potential to be so off course: you might find it interesting because it is something you studied before... You might push yourself backwards in that respect, but you want to be progressive and not stagnant. ...I can see that that would cause some kinds of conflict... You would have to set that out very clearly to begin with that, ‘yes, we want your input but we still want to give you a world-class degree’.

Furthermore, Staff D6 speaks about needing to provide students with the building blocks for critical learning later in their degree:

The teachers know what’s the next step, fourth step, fifth step. Students don’t see much in the future so they might miss the point, just see the present and then revolve around that.

It is notable that these participants tend to focus on the subject knowledge that they want to ensure courses cover, and they do not emphasise attributes of authentic *being* or skills that co-creators acknowledge are equally important. However, these non-co-creators raise the challenge of negotiating a balance between subject interests and academic rigour, and they want to ensure that staff leadership and expertise continues to challenge students and maintain high-quality degrees during curriculum negotiation initiatives.

Navigating Shifting Levels of Responsibility and Power

Although staff may initially lead in curriculum co-creation and take ownership as appropriate, power can shift between staff and students at different times. Co-creators emphasise that it takes times to build effective partnerships, but what is important is that their working relationships are based on trust and respect. Student B3 understands this as having ‘equal footing’:

That was one of my initial queries about the project: realistically, would it ever be an equal footing? Would the teaching staff be playing a role of being in partnership or would they genuinely and authentically consider the student to have equal footing with them? I wouldn’t suggest it was there initially but that over time, through regular meetings and communications, it did get to that shared platform of partnership.

This participant goes on to reflect on how different students will bring different experience and will also need different levels of support to co-create the curriculum.

Participants describe how students and staff negotiate shifting power dynamics. Staff A1 states:

It is a shared responsibility. ...Maybe it oscillates depending on what's happening, so maybe it's us initially but we reach a space where it's primarily the student... It's variable across time and context as well.

In alignment with the themes above on staff leadership and working towards equity in curriculum co-creation, Staff A13 describes how she aims to share power although she recognises how responsibilities shift over time based on student needs and negotiating what is relevant for the situation. She says:

One of the discussions was 'what is that power balance?' I think the suggestion at the time was the power balance should be equal: it should be 50:50. But it is all about equity. ...Coming back from our two [co-creator] students at that point in time was 'no, we don't think so. We think there are definitely occasions where we are looking for the staff to be more in charge of this or this'. ...The fundamental aspect of this is that element of respect: you are bringing something to the table and are respected as a full partner. There is a shifting dynamic... Everybody's voice has got equal standing and different situations might throw up different relationships and power balances at different times.

Importantly, this participant notes how it is important to return to the key values of respect and reciprocity that underpin effective curriculum co-creation. These values help students and staff work equitably – in different ways at different times and with different levels of responsibility at different stages – to negotiate a student-centred curriculum by incorporating all voices.

Other participants discuss the nature of co-creation tailoring the curriculum to different cohorts of students based on their learning needs or interests. Student B7 describes this process:

...we are learning through communicating and personal interactions. For the student I think it's incredible that you're communicating with somebody that you would have otherwise seen as above you. It's very much hands-on.

Furthermore, Student B6 speaks about the strong working relationships that students and staff develop during this process of listening and negotiating to achieve shared aims. Staff A11 also describes this, speaking about the changes he sees in students:

We are doing the simple things in the first instance like having the negotiation around about what we should be marking, opening up the

discussions. We have students coming back who have done these modules, coming back to us quite openly saying 'I don't think the learning outcomes fit here'...

By sharing responsibility and negotiating learning and teaching together, students are becoming more reflective about the learning process and assertive about sharing their valuable views to improve the curriculum.

Active Citizenship in Learning Communities

Another important aspect of co-creation of the curriculum is students and staff developing a shared sense of purpose and actively contributing to the learning community developing their course or project, which has wider implications for active citizenship beyond the classroom. Many participants conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum as modeling democratic engagement in the classroom, which can also have an impact on the wider community. For instance, Staff A2 describes co-creation of the curriculum by defining it as:

...a very old-fashioned notion in some ways of role modelling democratic engagement, and that's got some more modern reflections I think. So in my own subject there's a lot of talk about education for sustainable development and that's not just about understanding the carbon cycle. Most definitions of that would also involve equipping people with the attitudes and skills that are appropriate for a sustainable world – a socially just and sustainable world as well as an environmental one. ...[When co-creating curricula] it's about trying to live the values which are a bit more liberatory and democratic.

This participant suggests that co-creation of the curriculum should focus on developing students' skills and attitudes that foster social justice and sustainability through active citizenship and contributions to the wider society.

Other participants describe the democratic, grassroots nature of co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects which promote collective, bottom-up action that can have wider ramifications. For example, Staff A11 says 'we are not just taking this singular, top-down academic approach'. Staff A3 also comments that 'students and staff sit and work together from the bottom up' and this helps students see how their co-creation work has an impact beyond their own development to contribute to enhanced learning and teaching for other students. Similarly, Staff A12 says:

Now you can be active, informed citizens outside the university but we also want active and informed citizens inside the university. ...We want them to be actively involved in the programmes. We want them to be

citizens who take ownership, not just of their module and their programme but also of the actual university itself.

These participants articulate how co-creation of the curriculum promotes a high level of student and staff engagement that is broader than classroom engagement. This can promote active citizenship by working to develop a shared sense of purpose within their course, their programme, and the wider university.

Staff co-creation practitioners also describe a sense of shared purpose in democratic class engagement. Staff A8 says:

...you get to the point where you are having a conversation rather than them turning to you as the authority figure, trying to give the right answer. I think there is a moment where you can feel that switch, where you are having a dialogue... I think a sense of – I don't know if solidarity is the right word – but that we are all in this together, we are trying to do this together, we are trying to achieve the same things together.

Furthermore, Staff A7 describes:

I like it to be democratic. What I like about it is not me telling them things; what I like is watching them discovering things. ...The fun or interest in it is watching their minds changing and facilitating the process by surprising them, challenging them, putting them in difficult situations, giving them autonomy.

By giving students autonomy and sharing not only responsibility but a shared sense of purpose, these staff are modelling civic engagement and active citizenship in the classroom.

Chapter Summary

Although participants' fifteen co-creation projects vary in many ways, this chapter brings together themes cutting across their conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum. Co-creation is a process that requires particularly high levels of student and staff engagement, and many participants conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum as a pedagogy in which students and staff not only share responsibility for learning but also for teaching. Co-creators start to achieve these high levels of engagement by working to develop five key, common values including: shared ownership and responsibility, empathy, reciprocity in learning from each other, and respect for partners as they work towards a sense of equity in their professional relationships. These values clearly shine through in participants' descriptions and extend on the previous findings of Cook-Sather et al. (2014) who identified the

importance of respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility in partnerships in learning and teaching.

The themes of creativity, community, and learning from diverse ideas are also essential aspects of the curriculum co-creation process. Participants note that staff and students' collective sense of innovation develops through fruitful dialogue within learning communities that harnesses individuals' different contributions and forms of expertise. Creativity is clearly seen in student and staff co-creators' autonomy in pursuing non-traditional learning and teaching approaches. Their collaborative decision-making also facilitates staff and students' intrinsic motivation to enhance curricula and, where needed, to take on challenges.

Co-creators also acknowledge the power dynamics at play in curriculum co-creation, which is notable since the hierarchies present in traditional learning and teaching can be implicit. Participants recognise where staff leadership is needed and describe how the process of negotiation promotes shifting levels of power and responsibility as appropriate when co-creating a student-centred curriculum. As co-creators draw on the shared values of curriculum co-creation and work towards a sense of equity, it is powerful to see how this process can model democratic engagement and active citizenship in their learning communities.



Chapter 7: Findings: Benefits of Co-Creation of the Curriculum

*'It was a great experience...
I think it took a certain amount of trust on both of our parts,
and the trust has paid off. I would do it again in a heartbeat.'*
– Staff A8

Introduction

In this chapter, we turn to look at conceptualisations of the benefits of curriculum co-creation, focusing on student and staff co-creators' overwhelmingly positive experiences, perspectives, and reflections. With 230 qualitative data nodes coded to 'benefits of co-creation of the curriculum' from all fifteen examples of co-creation projects, it is important to note again that these projects varied widely. Despite this variation, my analysis spans all curriculum co-creation projects to share cross-cutting sub-themes related to benefits of this approach for individual student and staff participants and their institutions.

We start by exploring their shared benefits of heightened engagement during curriculum co-creation, their short-term feelings of enjoyment of learning and teaching resulting from co-creation, and their longer-term feelings of fulfillment. Substantial sections then explore the many beneficial aspects of student and staff personal and professional development. We also look at the broader aspects of impact for students and staff relating to how co-creation provides authentic learning and teaching experiences that help them gain important skills and attributes that will advance their lives and work beyond higher education.

Engagement, Enjoyment, and Fulfilment from Learning and Teaching

We start by examining the occasionally overlapping themes of engagement, enjoyment, and fulfillment in co-creation of the curriculum. All co-creators describe their increased engagement in learning and teaching resulting from the opportunities that co-creation presents to both students and staff. A very important finding is that all student participants co-creating courses with staff emphasise that these were the best courses across their entire university degree. Students and staff involved across all co-creation initiatives are extremely positive about their enjoyment of the experience, which proves to be both immediately gratifying and enhances the sense of reward from learning and teaching long afterwards.

Heightened Engagement with Learning

Many student and staff co-creators highlight the relevance of co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects to the needs and interests of both students and staff, which tend to lead to their increased engagement with learning. Staff A9 reflects that the student co-creators with whom she worked are more motivated and engaged in learning because 'They really cared'. Furthermore, Staff A8 reflects on finding shared passion in the subject content to develop students' engagement:

I think we have a responsibility to engage students, and my experience of this [co-created course] is that if you do try to engage students, if you engage them in what they are interested in (in part on their terms, though not exclusively, because that has to be a collaboration I think) that they will engage.

Staff A5 also says that, in co-creation projects:

It's a lot of fun to be involved with, and it's quite rewarding. ...A lot of the time we tried to rein them in a bit. I don't know if it's because they haven't had an opportunity to do something like this before... They do get really stuck in and engaged which is great for us. ...If it's done properly – it should really benefit the student. ...It's engagement again, but also giving them the skills they'll need afterwards. That's key really. There's this obsession with the NSS [National Student Survey], but I think if we start engaging more with students then the NSS should take care of itself.

These staff highlight that students' enjoyment of and engagement with learning are often inter-related. Staff A5 suggests that it can be more beneficial for staff to focus on nurturing students' intrinsic motivations to learn as compared to the extrinsic motivation of their department's NSS scores.

Staff A11 notes how students invest vast time and effort into their learning when they are motivated by development of a learning community:

With their experience on that module and the kind of camaraderie about the group work... [they] are working together, supporting each other... We really knew it was working when we were starting to see students coming in two hours early and leaving two hours later because they were working as a group and... they wanted to all be part of it.

The positive feeling of the learning community is a benefit in and of itself, but participants also suggest that it is indicative of deep and active learning which help students excel in their studies. We will revisit potential aspects of academic achievement later in this chapter.

Student co-creators also highlight that co-creation might mean that they put in more time and effort, but they are willing to do so because of the benefits they experience

when feeling more engaged and enjoying learning. Student B2 speaks about the effect of contributing to decision-making about how classes would be held:

We might go for a walk [to take the class] outside. Obviously logistically it might take more time, but people were willing to put that time in when we had benefits back from it like gaining more inspiration from being outside instead of sitting in a hot, stuffy lecture theatre.

In addition, Student B5 describes:

Everyone who I know who has done the course has loved it... [and] has been really engaged with it. ...I think a lot of people who don't do it [the co-created course] see it as a lot of work, but then I think everyone who does do it doesn't see it as a lot of work because they're enjoying it. They don't mind putting the work into it.

The connection between enjoyment of learning and engagement is clear here.

By engaging in co-created courses that are tailored to their interests and preferred methods of learning, some students reflect on increased learning in comparison to other courses they have taken. Student B10 describes her increased engagement with a co-created course because she feels it 'played to my strengths'. Student B6 also states:

I think it's just a lot more flexible and you can really show off your best side as well as challenging yourself so that you can excel in a field that you are interested in.

Furthermore, feeling accountable for a co-created course promotes students' increased engagement with learning. For instance, Student B7 says:

I definitely gained more confidence in who I can speak with and taking the initiative. I learned a bit more about responsibility. Having that close interaction with professors, you're held accountable for more. ...There was less room for me to casually do it or just pass by, which in other classes that's easier to do if there's less accountability and trust... Now when I'm even just writing an essay, I hope I have a certain responsibility to make sure it's the best work I can do.

These students note a strong connection between responsibility and engagement, and highlight wanting to do high-quality work due to an increased sense of accountability to their peers and teacher. Most powerfully, this engagement with co-creation seems to extend to students' engagement outside the co-created course, with students wanting to do their best in all their work at university.

Enjoyment of Learning and Teaching

Many students and staff highlight how co-creation of the curriculum can promote feelings of excitement and enjoyment of learning. For example, Student B8 says:

It was one of the best courses I've done in the university because you can genuinely feel like you're making a difference.

Students also describe the rewarding nature of their co-created projects, and Student B7 says:

It was better than any course I'd taken here... I'm so grateful I found this class.

It is striking that students describe feeling 'grateful' (Student B7) and 'lucky' (Student B10) for these relatively rare co-creation experiences in higher education.

Student co-creators also describe how having ownership over their learning through these methods can go beyond being enjoyable to even being fun when exploring new topics that interest them most and working with inspiring staff. Student B5 says:

It was really fun. The teacher was great. ...He's so friendly and always saying: 'If you have any questions, please ask me. Pop in any time'. ...[My project] went really well. Just finding out answers I found interesting as well.

Furthermore, Student B1 reflects on the enjoyment he felt co-creating a project in medicine:

It's helped me learn more, and it's very satisfying as well to produce something where the feedback was great so far. ...[It's] really fun meeting once a week with the general practitioners with a very small group so you're really learning and speaking to patients... [Y]ou are essentially lectured by world leaders in medicine. ...They're just super... you'd have people talking about their specialty, so they go into their favourite things to talk about. Then you get the passion behind it as well.

The theme of student and staff enjoyment in sharing learning and teaching experiences and passion for the subject area seems to lead students and staff to inspire each other.

Staff, too, share their enjoyment of working collaboratively with students and discovering networks of like-minded staff who enjoy teaching through curriculum co-creation. For example, Staff A5 says:

It's a lot of fun! ...A lot of it came about in terms of trying to spread the word around the University about the [co-created] course and you start finding these networks of people who are interested in this type of space...

Similarly, Staff A7 states:

It's exhausting but it's fun! I'd say that partly as a result of the University changing its attitudes [to recognise not only research but also teaching excellence], I now feel as if I've been given freedom to do maverick, unusual things *and* I'm encouraged to do it. I'm valued for my teaching and that is such a breath of fresh air... [T]hat's so empowering...

This staff member enjoys facilitating more innovative teaching methods through co-creating curricula. Although for some time she has facilitated co-creation and partnership approaches to teaching – and faced challenges in doing so (which will be explored in Chapter 8) – she is encouraged by university senior managers who are now starting to value teaching.

Others describe how both students and staff co-creators enjoy the experience. Staff A12 says:

The second year the [co-created] module ran, it was so popular we doubled the number of students. After it, the feedback for the module was fantastic from the students, and feedback from the module coordinator was really amazing.

Describing working with student co-creators on developing a new introductory course, Staff A8 states:

We brought in a reference group... from across the university and they [student co-creators] presented their work to them professionally... What was interesting was how much the faculty enjoyed it, in terms of really getting engaged and thinking about the issues... That is the point where I knew we were ok. ...It was a great experience. I hadn't anticipated how much students would have enjoyed it too. I think it took a certain amount of trust on both of our parts, and the trust has paid off. I would do it again in a heartbeat.

It is striking to see both staff and student co-creators' enjoyment of learning through this approach. Despite challenges in curriculum co-creation, this participant 'knew we were ok' through affirmation from both staff and student colleagues.

Staff focus group participants who had not yet engaged in co-creation of their teaching also recognise the benefits of staff and students enjoying these types of courses. For example, Staff D4 says:

I think co-creation has several very important advantages and the first would be that students would work on what is interesting to them.

Reflecting on her own experience of co-creation of the curriculum when she was a student, Staff D2 describes how students would share their learning and discoveries with staff: 'They were as excited as we were, and that was nice'. When students and staff co-create learning and teaching projects or research that is relevant to their interests, they often share a passion for, and enjoyment of, the subject content.

Both student and staff participants describe how the experience of co-creating curricula can be enjoyable with respect to developing a community of colleagues who

learn from each other, so students do not just learn from the teacher. Student B10 describes this in a powerful way:

I've ended up being best friends with those people in my group when I hadn't really formed many good friendships with people on my course until now... It comes back to the classroom not just being a cold environment: it's a place where you're friends. It does make a difference. You're more comfortable and feel safer.

Staff also highlight benefits of students learning from and supporting each other during co-creation. For example, Staff A13 states:

We know in relation to students' peer support, the fact that the students are actually engaging with each other, that dynamism that takes place within that relationship is something that feeds through... We get out of that what we thought we were going to see and, to be honest, we got an awful lot more than what we expected.

Beyond the intrinsic benefit of student co-creators developing friends and enjoying learning, they can feel more comfortable engaging in active learning when they develop trust within the learning community.

Enhanced Sense of Reward in Learning and Teaching

Staff and student co-creators often describe how this approach helps them feel that learning and teaching is rewarding and fulfilling in the longer term. For example, Staff A4 says:

There is a fantastic synergy and collaboration with the students who are doing the writing, and that's very rewarding for staff – striking up some really intimate academic relationships.

Also, for Staff A11, it is rewarding to work with students and see them develop as independent learners:

...they are much more willing to articulate themselves as autonomous learners and much more able to make their own choices, and appropriate choices. I think that is the kind of thing that I got the most satisfaction from.

Staff co-creators care about students' development. They highlight the importance of the co-creation opportunity to get to know students better and work with them to develop strong professional relationships. Staff A8 also speaks about the rewarding nature of co-creating learning and teaching:

There are some people who... don't understand why I am doing it – but miss out that it can be as rewarding for us as it can be for them.

Strong working relationships are often central to the rewarding nature of co-creation of the curriculum.

Staff co-creators emphasise the wide range of stakeholders who are engaged in and benefit from rewarding co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects. Describing peer teaching embedded into the undergraduate curriculum, Staff A4 says:

The second-year students liked it because they felt that they got more attention and they got to ask these so-called idiot questions to people who have been there before and understood the problems. The fourth-years liked it because they went back and revisited material and they said 'We have so much deeper understanding now than we did in the second year'. They were also blown away by how much and how far they'd travelled as people. This was really the first opportunity to see it. The staff really liked it because we could address these professional needs, but they also really like the interactions. They got on really well with the fourth-years and got on better [than previously] with the second-years.

Similarly, Staff A5 describes various stakeholders who benefit from co-creation:

It's really rewarding from different perspectives. For the students, you see them not necessarily mature, but really develop. The flipside of that course is that they are usually developing something for a community or for a school, so you've got two different groups who are really taking something different from it. It's positive on both sides of the coin.

Therefore, co-creation of the curriculum promotes an enhanced sense of reward not only for student and staff co-creators but also for other students and their wider communities.

Like staff co-creators, students find the experience rewarding since they feel co-creation of the curriculum makes the learning and teaching experience more meaningful and relevant to the 'real world'. Student B2 speaks about an example of assessment co-creation in which students increased its difficulty but also its relevance and impact. Furthermore, describing his co-created course in which he worked with local community organisations, Student B9 says:

It is a sustainable framework for these networks, these connections to keep going and benefit more people. As a selfish point, [we can say] 'we have made an impact and that was the mark that I left'. That is a really special thing.

These students speak about the fulfilling nature of the sustainability of their work being carried on through a positive, collective impact on the communities within and beyond their universities.

[Students' Personal and Professional Development](#)

Clear benefits of co-creation of the curriculum include the impressive personal and professional development opportunities that students experience. Themes include:

learning by applying theory to practice; negotiation and public engagement communication skills; confidence and leadership skills; developing expertise; developing professionalism and employability skills; retention and academic achievement; and transformation.

Student and staff co-creators speak at length about how curriculum co-creation improves students' development of transferrable skills, attributes, and confidence which are highly relevant to help them excel in their higher education degree as well as in their career. Whilst student and staff non-practitioners tend to recognise the general benefits of co-creation of the curriculum for students, it is understandable that they provide few concrete examples of benefits to students since they have little experience with co-creation; however, they do provide examples relating to the sub-themes of applying theory to practice and leadership. Otherwise, the voices in this section are overwhelmingly from student and staff co-creators who reflect on their experiences.

Learning by Applying Theory to Practice

Student and staff co-creators frequently highlight how co-creating curricula helps students to apply theory to practice. Staff A7 explains how 'co-creation is where you add the student lived experience to what the lecturer is doing' to help students share and apply their different experiences to the curriculum. She describes how this benefits all students and the teacher within the learning community as they go beyond understanding content knowledge to develop an applied understanding of concepts. Moreover, Staff A1 says:

Sometimes it is appropriate to tell people about stuff, but... why would we tell you about it if we didn't want you to do something with it?

Staff A6 also states:

I would feel as if I was doing my job properly if they can take something from what we're doing in the classroom, either influencing their career or what they're learning in the future, or being able to relate back to it. Being able to remember it!

In addition, Staff A5 emphasises the result of these practices:

I think you're going to have much more applied outcomes that are a lot more relevant to the student and what they're looking for.

The process of applying theory to practice can of course improve students' understanding of content, and it can also contribute to students' understandings of the implications of the subject.

Applying theory to practice can enhance students' development as they move from what Staff A13 calls a 'functional approach' to one in which they learn actively. Student B4 laments:

One of the downsides to university is you do very much learn what you need to learn to pass exams in the British education system in general. But when you are co-creating something in the curriculum you are immersed in it, you can't avoid learning things. I think that's a good way to learn for actually remembering things and getting a good grip on the knowledge and the theories which is beneficial.

Student B9 describes how seeing the wider relevance of learning – both to individuals in the short-term and to society in the longer-term – helps motivate students' learning:

I find it difficult to really learn something and take it in unless I can see how it could feasibly impact society... If as a student you can be given the opportunity to use what you are learning in the course – use the content and the learning outcomes – that is the biggest benefit they can get from co-creating it. ...They would have more of a context as to why their course is important, both now, next month, and in the longer term in the future.

Learning through curriculum co-creation can enhance students' motivation and engagement when they see how what they are learning is relevant and important in practice.

Student co-creators speak about their enjoyment of seeing the relevance of their learning when having the opportunity to apply theory to tangible projects. Student B8 reflects:

It was, to be honest, the only course where I felt like I was actually making a difference and had the opportunity to apply knowledge that I had learned over the past four years to a real-life situation. ...This course has given me the most applicable skills in terms of applying it to jobs outwith the university. ...I can go to an employer and say, 'look I've designed my own project, delivered it and followed up with the report and I've actually taken responsibility for something.'

Similarly, Student B5 describes the benefits of co-creation during fieldtrips:

I learn more in a two-week fieldtrip than a whole semester in another subject, just because you're out there, you're seeing it, the lecturers are so enthusiastic and it's hands-on. ...Often I feel that [other courses] in science, especially at the lower levels, you're just fed information and not thinking for yourself...

Like staff participants above, these student co-creators reflect on the deeper nature of learning taking place through co-creation experiences enabling them to apply theory to practice. This also connects to the theme of authenticity in learning in teaching, which we will explore towards the end of this chapter.

In reflecting on their current student engagement work and how they might be able to incorporate co-creation of the curriculum, staff focus group participants also see benefits in how co-creation helps students apply theory to practice. Staff D4 says:

They come to develop problem-solving skills by struggling to solve something by themselves and being shown how to break problems down, how to be inquisitive, critical.

Staff D9 also states:

...you're not just teaching them the content but you're teaching them how to work in a group, or with a peer, or do something on their own.

Again, participants highlight the skills such as problem-solving and teamwork that help students go beyond understanding the subject knowledge to apply it and use it effectively.

Negotiation and Public Engagement Communication Skills

Student and staff co-creators highlight the wide range of communication and negotiation skills that they develop through these experiences. Although other forms of active learning and student engagement help students develop communication skills, curriculum co-creation can develop students' negotiation, public speaking, and public engagement skills in particular. With respect to negotiation skills, Staff A6 co-creates marking criteria with students and also uses a combination of teacher-led assessment and student self-assessment methods. She describes students' skill development:

They were very critical with themselves and I think they were very accurate whenever they talked about what was good or what was a bit weak. They knew. ...It was very important that they can negotiate as part of their communication skills but also in future work workplaces they might have to assess themselves. ...I find that they're now more comfortable in negotiating.

This statement shows how students who take ownership in co-assessment can benefit by improving their communication skills and, particularly, developing negotiation skills.

Students also describe the negotiation skills they developed through curriculum co-creation to provide beneficial and honest feedback to staff. Student B3 reflects on her co-creation experience as a consultant peer reviewer who provided feedback to staff on their teaching:

What we don't build [in skill development elsewhere in the curriculum],

that I think this project allowed us to develop, was how you actually communicate constructively performance or behavioural issues to another person in a way that is received positively. ...It's really hard to do and then when you actually think about that, an experienced member of staff to happily receive constructive feedback from students, they've got to have reached a level of partnership and skill for that to happen. ...It's quite a sophisticated conversation to have.

Strikingly, this participant highlights how curriculum co-creation enhances students' critical thinking and advanced communications skills; in turn, these skills help students provide constructive feedback to staff that will contribute to their effective negotiation and enhancement of learning and teaching. Student B7 also elaborates on how 'the biggest challenge of it was trying to be on the same page'; as a result, she developed skills in communicating expectations and plans clearly so that all partners are prepared and share understandings. These skills are key to teams working together on co-created projects.

Participants highlight how learning how to communicate effectively with and engage diverse audiences – including the public – is an extremely beneficial skill that co-creation enhances. Staff A7 reflects on how co-creation helps students develop their own voice and a shared language to communicate effectively with staff. This participant also emphasises the importance of students being able to explain complex topics in clear ways using a shared language. Student B6 describes the importance of learning to communicate to different audiences, including the public:

...the way that the course was structured, they want you to improve your communication skills, both written and verbal, so we do quite a lot of presentations and... writing to a different audience [beyond academia]... These are skills which you could apply to anything...

Additionally, Student B9 emphasises how curriculum co-creation can improve skills including:

...communication, building video media resources, working with social media to convey a positive message to the correct and relevant audience, public speaking and writing. How you speak publicly and write confidently to a vast and different array of audiences: the general public, policy makers, academics.

Many students including Students B6 and B7 also speak about the benefits of developing confidence and overcoming fears of public speaking through participating in co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects.

Confidence and Leadership Skills

Almost all student and staff co-creators highlight the benefit of students developing confidence, and many also highlight leadership skills. For example, Staff A4 describes the importance of the supportive environments that co-creation provide that are:

...giving students the opportunity to spread their wings while they've still got experienced teachers that they can call upon if they think they're going wrong. The safety net is there. Within that, there's the room to breathe, and to grow.

Importantly, this participant highlights how the higher education experience is the ideal time for students to take risks and develop confidence. Staff A2 also describes how co-creation enhances students' 'very job-relevant skills, but more importantly I think it's around confidence in their own abilities but also confidence in relationship-building.' Similarly, Staff A3 describes working with student consultants:

It's about empowerment and developing their confidence. ...Students developed so much confidence in themselves. They were shown that their opinion matters, and they got to meet other like-minded students.

These participants and others show how students experience profound personal development and increased confidence when they are given responsibility to co-create the curriculum.

Students also highlight the benefit of embracing new challenges within a supportive environment. Student B7 describes the responsibilities she took on when teaching several primary school lessons:

...it almost felt like what you would expect for an internship of some sort, which was quite cool.

Similarly, Student B8 describes overcoming the challenges of taking responsibility for a project:

I'm pretty happy with what I did and it was a great experience. I think you have to be willing to put in the hours for it, definitely. ...You have to be willing to put yourself out there and that is quite challenging for some people... When you're thrown into that situation of having to go in front of a class and speak, people might find it difficult but you just do it, basically.

Although co-creation of the curriculum can feel like a risk because it is different from traditional learning and teaching, these student co-creators share reflections on the responsibilities and courage that furthered their personal development and success with their projects.

Co-creation of the curriculum also supports students to develop skills and attitudes that promote leadership. For example, co-creators such as Student B1 and Staff A4

describe how students benefit personally and professionally as they develop reflection and coaching skills while helping peers navigate difficult topics or situations. Student B11 helps facilitate classes alongside teachers and she describes how she gained experience by reassuring her peers and coaching them through a challenging learning experience which was unfamiliar to them. Staff A7 speaks about a conference that her students plan, organise and implement with Vice Principals and local secondary school pupils who attend. She explains that she is 'invisible' with the students taking full responsibility for preparing for and running the conference.

Similarly, Staff A11 notes the increased sense of leadership of various student co-creators throughout their involvement in the project:

...of course you start to see people change because of that experience. You see major changes when you work closely with them, but you also see that reverberating around the student body. The context of leadership is a really important one because you do see people taking ownership and control and also encouraging others to do the same. It is very difficult to measure.

Importantly, the effect of co-creation of the curriculum is not only on only student co-creators but also on helping to model a sense of leadership for their peers.

Staff D9 and Staff D4 speak about the benefits of students developing an active learning mindset and teaching peers by explaining difficult concepts in clear ways. Staff D4 works with students in peer support projects outside the formal curriculum, and she also recognises the benefits of leadership in curriculum co-creation:

We are trying to give students the power to create stuff... We are quite big supporters of trying to get students to help each other and develop the skills to be able to learn and develop themselves in future without relying on somebody to explain things to them all the time and to spoon-feed them information. ...By giving some of the responsibility to students to decide on what they would like to tackle... [t]hey will be much more prepared and have greater motivation when they are specialising in courses such as the ones which they may be developing.

When students take responsibility for their own active learning and mentoring peers, learning and teaching moves away from a transactional, consumerist model of education towards a partnership model that helps students develop important transferrable skills such as leadership.

Developing Expertise

A number of student and staff co-creators speak to the theme of students' development of expertise, as well as particular examples of presenting and publishing their co-creation work. This theme may be especially significant for participants since I identified some through conference presentations and publications of their co-creation work. Describing how co-creation of the curriculum benefits her, Student B2 says:

I think it's just something that added to my general attitude towards opportunities, like generally being more proactive and engaging and maybe thinking about things in a slightly deeper level than just taking facts as they are – the critical thinking skills. It was partly because of the way that [X teacher] structures a lot of his classes – it's not just 'This is fact' – it was 'What do you think about it?' I think that helps a lot.

By becoming more engaged in taking up opportunities, this participant honed her critical thinking skills and ability to describe her views as she demonstrates subject expertise.

By developing expertise, student co-creators reflect on how they become more confident in sharing their work through presentations and publications. Student B4 learns to 'feel that my opinion is worthwhile' and speaks about her expertise being valued:

Through this [co-created] project I feel I'm able to give them feedback that's going to be of value to them and isn't really just my opinion; it's more than that. It's based on my learning and what I can say about it.

For Student B4, a key benefit of participating in co-creation of the curriculum includes presenting at conferences which is 'really fun'. Student B2, in addition, reflects on the importance of having the opportunity of co-publishing with staff:

Not many people leave an undergraduate degree with a publication so I thought that was a huge benefit to us.

Similarly, Student B1 says:

I'll present preliminary findings [at our student-led conference] but the hope is to take it to bigger conferences and probably publish... It's just good practice [to share your work] and it's always useful for other people to present things professionally. Publication-wise, it doesn't do any harm to do at all and it's helpful practicing that, and it's interesting as well seeing others' projects and speaking to others... [who] are passionate and have put a lot of work into it.

This participant modestly emphasises the benefits of presenting and publishing for his career and for the wider educational community to learn from their findings.

It is significant that participants reflect on how co-creation benefits not only individual students' development of subject expertise, skills, and attributes: their expertise also has a wider, positive impact on others. For example, Staff A10 says:

We have had them presenting their work at conferences and things like that. It is really good to see that not only have they developed resources that might help other students, they have gained something for themselves from that process as well. They have also gained more than just the knowledge that comes from building a resource like that.

Student B11 states:

The results of the research have been published and we went around different conferences in the UK to present it. From then on, a series of different projects have started. A few workshops, a few conferences and presentations, and a project to expand partnership ethos in the university and to learn about partnership from other universities as well.

These participants highlight their pride and enjoyment of students presenting their work, the academic benefits of publishing and presenting, and the implications of their work inspiring other co-creation projects.

Developing Professionalism and Employability Skills

The majority of staff and student co-creators highlight how students develop a sense of professionalism and employability-related skills. In some cases, student and staff co-creators also share that the experience of co-creating the curriculum can influence some students' career choices or help them gain a better understanding of which professions are – or, importantly, are *not* – for them. Staff A5, for instance, shares that he and his colleagues often keep in contact with student co-creators after they graduate, and they have found that roughly 15% of these students received job offers from the clients with whom they worked. For other students, he reflects on the value of the project in influencing students' understanding of careers. Speaking about one student co-creator, Staff A5 says:

He'd learnt so much. He worked with the local school and he said it was really valuable for him because it reinforced in his mind that he didn't want to be a teacher, but still it was an opportunity to try something. ...We found that for some it really did influence the career choice.

Even if a student decides through the co-creation experience not to work in a particular profession, it is still an extremely valuable learning opportunity.

Students also describe how co-creation of the curriculum can help them explore different careers. This is particularly the case regarding teaching careers since a number of student co-creators teach in local primary schools for their project and

some student consultants are also interested in this profession. Student B7 shares: 'I think I'd always wanted to be a teacher. Now I'm not so sure...'. Student B5 also says:

One of the things I would really like to go into is education [or public engagement]... I guess it [the co-creation project] gave me more confidence and experience in that, to be like: 'This is something that I would like to do'. ...[But] I don't know.

These student co-creators are able to explore careers in teaching and other education-related jobs, which helps them learn about the possibilities and gain confidence in their abilities to pursue a wide range of careers.

Several staff also speak specifically about the professionalism that students develop during curriculum co-creation. Staff A3 reflects on supporting student consultants to work with academics:

There's a recognition of professionalism, and that being a peer reviewer is a sensitive relationship that comes with responsibility. They also need to realise that their work goes beyond themselves and they're having an impact on the institution. ...The students were very positive and they took the project really seriously.

Furthermore, Staff A5 says:

One thing that we really draw out is that they are representing the University... A lot of it is all about preparation for careers like dressing smartly for meetings, being formal in emails and carrying themselves professionally. ...Once they've met with the client, the responsibility becomes more obvious to them that they don't want to let the client down...

When student co-creators' work influences other stakeholders within and outside of higher education, student co-creators develop professionalism. This will be explored further in the democratic and civic engagement section later in this chapter.

Staff A7, A8, and A9 speak about the graduate attributes and transferrable skills that student co-creators develop, as well as their ability to articulate these skills to future employers. For example, Staff A7 says:

Often in these kinds of things the students will have created a product and they can look at it, point at it, and share it with other students in later years but they can also draw potential employers' attention to it. ...[T]hey're describing their skills and experience in ways that the employer can understand, seeing what they can bring to the table and how they can fit into the organisation. That's an employability output.

Similarly, Staff A9 reflects:

Listening to the students, it was only really by doing this [co-creation of the curriculum] that they realised that they had had personal development

and had developed graduate attributes [throughout their degree]... Clearly for all of them, it was a positive experience and for some of them it was a transformational experience. Some have gotten jobs on the basis of talking about this course in an interview.

Furthermore, Staff A8 says:

They saw this [co-creation of the curriculum] as giving them life skills in the sense of confidence, presenting to diverse audiences, and putting together portfolios. A lot of them started to see for the first time the value of their degree, which was always there but it was making explicit some things that are probably a bit more implicit in their degree.

The process of reflecting on their development throughout a co-creation project helps many students recognise and articulate their skills, which can also benefit them in interviews.

Like the staff above, student co-creators speak about a range of transferrable skills they gain and how they feel more prepared for employment. For example, Student B3 says:

What this project uniquely did was it helped students develop those skills and attributes which I think will really benefit them in the world of work. ...Experience in the corporate world – which most students are going into – revolves around relationships and performance and everything. To have gotten that insight at such an early stage in student life is brilliant.

Students B1 and B6 also speak about their development of teamwork, work communication via emails and meetings, and networking skills to build effective professional relationships. Student B6 considers:

I think it's just very different [in this course], and I think it does speak a bit more to how a workplace feels.

These students share a variety of teamwork and relationship-building skills which are valuable in any career context they might pursue in the future.

Other students highlight the time and project management skills they gain through taking ownership over a co-creation-of-the-curriculum project. For example, Student B7 says:

...professors are giving me skills that I will use with other people. ...[T]hey were helping me with project planning and time management. ...I realised how great the outcomes were when I did set up a schedule for myself.

Student B8 describes:

The skills that I've developed in this course are relevant to the jobs I've been applying for: stuff like project management, interaction with a wide range of age groups, explaining complex information in a simple way. Although lots of courses during the last four years at university have

helped me develop, I'd say this course has actually given me probably the most applicable skills in terms of applying it to jobs outwith the university. It's actually taking responsibility for a project and having to just go and do it outwith the university, with minimal assistance. It's very different to anything else I've done at uni.

Student B9 also says:

I think it is one of the best things I have done. It is the kind of selling point I would use for myself if I was applying for a job or further study, and it is a set of skills that I want to take forward.

In common with staff, student co-creators highlight the value of developing professional skills that extend beyond understanding subject knowledge. They recognise the long-lasting value of co-creation of the curriculum that improves their ability to excel professionally in the future.

Retention and Academic Achievement

Student and staff co-creators speak about experiences where students have demonstrated striking academic achievement through co-creating the curriculum. With respect to co-creating educational resources and peer teaching, Students B1 and B9 describe how they revised and consolidated knowledge, which improved understanding of difficult concepts. Students are reflecting on the pedagogies that help them learn the most, and they are discussing with teachers how to co-create curricula that help a wide range of students learn to excel in their studies. Staff D8 also speaks about the process of students co-creating exam questions:

That's really useful because it shows them how tough it is to think up good exam questions. It makes them start to think about what sort of responses are going to be required.

Student B7 describes the result of curriculum co-creation:

I think, definitely, it's put me at a higher standard of what I want, when it comes to the work I'm doing.

By consolidating knowledge and gaining a deeper understanding of how learning can be applied in assessments and beyond, student co-creators often excel academically.

Staff share how some students participating in co-created courses have achieved the highest marks they have received throughout all their courses at university. Staff A9 says:

Out of the 12 students, five got firsts and seven got 2:1s. For some of those students, it was the best work that they had ever produced. They felt really empowered. ...It can have that hugely transformational effect, particularly on quite good and quite competent students who would

probably be quite middling but it just gives them that sense of confidence and often they do really perform well.

Staff A8 also explains:

We have students who have achieved the highest marks they ever have in their university career, and that is not because we mark any higher and not that we are inflating marks. It is because those students have gotten so motivated by what it is they are doing that they have excelled themselves. ...They got caught up in the project and have become much less instrumental about 'what is the bare minimum I need to do to achieve the grade I want to achieve?'

Like others above, these participants describe strikingly how students' increased ownership through co-creation can lead to enhanced intrinsic motivation. She also highlights the academic achievement and satisfaction that come from students moving away from extrinsically motivated, 'instrumental' approaches to learning.

Some staff point out that it may be the 'average students' who have the highest learning gains resulting from co-created courses compared to traditionally high-achieving students. For instance, Staff A5 describes:

There are students we pass with traditionally quite good projects, but for some of them it's more the middle-of-the-road students and you get to see them really develop their confidence over the year. Then when you see them present their projects at the end, they're literally different people. ...I've noticed it with the marking as well, just seeing that they've understood all of the different learning outputs.

In addition, Staff A7 says:

I found that high-scoring students were not very good at reflecting. They didn't actually know *why* they were good – they just were. That makes you think, 'Is there any intellectual pursuit going on here?'. Whereas people who were maybe not so high-scoring seem to get the most out of it, be most reflective, and be able to talk more about what had happened in their heads. For them, the transformation was both bigger and they were more insightful about it.

These staff capture a potentially powerful outcome of co-creation, where more average students demonstrate a greater ability to reflect on their co-creation experience and thereby see larger learning gains.

Others speak about not only academic achievement but also the value of co-creation of the curriculum with respect to student retention at university. Student B10 says:

I ended up getting a 1st for that course and in a lot of my other courses I've been getting 2:2s and low 2:1s. If they ever need evidence to show that student engagement creates better grades, then there's that – the fact that I got a 73 in that course and it's my only 1st out of all my courses.

...I was actually considering dropping out throughout last year so having this course to look forward to was the main reason why I stayed.

Student B11 also describes how curriculum co-creation can motivate students to engage in learning by applying transferrable skills in jobs and experiences outside university. Staff A11 also speaks about a student who would have dropped out of university if being involved in co-creation of the curriculum hadn't stimulated her interest in learning:

...a lot of things that she felt she was doing in the initial stages [of the undergraduate degree] bored her, so that was very much part of her getting involved with this [co-creation project] group and she talked quite openly about that. I think it is fair to say that she would withdraw from university if she wasn't being stimulated. If you think about that as being the driver to come to university – that stimulation – if you can create that, then you are attracting people.

These are more than superfluous feelings of stimulation and excitement for learning since they can affect student and staff motivation and engagement which, in turn, may affect students' persistence with their studies. It is striking that co-creation of the curriculum may have the potential to decrease university drop-out rates and positively affect students' academic achievement by engaging those students who may not engage or excel in traditional teaching.

Transformation

In the sections above, numerous participants have suggested that co-creation of the curriculum has had a transformative effect on them by contributing to students' personal and professional development. This section focuses on additional accounts of student transformation to analyse further this sub-theme. For example, Student B11 says:

It gave me a lot of experience and a lot of confidence... This experience changes you and transforms you and how it helps you for the future. When I was looking at some graduate positions... it was so satisfying to see that even though I am still on an undergrad course I have so many skills that you would get at a higher level, just because of all the things I have been involved in [during the co-created course].

Other students such as B4 describe developing self-respect and confidence in their own ideas, as well as the ability to contribute alongside staff without feeling intimidated by academic hierarchies. Furthermore, Student B10 reflects:

I think it taught me to challenge authority a bit more. ...It meant that now, going into the workplace and the wider world, I know just because someone has a higher status than me, it doesn't mean I'm unimportant. I can still challenge them and I should still have the confidence to question

things and not just take things because I'm on a lower level than them...
[I negotiate now but previously] I definitely put myself in a box and accepted that 'I am this level, therefore I can't do this'.

This student emphasises the confidence she gained as she transformed her perspective from one of powerlessness to become assertive, think critically about experiences, and challenge authority where necessary.

Staff also provide examples of students' development which, in some cases, is transformative. Speaking about a student co-creator, Staff A13 says:

She can articulate what she has done, what it meant to her, and how she has developed.

Similarly, Staff A11 shares:

We have a student with very particular social issues... who has described that module as the thing that changed his life. He now has ability to take ownership and to lead. He had never, ever seen himself as a leader but started to recognise it and reflect on it, so he has been able to do things that he couldn't have done before. ...Of course you start to see people change because of that experience.

In addition, Staff A9 describes:

I think it's been a great course, and we've really seen a transformational effect on the students involved. That's certainly what they're telling us that there's a lot of value added. ...It really made them *incredibly* active and reflexive.

Students' development as reflective and active learners and leaders are powerful benefits that point to the transformative nature of most curriculum co-creation experiences for students.

Staff Personal and Professional Development

This section focuses on the theme of staff personal and professional development resulting from engagement with co-creating the curriculum. As compared with the student benefits described above, participants focus on a more limited number of key areas of staff development, including: seeing students in a new light; adopting new teaching approaches; learning from students to enhance teaching; and reflecting on professional development. Each sub-theme is explored below.

Seeing Students in a New Light

Many staff share how co-creating the curriculum helps them learn more about their students and see them in a new light, which increases their respect for students. We

have seen examples of this above where staff have remarked on students' significant transformation throughout the co-creation experience. Furthermore, Staff A8 says:

What was interesting for me was it became clear that I had assumed more of this kind of style of teaching [with co-creation] was going on, than actually was going on. They were telling me things like they had never done this kind of group work, some of them had never engaged one-on-one with a lecturer in this way and that, for me, was quite eye opening.

Seeing students' transformation and learning how rare curriculum co-creation opportunities are for students can help staff see students differently and respect their increased engagement through co-creation initiatives.

Staff A5 speaks about learning from his students' work and letting them take ownership:

It makes me feel proud. ...From the staff end, they're really great opportunities to have these conversations to make these links and collaborations. ... A lot of the time we think we know what's going to be best for the students and if they don't engage with it at any level then we wonder why they hate it. But sometimes academics are just getting in the way.

Rather than assuming that staff understand students' learning experiences and learning needs, staff benefit from the co-creation experience by learning from students and giving them greater freedom to focus on their interests. Giving students more freedom within the curriculum can also enable staff to gain greater respect for what students can contribute. Students often surpass staff expectations, despite these expectations already being high in many cases. This is the case for Staff A9 who describes the increasing respect she feels for students:

I think that I saw students in a new light in terms of being hugely responsible and reflective, really taking ownership of their learning but also developing this [co-created] product that they were deeply invested in – which was this course they were developing for the first-years.

This participant reflects on her own personal development in seeing students' talents and passion for learning through co-creation of the curriculum.

Students emphasise how staff members' openness to feedback help them learn from students' diverse perspectives, which in turn can increase their respect for students. Speaking about staff who were motivated to work with student consultants, Student B3 says:

...it would seem that they were people who were just open to improving and wanting to do the best job that they could do in their role. ...For the

positives for the staff, they've got to be getting really into and behind the student perspective in their teaching because I am aware of just how busy they are, and all the requirements made of academic staff.

Both student and staff participants show how co-creation of the curriculum helps to facilitate conversations in which staff respect students' views and invite them to take part in curriculum decision-making experiences. In addition, Student B2 says:

I think it helped that all the way through the course he wanted continuous feedback on how we thought it was going, and I think it was a conscious decision on his part, the fact that he'd opened himself up for criticism created this environment where we felt comfortable where we could say, 'No, actually that class was pretty bad. Do it this way next time' and that kind of thing.

This student shows how the staff co-creator with whom she worked invites students to provide continuous, constructive feedback since he respects their views, even though this may expose vulnerabilities in the short term. This will be explored further in Chapter 8 relating to challenges of co-creation of the curriculum.

Adopting New Teaching Approaches

Participants describe how co-creating the curriculum provides opportunities for staff to try new teaching practices. Staff A8 speaks about how participating in a postgraduate certificate in academic practice programme helped motivate her to incorporate co-creation of marking into her teaching to help students better understand marking criteria, with her mark worth 50% and the aggregate mark of students' peers worth 50%:

...they have to work through the marking criteria themselves and figure out what it is. They have not only more of an appreciation of what it is you do, but also they have more of an appreciation of what they need to do to achieve the marks they need to achieve. That was definitely true.

Co-assessment can create the space for staff to focus on creating valuable spaces that help students understand the marking process and how to excel in demonstrating their learning. Staff A6 also describes the benefits of co-creation:

It's made me more interested and excited about teaching I think, being able to do this and to improve and develop my teaching... It's an ongoing thing and I don't think, 'Well that's it now.' I've been trying to find ways of improving things and making it [learning and teaching] more exciting.

This participant highlights the importance of staff continuously improving their teaching practices to tailor them to their students' needs and interests. By reflecting on and implementing different pedagogic approaches, staff can gain a new sense of satisfaction and motivation from teaching.

Staff also reflect on how adopting new teaching and learning processes through co-creation helps develop their confidence with student engagement and partnership practices. Staff A1 says:

I got a round of applause at the end which I think was the first time that's ever happened in my professional life. ...It started to make me feel like I could do a lot of things that are a lot more interactive.

Similarly, Staff A12 describes 'the growth of my confidence, in terms of the [partnership] model'. By trying new learning and teaching approaches incorporating co-creation, staff can also develop their confidence in pedagogic approaches that promote other aspects of student engagement elsewhere in their teaching.

Staff speak about the fulfilling nature of co-creation projects that can help them try new learning and teaching methods. For instance, Staff A11 describes:

Partnership was something we were doing to test out a kind of thesis, what it actually means in practice. I suppose that we only felt comfortable about that after it had finished.

Staff A9 states:

I think it worked as a proof of concept, so I was very pleased in that respect because there are people in the school who are a bit skeptical. ...[P]eople were like, 'OK, you go into that – see if it works' and then, when it worked so well, it was really, really great.

This participant went on to describe how her co-created course won a Students' Association Teaching Award. This helped to validate the success of adopting this new approach, despite previous skepticism from colleagues within a more traditional academic department. These staff share the risks they take in challenging the status quo to adopt co-creation of the curriculum (which we will revisit in Chapter 8), but the success of their 'proof of concept' can be extremely fulfilling.

Learning from Students to Enhance Teaching

Students and staff describe how curriculum co-creation helps staff enhance their teaching practices by learning from students' ideas and perspectives. For example, this approach helps students and staff question norms and traditions in learning and teaching – and especially assessment. When staff create new spaces where they can learn from students' views, they reflect on how they can most effectively reach their shared aims. Staff A10 describes how she benefits from co-creating the curriculum:

I think it is learning something and gaining something that you couldn't have gained without students' insight. ...I am really for anything that makes people start with a blank sheet in terms of their assessment. ...I suspect if people actually think about what it is they want to assess, they

would come up with something completely different. A lot of what we do is just because it is tradition and we have always done it like that. In addition, Staff A9 speaks about the value of both the process and the products produced through co-creation of the curriculum:

I think that some of the things that were produced were excellent... [S]tudents were fantastic in coming up with great activities and some great ideas about how to use readings that have improved that course.

Furthermore, Staff A7 reflects that the curriculum co-creation process helps her gain 'continuous feedback on everything you do' to enhance teaching and learning.

Other participants reflect on how co-creation helps staff improve their assessment practices. Staff A2 highlights an example of when students advocated that an assessment become more difficult since it would be more rewarding:

[Co-creation has helped me with] my own goals in terms of trying to do what I can with my students to really engage them with the subject and enthuse them with the subject, but also in terms of improving my practice as a teacher. For example, getting better assessments.

Also speaking about this experience of the students in the year ahead of her embracing risk and challenge by making the assessment more difficult – and more rewarding – when working with this staff member, Student B2 says:

He gave them the choice of how they wanted the assessments to be. I think the year before there was an exam but that year they said, 'We all hate exams. They're a pointless way of testing us' and they actually made a more difficult assessment, but one that you had a week to complete by yourself. Every other student agrees that that's a much more constructive way to assess that actually makes you think about it.

Therefore, through the co-creation experience, staff can learn from students' perspectives to negotiate more challenging yet more meaningful ways of facilitating their learning.

Staff A8 describes how discussions with students about learning objectives contributed to her changing her original perspectives of learning objectives as a tick-box exercise towards viewing them as a valuable process:

I think actually having gone through that process was helpful, having to think through what I was asking students to do and whether they could achieve it. In co-creation it is about talking through 'what do we mean by all these things? What do we mean when I ask you to demonstrate reflexivity by the end of the course, and how will you evidence that?' ...It is not that we always agreed 100% on what they had produced in the sense that it might not have been how I would have approached a particular question, but you could see the thought process and how they

had done it. It often made me think a bit differently and we had some really interesting conversations... [particularly about] what we do when we don't agree. I was of the view that disagreement is natural and we should just hash it out... but they felt very strongly that I should intervene at a certain point if a decision couldn't be reached.

It can be difficult for both staff and students to learn how to negotiate, but creating spaces in the curriculum for staff and students to learn from each other is an important benefit of co-creation.

Students also reflect on how co-creation of the curriculum facilitates staff members' continuous development of their teaching practices by learning from students. Student B6 states:

...if you [as staff] are co-creating then you're going to be gaining knowledge from the other side [from students] as well.

Student B7 also states:

I think it's good for both. I think the professors learn a lot from doing that... [and] we are learning through communicating and personal interactions.

Staff and students' active communication and interactions are important aspects of co-creation where participants can learn from each other.

Reflecting on Professional Development

Staff co-creators also speak about how co-creation of the curriculum helps them share and learn about best practices in learning and teaching. Some participants reflect on the professional development opportunities they gain throughout curriculum co-creation, which can contribute to their Higher Education Academy Fellowship applications to Advance HE. For example, Staff A3 speaks about colleagues who worked with student consultants on co-creation projects:

For staff, we advertised the project as fitting in well with their application for HEA Fellowship since they could use working with a student peer reviewer as a case study. Often the feedback they received was positive affirmation of their teaching, and students operated in a support capacity to check in with the staff member about how their teaching was going.

Similarly, Staff A4 describes how co-creation provided him with the space to learn about teaching pedagogies used in different disciplines and adopt them where appropriate in his teaching. He has shared his co-creation work with other areas of the university, and he intends to incorporate these activities into a Principal Fellowship application.

Other staff benefit from co-creation of the curriculum contributing to research and

scholarship of learning and teaching. A number of participants publish or present their co-created work with students. Staff such as A3 explain how their research extends and advances previous research findings on peer learning and student engagement. Staff A12 has presented widely with colleagues and student co-creators, and he reflects:

...it has certainly been transformative for staff as well. With the transformation it has had on me and my own way of how I approach learning and teaching, I don't see the point of lectures and that stuff anymore. It has been transformative for me but that is because I was willing to reflect.

By creating opportunities to reflect on how co-creation of the curriculum affects students, staff, and teaching practices, staff further enhance their professional development through engaging in the scholarship of learning and teaching.

Broader Impact for Students and Staff

In addition to enhanced engagement, enjoyment, reward, and personal and professional development, there are broader ways in which curriculum co-creation benefits students and staff. Here I analyse data relating to notions of authentic learning and teaching; resilience and skills to deal with complexity; and democratic and civic engagement that benefit both student and staff co-creators alike.

Authentic Learning and Teaching

Student co-creators emphasise the authenticity of co-creation of the curriculum that facilitates their input in ways that are accessible and meaningful to them. This sub-theme overlaps with those focusing on the rewarding nature of co-creation initiatives and how they benefit students by helping them apply theory to practice. In one example, Student B9 says:

...you are going to learn better from someone you can relate to. We relate best to people closer to our age, so if we can build peer learning into it, I think that is a big plus. ...I think that a curriculum that is in part led by students is something that could be much more engaging.

When students contribute to decision-making relating to teaching approaches, co-created curricula will be more engaging and relevant to students' interests and needs. In addition, Student B2 compares the reciprocity of co-created courses with more traditional feedback mechanisms:

You often hear criticisms of a specific module of the course and yet that never really seems to be as easy to put down when you have a module feedback form... That kind of thing doesn't get translated as well, and

often by the end of the course when you're writing a feedback form you think, 'I can't be bothered. What difference does it make to me if I put effort into telling them what I didn't like?' But with co-creation you have a lot more genuine input and there's a lot more motivation to tell lecturers what you like and what you don't like.

It is important that this participant notes how providing continuous feedback in a supportive environment built on trust with staff facilitates more authentic and valuable opportunities for feedback compared to end-of-course evaluations. Similarly, Student B3 previously described in Chapter 6 how her partnership with staff evolved into one where staff 'genuinely and authentically consider the student with them in an equal footing' as they developed a strong working relationship.

Student co-creators also speak of their motivation to engage in co-created courses where they have more responsibility that affects others, and they compare their levels of engagement in co-created and traditional courses. For example, Student B10 says:

...that was a proper collaborative course. We were creating the content of the general studies course, so we felt like every presentation we did, every learning part, we knew it was going to add something concrete and that was a really amazing motivation to work hard and impress the teacher. We knew that they were going to use that to create a really great course, and not just mark it and throw it away and never think about it again.

A key element of many co-created curriculum projects is students' work extending beyond themselves to impact positively on others. Student B8 also shares:

It's taking responsibility for your own project and knowing that you're responsible for how successful it is. That's something that's lacking for most courses. ...[With the co-created course] you were accountable to lecturers and your client... You felt ultimately accountable for the work you were producing. If you maybe produce an essay in another course that you know isn't very good but it's good enough – there aren't really any ramifications from that apart from your grade going down.

These student co-creators speak of wanting to impress others when they feel that their work goes beyond themselves since they feel greater accountability and motivation to excel.

Many student co-creators feel grateful for authentic learning experiences. Student B10 states:

I feel really lucky to be part of that... [because] you feel like what you're learning is really relevant to your life rather than just something you can put in your short-term memory and forget about once the exam is over or an essay is over, which happens quite a lot. ...[But with co-created courses] everything I've learned, that's for the rest of my life and I know

that people will be benefiting from it in years to come.

Similarly, Student B6 states:

It feels like you're actually doing something, rather than just writing an essay... and then just putting that in your files and never looking at it again.

Student B11 also reflects:

It really makes you feel proud of what you have done and it makes you see what you can achieve within the university when you get given the opportunity. ...The fact that you get the possibility to explore the things you can do, the confidence you can gain, and the people that you can talk to and can learn from outside and inside the classroom, it just makes you grow as an individual beyond the university skills and beyond everything you can learn in the classroom.

These students appreciate fulfilling opportunities to co-create the curriculum as they think about the long-lasting impact of their experiences.

Although it is mainly student co-creators who reflect on the value of authentic, co-created learning experiences that staff facilitate, several staff also emphasise this theme. For instance, Staff A7 describes how students gain autonomy and experience positive struggle:

It gives life meaning to both the student and the lecturer; it turns the enterprise into a meaningful and worthwhile one. ...What I like about it is not me telling them things; what I like is watching them discovering things. ...The fun or interest in it is watching their minds changing and facilitating the process by surprising them, challenging them, putting them in difficult situations. I think they learn the most of anything out of the experience of giving them autonomy.

Staff A8 also speaks about the rewarding nature of co-creating learning and teaching:

There are some people who... don't understand why I am doing it – but miss out that it can be as rewarding for us as it can be for them.

Some of the powerful quotes from staff show the deep connections that they make with student co-creators. In the sections below on resilience and democratic engagement we will see further reflections from staff and students on how co-creation promotes authentic learning and learning opportunities.

Resilience and Skills to Deal with Complexity

Participants share that co-creation of the curriculum is an innovative, non-traditional form of teaching that can be challenging for staff and students when sharing decision-making and creatively trying new approaches. However, co-creation can also be a rewarding process of curriculum innovation that helps them develop the skills and

resilience to deal with complexity. For example, Staff A11 and Staff A12 describe a joint project where co-creating curricula posed both opportunities and challenges.

Staff A12 describes:

It just snowballed to different directions, and the terms of partnership and the way the staff and students were interacting, that led us to one thing, led us to another, led us to another. ...We are taking students to uncomfortable positions and we have to also be accommodating. I think that is part of partnership as well. This is a protein bar: think about doing your dissertation or a piece of independent research... You might not particularly like this at this point but maybe next year, or the year after, you will look back and think it was valuable.

While co-creation projects can evolve creatively, an important part of curriculum negotiation is finding the right balance between challenging and supporting students in what can feel like uncomfortable learning experiences initially that develop various transferrable skills. Describing co-created modules, Staff A11 also says:

...we knew they were going well but we also knew we were asking people to do things that they had never been asked to do before and they were really uncomfortable at times...

Similarly, Staff A2 and Student B2 have described above how students embraced challenge in a new, co-created assessment that was more difficult than it had been previously since they suggested that assessment *for* learning is more rewarding and authentic than assessment *of* learning.

Other staff emphasise the rich learning experiences that come from learning from 'failure' in supportive, co-created environments. Staff A5 shares how students learn from staff who challenge them as they develop confidence to take ownership over their learning:

Some of the ones who we find get the best marks are actually the ones whose projects have gone a bit wrong, so they've had to change course in the middle. There's a reflective component of the assessment and that really comes out when they've had to take a step back and think, 'I've got to think on my feet now'. In terms of skills, that's probably a much better marker for the real world. ...It just has to take a [co-created] module like that which is a bit different to really get them out of their shells.

Similarly, speaking about fieldwork that involves co-creation, Staff A2 describes the importance of learning from and reflecting on creative experiences that do not go as planned:

...students have a chance to fail, and fail kind of creatively. ...[Elsewhere] in the science curriculum, typically in the second-year laboratory for example, you'll be very aware that you need to process 50 students in the next three hours and the learning outcome will involve a particular

laboratory technique, and it has to work. So students, as a result of that experience, often emerge assuming that science is like cookery: following a predetermined set of steps which is a very uncreative process. Of course, people do need to know how to do those protocols and to follow those protocols, but the whole creative thrill – and the agony of failure – is squeezed out that kind of very simulated lab.

It is striking that this participant speaks about the creative thrill of authentic learning experiences that allow students to ‘fail kind of creatively’. These are rich learning experiences that help students learn from complex situations.

Experiences of curriculum co-creation can help both students and staff to hone their skills in dealing with complexity and embracing risk. In addition to the challenges for students that we saw above, co-creation can also be more difficult for staff as compared to didactic teaching. For instance, Staff A1 says:

I think sometimes people expect teachers to have all the answers... But sometimes it's being upfront that we don't know the answers ourselves, which I think can be challenging because sometimes there's a tendency to assume that teacher knows enough to tell you: 'Here's the answer'. It's getting people to enter our spaces to find their own solutions.

This participant works to invite students into collaborative ways of working that help them solve problems and understand that knowledge is not fixed. Student B3 also acknowledges challenges for staff:

I am aware of just how busy they are, and all the requirements made of academic staff. It is so much easier to keep regurgitating the same thing, it's got to be, but actually to be able to do something like co-creation and amend your practice so that it's really well received and understood, it's got to be motivating as well. I think there are huge risks but there is the potential for lots of positives, definitely.

Furthermore, staff co-creators such as Staff A8, A11, and A12 describe the nervousness they have felt with respect to the risk of incorporating non-traditional teaching methods into their practice. Staff A8 describes:

I think it also requires a certain level of experience, being able to deal with various different people, different power relationships, navigate those, be able to take on feedback and criticism constructively.

This quotation is equally relevant to student and staff co-creators who develop resilience and skills to deal with complexity. We will explore other aspects of risk in co-creation in Chapter 8.

Democratic and Civic Engagement

Participants describe how, through co-creating the curriculum together, they develop a sense of democratic engagement that is based on respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility. Although some individuals consider student representation to be a democratic form of student engagement, various participants describe how co-creation can overcome some of the challenges faced by formal student representation systems. Student B2, who is not a student representative, says:

I think there's more links in the chain: the class tells the class rep, the class rep goes to a meeting, whoever chairs the meeting then passes it on. So, you think, 'Well does my view actually get translated all the way through and heard?' Where things like co-creation are direct, just people creating one thing. It works a lot more efficiently I think.

Similarly, Student C9 (who is a student representative but not a co-creator) says:

I think it's quite easy to collect feedback, but often seeing the output of that feedback and seeing the actual change made – it's harder to follow along what happened with the feedback. From what this co-creation thing seems, you'd be a lot more involved throughout and you could actually see the changes being made.

These participants describe how co-creation of the curriculum can not only contribute to more effective and immediate curriculum development but also be more meaningful since it is focused on relationship-building often with a whole class, which helps students feel respected.

In addition, Staff A11 says powerfully:

Forget the student rep system. The very fact that you are calling it a rep system means it is dated and problematic. It [higher education] is about being a citizen, a critical citizen. ...When we did hold a discussion, none of the [class rep] students turned up. That doesn't absolve us of the responsibility of articulating what is happening, but it tells you a lot... Tinkering about the edges is not going to make any difference. If we are really serious about partnership that is where we should be starting.

This staff, like the students above, describes some of the problems with current student representation systems. He advocates for working in partnership to help students become critical citizens who feel part of the discussions within their democratic learning community. Furthermore, Staff A13 emphasises the collegial approach of co-creation of the curriculum that can be a change for some colleagues:

You are trying to shift that massive culture from concentrating on 'my module'... There has been a shift, there are more people thinking creatively, there are more people thinking outwith those boxes of module development and 'what it is I do' and start to think a bit more collegiately.

These participants focus on how active engagement in co-creation of the curriculum can help both students and staff develop more collaborative and democratic perspectives, even though they can represent an academic culture change.

Staff A2, A6, A7, and A8 describe how they work to foster 'democratic' learning environments in which students and staff negotiate the curriculum and reciprocally share benefits. For example, Staff A6 says:

It's trying to be democratic in the classroom and it should mean it changes the power relations within the group.

Similarly, Staff A8 remarks:

You get to the point where you are having a conversation rather than them turning to you as the authority figure, trying to give the right answer. I think there is a moment where you can feel that switch, where you are having a dialogue...

These staff describe what their democratic, co-created courses feel like when they shift power relationships to promote shared responsibility across all members of their learning community.

Furthermore, student co-creators reflect on the benefits of these learning communities that promote their engagement. Student B10 states:

[X teacher] explicitly said, 'look I'm your teacher, but it doesn't mean I'm more important than you. ...It [co-creation] means we are all equal.' ...I had the power to negotiate and have the authority to say what I want.

Also, Student B10 describes a sense of inclusivity:

I feel more a part of academia now. At the end of third year I very much thought 'academia is this awful thing and I'm very separate from it; I don't feel engaged in it'. Whereas now I know some of the faculty, I feel like I can get involved in this again and maybe come back to do a Masters or a PhD. I feel like academia is more for me now.

Participating in co-creation of the curriculum can help students and staff develop strong relationships based on trust, which enhance their sense of belonging and engagement in the wider academic community.

Lastly, participants speak about the powerful co-creation experience for them individually as well as the benefits for their wider communities through their democratic engagement within and beyond the university. For example, Student B11 states:

Taking it from my personal experience, I just found it very transformative and enriching and I don't see why other students shouldn't be given this opportunity. ...It would be helpful to the institution as well because it could

be projects that actually go towards developing the institution and programmes in the community.

Staff A5 also describes how the benefits of co-creation are 'double-sided' since:

The students are giving something back to the community, and the community is getting something out of it.

Student B8 describes how taking responsibility for a co-created project helped him feel that he was 'making a bit of a difference basically' by sharing his academic knowledge outside of academia to engage the public. Moreover, Student B7 says:

Connecting with somebody outside the community is really a great thing. ...You think you're a student, you're just paying to understand the world a bit better but now you actually realise that what you know is something valuable. That's a really great thing to teach: other communities are benefitting.

In this section we see how many students and staff co-creators are having a positive impact outside of the academic sphere by demonstrating democratic and civic engagement to benefit their wider communities.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I presented a wide range of themes relating to participants' conceptualisations of benefits of co-creating the curriculum. Staff and students' enjoyment of learning and teaching through co-creation have also promoted their heightened engagement and enhanced sense of reward in learning and teaching. These are both short-term and longer-term benefits, which also contribute to students' and staff members' personal and professional development. While development-focused benefits of co-creation of the curriculum and student/staff partnerships in higher education tend to focus on students (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017), it is notable that in my study both staff and students reflect on how co-creation contributes to aspects of staff development and pedagogical enhancement. It is also striking that curriculum co-creation may engage those students who are less often engaged since a) average students may gain more from the experience as compared with traditionally engaged and high-achieving students and b) this practice may prevent some students at risk of dropping out from doing so.

In addition, broader themes arose from the data emphasising how both student and staff co-creators benefit from learning and teaching experiences that they perceive as authentic. They highlight how instances of productive struggle in curriculum co-creation helps students and staff to develop skills to deal with complexity through

rewarding yet challenging initiatives. These rich experiences also develop staff and students' sense of democratic and civic engagement that benefit not only themselves and their learning communities in the classroom but also wider communities beyond academia.



Chapter 8: Findings: Challenges in Co-Creation of the Curriculum

‘Sometimes there is this prejudice about students that “no, they are not going to work in partnership, it is not going to work because students don’t want it”. You don’t know what they want!’
– Student B11

‘You take a risk, but actually we have lots of structures within the University which are there to mitigate that risk.’
– Staff A2

Introduction

While there are many benefits of co-creating the curriculum as described above, it is also extremely important to recognise the challenges that this partnership-based approach can present. Co-creation practitioners highlight a wide range of challenges since many advocate that it is important to be transparent with anyone considering engagement with co-creation. Non-practitioners also discerned challenges, which generally echoed those raised by co-creators. With 184 qualitative data nodes coded to ‘challenges of co-creation’ from fourteen different examples of co-creation projects, it is important to note that different types of challenges arise for different types of co-creation projects depending on the number of student participants, the nature of their co-creation work before/after a course or as it is taking place, the nature of the university environment, and many other variables. Despite these differences in co-creation examples, in my analysis I present the main sub-themes related to challenges that cut across the sampled co-created projects.

I have categorised the key challenges in co-creation of the curriculum as: academic culture and priorities; academic structures, processes, workload, sustainability, and upscaling; staff perceptions; student perceptions; and challenges in upscaling co-creation of the curriculum. These generally move from the macro towards the micro levels, starting with institutional-level challenges and moving to cover challenges at the level of the individual relating to staff and student perceptions. Although there are challenges relating to tangible university priorities and structures, it is striking that the main challenges lie on a more micro level in the form of some resistant individuals’ values, expectations, and perceptions of risk, which ultimately affect institutional culture, values, and ethos. Those interested in co-creation of the curriculum often

work tirelessly to navigate obstacles and challenge the way teaching is done while working to change processes and reallocate resources. We will explore these themes in this chapter.

Academic Culture and Priorities

Participants note that the academic culture of some Scottish universities is conservative and resistant to change, particularly when research is prioritised over teaching and when student engagement is enacted within a consumerist context. This section focuses on these sub-themes.

Conservative Ethos and Pedagogy

Co-creation of the curriculum can challenge the status quo with respect to the 'traditional' university ethos, academic hierarchies, and pedagogies. In this respect, the conservative university ethos and resistance to change can present challenges for co-creators who are working against the grain to implement a non-traditional learning and teaching approach. Staff A11 highlights why he believes there is a need for co-creation of the curriculum:

It is a powerful way in which we can reengage and rethink the University rather than complaining about it, which is what we tend to do. ...[However] we have a lot of resistance because people have always done things in certain ways and it is much easier to be didactic and not have to engage in that type of learning and teaching. ...Certainly we have a whole system of support which is either vulnerablising students or patronising students... Tinkering around the edges is not going to make any difference.

By re-envisaging academic culture, learning, and teaching by engaging both students and staff through curriculum co-creation, this participant shares his vision for action as well as challenges in changing academic environments that are typically hierarchical.

Other staff share frustrations with the slow nature of changing academic culture persistently over time. For example, Staff A5 says:

I do think it is quite a conservative environment and that's something we need to change... Sometimes we're constrained by the [large] size of the University and bureaucracy so I think it's a bit harder for it to be reactive and flexible. ...[Using programme-level co-creation] as an example, I think it's a bit too radical for the University because of the conservatism.

This participant highlights how the size and conservative ethos of his university can constrain 'radical' ideas for upscaling co-creation of the curriculum. Furthermore, Staff A3 describes the effects of co-creation initiatives that affect universities in ways that are not subtle:

It challenges and disrupts current systems without room for nuance.
...Our project was running against the norm.

Strikingly, like Staff A5 and A3, Staff A8 also speaks of 'disrupting some of the top-down lecturing style... [that is] very mainstream and very traditional' since her work co-creating the curriculum can be seen by others as 'quite radical'. These staff share how the values and ethos of co-creation of the curriculum can be difficult to implement since they challenge traditional higher education environments. Many staff also highlight how co-creation of the curriculum can challenge the ethos, values, and pedagogy of traditional academic cultures; therefore, staff who lead co-creation projects need managers who are, as Staff A10 says, '110% supportive' of their learning and teaching innovation.

Research Culture Prioritised over Teaching

Both staff and students from all participant cohorts raised without prompting how they feel that academic culture often prioritises research over teaching, which is generally a challenge for any teaching that focuses on student engagement and especially for co-creation of the curriculum. Research culture is not something that I included in interview questions, but it is a significant, recurring topic that both staff and students are passionate about discussing. For example, Staff A4 states:

The majority of staff don't really want to teach... [but] the undergraduate body, to my mind, is the core of the University. Everybody's prime mission should be to teach undergraduates. The drive from the research assessment exercise has been particularly strong... We've certainly taken our eye off the ball in terms of teaching in an *obvious* way.

Since teaching-related income often brings in as much, if not more, income into universities compared to research funding, many participants describe how teaching undergraduate students should be central to university priorities, even though they feel that is not often the case presently. Staff A8 also describes significant research demands resulting from current institutional priorities, although she suggests that attitudes need to shift away from the teaching/research dichotomy to focus on solutions which better integrate them.

Some staff refer to recruitment processes that prioritise research over teaching, influencing the academic culture to make co-creation of the curriculum more difficult to find the time to implement. According to Staff A2:

There are massive structural challenges around the motivations for academics, for example, as a result the kinds of people who we recruit into academia. It's still unusual probably for academics to come into university because they love teaching... Most of the recruitment panels would be asking people about their publications and their [research] income before they ask anything about teaching, and some of them don't ask anything at all about teaching.

This participant and Staff A7 both raise important issues relating to recruitment processes, attitudes, and priorities focusing on research.

Other staff who are not involved in co-creation of the curriculum also highlight that prioritising research within academic culture can pose challenges for implementing innovative teaching. Staff D2, D3, D5, and D6 all speak about the importance of research publications within their university and Staff D3 states:

It just reflects a lack of overall concern for teaching. ...It's a cultural issue at the university. I think anyone in a teaching role here would say there is a problem.

Similarly, Staff D6 reflects on some negative attitudes of research-oriented staff towards teaching and a lack of respect towards students. Since values including respect and reciprocity are central to co-creation work, research culture that undermines teaching and devalues students can threaten student/staff partnerships that aim to build strong learning communities.

Students are keenly aware of the ethos within a university. Students B3, B6, and B9 speak about how they notice when a teacher is uninterested in teaching or too focused on research to prioritise teaching. Student B3 says:

If you're involved in teaching, you've got to really want to do it, not seeing 'pesky' students as interrupting what you want to do but as people who you can really help shape by opening up their thinking and learning.

Students sense their teachers' passion, or lack thereof, for working with students.

Student B8 also raises issues about lack of support for students when priorities are not balanced:

In general, lecturers here might get caught up in their own research too much and maybe don't spend enough time... to help students when they need help. ...I don't think you would have to sacrifice your reputation as a world-famous research facility to improve your student satisfaction. I don't think the two have to be mutually exclusive.

Rather than seeing teaching and research in opposition to each other, many co-creators see an opportunity to implement research-led teaching and to help transform the nature of their academic culture to welcome curriculum co-creation.

Those students who have not had the opportunity co-create curricula with staff partners express even more negative views about the research culture of universities, perhaps resulting from their lack of experiencing quality teaching and learning. Students C1, C5, C9, C13, and C14 each highlight the research culture as a challenge to student engagement generally and, in particular, co-creation of the curriculum. Student C1 says:

I've had professors who clearly, visibly, do not care about what they're talking about.

In addition, Student C13 points out that:

My tutor last semester admitted that he was told not to teach because it will ruin your career because you've got to focus on research.

These are striking remarks that underscore students' perceptions of the research culture of their university. Student C14 adds:

Maybe the university as an institution itself might neglect the responsibility to make student/staff interaction possible because, from the PhD tutors I know that they are often overworked, their contracts are not necessarily fair, they struggle to actually do their research (which is the main reason for them to be at university) because they have to take on so many [teaching] hours. ...I think there is this bad institutional, structural dimension where the university itself has this responsibility to make it possible for tutors to actually invest themselves both emotionally and timewise into their teaching.

This student powerfully describes the values, decisions, and actions of university management that can foster an academic culture that not only overlooks but actively devalues and 'might neglect' responsibility for quality teaching through the casualisation of teaching contracts. This has strong, negative implications for co-creation of the curriculum.

Some staff participants raise both challenges and benefits of having teaching-track careers that do not require them to engage in Research Excellence Framework (REF) submissions. For example, Staff A7 shares the emotional journey of changing her role to focus on teaching:

You do not get promoted for excellence in teaching no matter what the HEA [now Advance HE] says ...It's still painful [changing to a teaching-track role] because, although it's good for my health to step off the REF

ladder and trying to beat the rest to get journal articles at 3 and 4, I've had to give up part of my identity.

By contrast, Staff A6 highlights how having a teaching-focused role has helped her lead co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects:

I think perhaps the reason I've got more opportunity to do it [co-creation] is because I'm a University Teacher actually. I have more time and freedom in that respect... [since I am] not obliged to enter into the REF.

These participants share the mixed emotions that come with focusing on teaching, including their co-creation work, when their academic culture prioritises teaching.

Several staff note aspects of the slowly-changing academic culture that may facilitate co-creation of the curriculum. Staff A5 speaks about his frustration with his university's lack of prioritisation of teaching and, in contrast with Staff A2, he suggests that the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) may help teaching become more valued:

I've always thought that external factors are going to have to push the University to change, and I do think with [tuition] fees and the TEF, it is going to happen. That will really force us to look long and deep at how we do things. ...In my entire time here, I've never come across a single lecturer employed by the strength of their teaching. I think changing that mindset, if we're really serious about it, would really help.

Staff A7 also has hope there will be culture change to embrace co-creation of the curriculum:

I'd say it's definitely something worthwhile, but we've got a very long way to go before we convince people to buy into it. Then once we've convinced them, I think the PG Cert [in Academic Practice] is going to be a great help and it's going to teach the new lecturers, and then the old ones can just retire and be got rid of. Universities will change.

This participant sees the Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice as a key way of inducting newer colleagues with ideas for engaging teaching such as co-creation of the curriculum. Although other participants do not share the perspective that those most resistant to co-creation are older colleagues, Staff A7 takes a passive view in hoping that they will move on from university teaching rather than trying to address their concerns. By contrast, Staff A10 describes a cultural change in her department that increased the value of teaching in the last decade and now 'It is valued... we got past thinking that teaching is a second-rate endeavour'. Changing academic culture can be a long, slow process, but these individuals reflect a sense of hope as they challenge the status quo and model co-creation practices for other colleagues.

Consumerist Culture

Several staff and one student highlight increased tuition fees – for students from the rest of the UK outside Scotland and for international students – as creating a consumerist culture in academia that also presents challenges to those trying to co-create the curriculum. For example, Staff A2 describes:

There is a conceptual challenge that student engagement is seen increasingly with the consumerist lens, and that's driven very ruthlessly by the NSS. I know colleagues, particularly south of the border, who feel pressures about 'I paid £9,000 for this course, so you give me an A.' ...That's such a corrosive perspective for student learning that's detrimental for all sorts of reasons.

Participants describe how increasing tuition fees, monitoring of student satisfaction, and a sense of consumerism in higher education has affected the culture and expectations of some students and staff. Student B4 also describes challenges of low engagement of other students in her co-creation work as a student consultant, which she attributes to the effect of consumerist culture on students' sense of community. Since collaboration rather than transactions within learning communities are key to co-creation of the curriculum, consumerist attitudes and expectations may be a challenge for co-creation work. We will return to the challenges of student and staff expectations later in this chapter.

Other staff describe feelings of frustration that their colleagues may critique neo-liberalism within other areas of society but not within their universities. Staff such as A11 see this as problematic for co-creating the curriculum:

We have taken on this language of neo-liberalism without actually challenging it in many ways. ...[Current models of student satisfaction and representation are] what the deficit model is based on: 'You said, we did'. ...Just because you said, it doesn't mean we have to do anything and just because you didn't say it doesn't mean we shouldn't do something. ...We are actively creating a consumerist approach – a consumer's understanding of education – by our very actions, without critiquing it.

Similarly, Staff A12 states:

Social scientists are critiquing the world outside but the resistance that we have found, and the challenge we have found, is they are not willing to critique their own work environment. Once they start doing that, it leads them to uncomfortable places.

Although consumerism can challenge values-based work in curriculum co-creation, Staff A3 describes how co-creation can contribute to overcoming the dominance of consumerist ideals:

It is also about showing students that we actually really care about teaching. ...The project was great for seeing students as stakeholders and not as consumers, and that they have a stake in the learning and teaching that happens here.

Therefore, many co-creation practitioners embrace student/staff partnerships in learning and teaching as a way of actively challenging consumerist attitudes in higher education.

Academic Structures, Processes, Workload, Sustainability, and Upscaling

In this section, I present the academic structures and processes that can present challenges for co-creating the curriculum. These include examination boards, timetabling, and workload allocations that can hinder the often-time-consuming work of developing strong working relationships with each group of students who contribute to co-creation projects. Additionally, there are concerns about the success and sustainability of co-created courses projects that are heavily reliant on the strength of staff and students' working relationships.

Structures and Processes

Staff co-creators in particular and others suggest that a variety of university structures and processes can present obstacles for curriculum co-creation. For example, Staff A8 describes how the way teaching is organised within universities can make implementing co-creation of the curriculum difficult. Staff A5 also talks of the structural and procedural challenges he faces in implementing co-creation projects, including:

...the bureaucracy and red tape, the timetabling. ...I say 'just silly things like timetabling' but there are real issues so that people from different schools can come. ...A lot of co-created courses should, by their nature, be interdisciplinary but then you come up against things like 'which school is going to host to the exam board?'. ...These are really big things that can sink it. So, at the time being I think there is no real hope for these kinds of things, or not if they are to be done properly anyway. ...I think we do need to be a bit more radical.

In these ways, structures and processes can be forms of institutional resistance to teaching innovation.

In addition, both staff and student co-creators raise the issue of course planning and approval processes. Staff A7 describes how courses often need to be planned a year in advance, with staff making decisions that affect the extent of co-creation that could then take place. Similarly, Student B10 describes:

Co-creation implies that there's two or more groups that are creating it... [but] when we started the course, certain things had been decided. They had decided what the assessment styles would be but then we were responsible for finding readings and thinking of some interactive activities. ...There was stuff that couldn't be changed, because of bureaucracy – things that were beyond us... [But] that wasn't a democratic decision between students and teachers. We thought that was a bit weird.

Even though staff and students try to work democratically during co-creation of the curriculum, often course approval and quality assurance processes dictate that staff need to take the lead in decision-making, as we also saw in Chapter 6.

Other staff, particularly those who teach on professionally-accredited degree programmes, highlight the constraints of these curricula. For example, Staff A10 reflects on her experiences in professionally-accredited veterinary science programmes:

We wouldn't be expecting them to do that [co-creation] during the standard curriculum because they don't have time. ...We wouldn't get our accreditation if our curriculum went off on all sorts of different angles.

Similarly, Staff A7 says:

I now think that, for an accredited degree, perhaps at the moment the risk is too high for co-creation to happen in core subjects. ...I think it could happen in first-year, second-year, and in optional courses in fourth-year... It's all very well to be innovative but we shouldn't be experimenting with our own students. For me, I see it as mostly a formative experience and a shared experience.

These participants suggest that perhaps, for professional degrees in particular, co-creation of the curriculum may be most beneficial in pre-Honours courses, optional Honours courses, or extra-curricular projects.

Some staff who don't currently engage in curriculum co-creation are interested in it, but they also discuss challenges in the form of academic structures and processes like those raised by the co-creators above. Staff D5 laments:

...it's really annoying – the university has so much institutional red tape that prevents some of this from happening.

Furthermore, Staff D8 says:

I like the idea of co-creation as a course unfolds, in terms of thinking about the content, pedagogy, and the marking criteria. I don't know how I would get that through a Board of Studies though.

Although co-creation initiatives vary in nature and the way proposals are presented may influence colleagues' willingness to embrace new learning and teaching

approaches, Boards of Studies were thought to present challenges. In addition, Staff D9 also speaks about curricular innovation:

...if people are experimenting with this and they're getting these low scores on things that their line manager is going to look at or the department is going to be negatively affected by, then they're not going to want to experiment and they're going to go back to an easy, transmissive model: 'here's the knowledge I'm transferring it to you.' ...I think that's a real problem.

This non-co-creator makes assumptions that transmissive teaching approaches are effective and that co-creation approaches may not yield desired results. However, these staff raise perceived structural and procedural challenges that point back to the conservative, risk-averse academic culture of many departments.

Despite the challenges that academic structures and processes can present, co-creators also describe how they work flexibly within these constraints. Staff A8 states:

It is very much a course that has adapted to what they [students] have wanted to do and what we have collectively agreed might be useful. ...A lot of the course design was leaving enough leeway that an external [examiner] wouldn't question why things were in the course guide, but you had flexibility to change things.

Furthermore, Staff A2 describes how the 'creative thrill' can be squeezed out of learning and teaching due to needing to 'process' large numbers of students through labs efficiently. He expands on this challenge in co-creating the curriculum:

...it can be a very constructive, imaginative, and creative process and it's around how we do that collectively without it being squeezed out by the constraints of timetable and poorly-designed and blunt assessment instruments. A lot of it is about how we take the constraints that we have to live with and work against them to create those communities of trust and genuine learning [through co-creating the curriculum]. That's how I see it, and that's exciting.

It is interesting to see how this co-creator considers the challenges of efficient forms of teaching and assessment for large classes, and he actively works to overcome these obstacles to enact curriculum co-creation.

Time Commitment and Workload

Both co-creators and non-co-creators highlight the challenge of academics' high workloads, reducing their time available to be creative in their teaching through co-creating the curriculum. Many participants describe, like Staff D5, how 'the university already demands too much'. Staff A5 also highlights how academic cultures that focus on research often emphasise teaching efficiency:

For many lecturers, they're so pushed in terms of research and other things like admin that they haven't really got a lot of space to be thinking outside the box and doing other things. I can see that if you're really busy you're not really going to rewrite your course and do all these wacky, crazy things. You're just going to fall back on what you always do.

However, Staff A11 speaks about carving out time for facilitating co-creation opportunities:

...it does become easier, but it takes time. And that time isn't rewarded by university systems. In fact, it is actually discouraged...

Staff A12 elaborates:

It is very easy to give a two-hour lecture. Universities reward that model. If you do something outwith that, timetabling and workload for instance can be a problem.

These staff show how time for teaching may be given low priority generally, which makes it especially hard to engage in co-creation activities if they follow non-traditional schedules or are more time-intensive than transmissive teaching models.

Many staff co-creators including A2, A7, A8, A9, A11, and A12 emphasise the time-consuming nature of curriculum co-creation. This includes a high level of preparatory work, which students do not often see. Staff A8 states:

...it takes a lot of set-up costs, in terms of laying the groundwork and what people do and what is expected of them. ...It has been so time intensive... [and] I found it expanded to fit whatever space there was. It didn't matter if you set parameters on it: if you had space in your week, it would expand and slowly take that over. I hadn't anticipated it and I actually thought it would be less time, because they would be doing more independent work. ...Actually it is more work because it is a constant refining of the portfolio, the presentation, and the diaries they did every week.

Similarly, Staff A11 says:

These modules take a lot of time and effort, and most of it is about communication. That communication demand is phenomenal at times, so you have to identify how you are going to do it.

These participants share the time-consuming nature of communicating with students, including providing formative feedback and support for this new way of working. Although the demands of each co-creation project differ, the challenge of workload for both staff and students reoccurs frequently.

Many staff co-creators emphasise how, despite its time-consuming nature, co-creation is extremely rewarding. Staff A2 states:

I would unequivocally recommend it to others, provided they understand it's likely to take some time and they have that time to commit. I have

colleagues who are on temporary contracts and are juggling insane busyness. They might be in the 'I need to survive this year' mode, so it's not something to do if you're stressed like that.

Staff A7 adds:

I suppose the negative side is, because I find it rewarding and fun, I do tend to put probably too much into it and care about it too much. ...Academic enhancement doesn't save time – it takes longer, and it takes more skill!

Although these participants reiterate the fulfilling nature of curriculum co-creation, they also share that it is important to evaluate it within the broader context of other responsibilities and objectives.

Not only Staff A5 and A11 but also Students B2, B3, B5, and B10 agree that co-creation of the curriculum can be similarly time-consuming for students, especially when they become highly motivated and engaged. Staff A5 describes one student who dedicated over 400 hours to a co-created project in one year. Students B5 and B8 describe the time-consuming nature of project planning, and the latter states:

I've spent a lot of time on it because I obviously want it to be to a good enough standard. ...I think the reason it was so much work was because I've never had to do anything like it before, but I guess that's a positive thing.

The new and different experience of co-creating the curriculum and producing a project for an external organisation contributed to the time-consuming yet fulfilling nature of this student's work. Similarly, Student B10 says:

I had to dedicate more time to it, but it felt like less energy was taken up because it was more enjoyable.

Other students echo this, and Student B3 states:

Obviously logistically it might take more time, but people were willing to put that time in when we had benefits back from it like gaining more inspiration from this.

These students are intrinsically motivated to dedicate time and do their best work when they have developed strong working relationships with staff; they then develop a sense of responsibility to the local community.

Success and Sustainability of Co-Creation of the Curriculum

Various participants highlight how relationship-based, co-creation work indicates that the experience can vary greatly with each cohort's working relationship, which points to challenges of success and sustainability for curriculum co-creation. Although some traditional, lecture-based classes are adapted to different cohorts of students, many

participants describe how each co-creation initiative is unique depending on the nature of students and staff engaging and the relationships they develop. Staff A6 speaks about the importance of listening to each cohort of unique students to understand their particular learning needs and aims, and Staff A12 describes how students' levels of engagement and resilience can vary widely. Student B3 also states:

It would be wrong to assume that just because it worked one way one year, that it's going to work the same way.

While this can be the case with other forms of teaching, the effect may be exaggerated in co-created courses and projects, and Staff A11 also recognises how the educational context of a university or a department affects co-created teaching more than traditional teaching.

Furthermore, Staff A5 notes the 'fortuitous' nature of co-creation projects' success depending on participants' engagement and the strength of their working relationships, making curriculum co-creation 'risky in that sense' when outcomes can vary. In addition, Students B3 and B4 (who volunteered as student consultants to work with different staff) emphasise how the experience varied based on each pairing's needs and preferences as they came to know each other and identify the most effective ways of working. Staff A3, who worked with them to support the overarching project, states:

In practical terms for the project, we learnt that we couldn't predict how the pairing between the staff and the student reviewer would work out.

In addition, Staff D2 speaks about an instance when a staff co-creator became unwell and was unable to support the course which was 'so unusual in its format and its structure' that other staff had difficulty in covering the planned classes. Although this was an unusual example, it unfortunately did have a significant, negative impact on the student experience. Since each co-created initiative tends to be unique and centred around the interests and needs of the participating students and staff, this does present an element of risk in the sustainability of co-creation of the curriculum. As Staff D3 also recognises, the risk of relationship-based, co-creation work 'is extremely contingent on the individuals involved'.

Both Staff A5 and A11 share a concern about the over-engagement of the relatively small numbers of extremely engaged students and staff at their separate universities who are active in a wide variety of project-based initiatives including co-creation of the curriculum. Staff A11 states:

It's just the same members of staff all the time, and the same students who are involved. There is a danger of overload across the board. That is a real problem, so until we normalise it [co-creation] and make it our defining pedagogy, then we are always going to be struggling.

This participant reflects on the risks involved in always working with the same engaged staff and students in project-based co-creation approaches, which points to the need to embed curriculum co-creation more widely and democratically within greater numbers of whole classes of students. We will revisit the challenge of upscaling co-creation work in the next section.

As is alluded to above, both staff and students who co-create the curriculum appear to be self-selecting in many cases. Student B2 reflects on how certain personalities may affect this choice:

I think it worked well for [X teacher] because he's that kind of person and that's what he loves doing. ...I definitely think it would depend on the lecturer and I don't think it would be feasible across the board.

Other students like Student C7 also identify that 'it depends on the course organiser', so they see challenges in sustaining co-creation of the curriculum if individuals aren't motivated by the values that underpin partnership work.

This element of self-selection for co-creation opportunities may be similar for students, which reflects challenges of equal access and inclusion when looking closely at which students self-select and/or whom staff select. For instance, Staff A9 reflects:

...often our most motivated students have a lot of capital of all sorts and actually it's further privileging them without the others. There were all sorts of things that I was really concerned about.

Co-creators like Staff A9 raise the concern of further privileging those students who are confident, engaged, and high-achieving, especially with respect to the transformational benefits for average students as we saw in Chapter 6. In addition, Staff A5 reflects on student co-creators' high levels of engagement:

It does vary, but I think it's a bit of a self-selecting group... [and] they all are pretty engaged with the topic they're interested in.

Similarly, Staff A8 describes how she interviewed and selected a small cohort of students for her co-created, option course:

We were dealing with a particular subset of engaged and motivated students. ...We were able to do it because they were a particular group of students at a particular time.

Although selection varies by project, students often self-select by actively choosing co-created, option courses or applying for extracurricular co-creator roles since there were few examples of students being required to participate in co-created courses. The elements of risk in the selection and engagement of both student and staff co-creators can, therefore, pose challenges to wider implementation of curriculum co-creation.

Upscaling Co-Creation of the Curriculum

Co-creators often want to upscale co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects to larger courses or across a programme so that the benefits can be experienced by greater numbers of students and staff. However, they often share concerns about the resources involved and the strength of co-creation work when upscaling. For example, Staff A13 states that some of her colleagues may be enacting co-creation of the curriculum 'in a tokenistic way... it is one student, one experience, over one year'. Similarly, Staff A2 describes how co-creation often occurs 'in small pockets' since:

I think it's really hard to do at programme level. It would be lovely to do this in a much more profound way across the University, but it's a real struggle: partly because of institutional inertia, partly because of the time it would take, partly because students are coming and going. Even if you've got a student for four years following a traditional programme, it would take a while to build that trust up. ...That's the idea [of upscaling to co-created programmes] – it's one to which we might aspire but probably won't reach.

These participants allude to many of the challenges cited previously in this chapter as they describe the challenges of increasing the numbers of student co-creators and the scale of co-creation of the curriculum across their universities.

In the challenges of academic structures and processes section, we saw from Staff A10 that it might not be possible within the context of professionally-accredited degree programmes to give every student an opportunity to co-create the curriculum. Indeed, many staff participants including Staff A2, A5, A8, A9, A10, A13, and D6 describe that it is not possible for all students to become co-creators within most programmes under current structures and resourcing. For example, Staff A9 states:

I would see it as part of a portfolio, part of what you would do but not the whole part and not a part that you can just whip out and say, 'Hey, you can do a bit of co-creation!'. It's quite serious and quite difficult. ...It would be ideal if we could offer that level of intensive interaction to all students, but our model doesn't allow for that at the moment.

Staff D6 expressed similar sentiments and said, 'It would be chaos; it's not easy to manage'. Both Staff A9 and D6 also describe how they prefer co-creation models that present discrete windows for curriculum negotiation and offer short menus of options to help structure and manage the resources involved.

Although students and staff highlight the value and importance of the co-creation experience, students, in particular, and non-co-creators often state the concern that it is more difficult with large classes. Students B4, C5, C7, C9, and C16 describe challenges in building strong working relationships and having meaningful discussions in large lecture halls; in addition, there can be difficulties in negotiating a wider array of opinions when trying to establish shared objectives with larger cohorts. However, student co-creators such as Student B10 emphasise:

I think if everybody had opportunities to do at least one course like this throughout their degree, I think that would be ideal. Not necessarily every single course, because obviously in reality that would be impossible to do... but if everyone got the chance to do it at least once, then that would be really good.

Furthermore, Student B2 shares these sentiments and states that it would not be logistically possible with current academic structures.

In addition, Staff A8 states:

We have hundreds of students and we need to find the most effective way of teaching them... It [co-creation] can be done, and I think the university needs to think about it, but it is very time intensive.

The challenges of resources are significant but, as Staff A5 says:

...the language is all there [with university managers valuing curriculum co-creation] but where's the process and the plan to actually do it? It's one thing saying something but it's another thing doing it – and doing it properly which is the hard part.

Staff A8 and A5 emphasise that a lack of resources can be surmounted if university managers choose to prioritise forms of learning and teaching such as co-creation of the curriculum.

Risks for Staff

Next, we move to individuals' perceptions that can challenge the notion and implementation of curriculum co-creation, starting with staff perspectives. Some co-creators note how colleagues have questioned the co-creation pedagogy generally and students' capabilities to engage effectively in co-creation in particular. In addition,

there are different dimensions of risk for staff, including: flexibility and trying new teaching methods; the invisible effort and perhaps appearing 'lazy' during co-creation; and vulnerability and being challenged. Co-creators also discuss how their practices influence colleagues by disrupting others' traditional teaching practices.

Questioning the Co-Creation Pedagogy and Students' Capabilities

As we have seen above, staff co-creators tend to have high expectations of their students, and they value, respect, and have confidence in their abilities; by contrast, staff who challenge co-creation of the curriculum can question the pedagogy and students' capabilities to engage effectively with it. For example, co-creator Staff A1 says:

I don't see any reason why we should see students as a nuisance. For the majority of us, we wouldn't have jobs for a start, we wouldn't have livelihoods if they weren't here. We can bang on about research as much as we like... but if we really value research where the hell do we think the researchers of the future are coming from?

In contrast, non-co-creator Staff D6 speaks about students having the opportunity to co-create the curriculum and states bluntly: 'I don't think they would know what they would be doing.' Staff A2 shares how he reacts to some colleagues who are more resistant to co-creation:

When I speak to other academic colleagues about this idea, they'll often say 'Well actually students aren't our colleagues... You're just pretending and you're ignoring power differences.' And that's *not* the point. The point is to challenge the conception.

This participant argues strongly for the co-creation pedagogy as a way to enact his values about respecting students' capabilities.

Staff A11, A12, and A13 reflect on how some of their colleagues advocate for traditional teaching methods since they are familiar, and they may have a 'deficit' mindset (A11) in thinking that students are not capable enough to co-create the curriculum. Staff A12 also describes how 'The main challenges are not with students, but with colleagues' who have benefitted from traditional teaching methods in which they excelled, and they don't see benefits of different forms of teaching for current students. Staff A13 echoes the point that staff who challenge co-creation are often those who benefitted from traditional teaching methods. She reflects on how they neither want to give up the power they have gained through this approach to teaching, nor acknowledge that alternative approaches might have value. Staff A11 says:

We have a lot of resistance because people have always done things in certain ways and it is much easier to be didactic so that is always going to be the challenge. ...It takes time to break down resistance and you need resistance to create some critical dialogue. ...We do need that resistance, but we need it to be supportive.

This participant speaks to the rigour and time needed to challenge norms and change the academic culture.

Others also describe the challenge of gaining buy-in from colleagues who see the teacher's role as disseminating subject content. Staff A1 comments:

I've certainly spoken to staff who believe... 'You can't even begin to be an independent operator until you know this stuff... And only when you can regurgitate this stuff can you then move on.' ...We need to think in a more sophisticated way about what that learning is... What would worry me in a research-oriented university like this: some of this could be used as a way of rebadging neglect [without adequate student support] and that's what we have to be very careful of.

Some staff who adhere to views of learning that reflect the 'banking' model of education (Freire, 1972) may not value the skills and attributes that co-creation can help students to develop. There is also a risk that they would fail to provide the student support needed for effective co-creation work to take place.

Students also poignantly share challenges of experiencing negative perceptions of some staff regarding students' abilities, which also reflect their lack of openness to co-creation. Student B11 states:

I have experienced challenges with specific members of staff and there has been some resistance and some quite open, patronising behaviours... Definitely one of the things that really bugs me is the fact that sometimes there is this prejudice about students that 'no, they are not going to work in partnership; it is not going to work because students don't want it'. You don't know what they want!

Student B4 also shares a feeling of staff apathy towards the opportunity of working with a student peer reviewer:

Staff here that I've spoken to have seen the email and to me it feels like they've assumed they don't have enough time... but I'm not sure they fully understand the time commitment. I think a lot of people are nervous about it too, in having their teaching practice reviewed, but it's not so personal.

The challenge of time reappears again here, and the perceived risk of staff feeling vulnerable where their teaching is opened to student critique is explored further below.

Students such as B4 and B11 can help in overcoming the challenge of staff members' negative perceptions, and Staff A12 reflects: 'Ultimately if students drive the change,

that breaks down the resistance'. Those who persevere with co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects and experience many benefits of this pedagogy often feel relieved when they have successes to share with colleagues who had been resistant to the idea.

Vulnerabilities

Vulnerabilities for staff range from the flexibility and courage needed to try new teaching methods, to the invisible effort involved in planning for curriculum co-creation, to being challenged in their teaching practices that ask more of students. Staff participants, particularly those who have experience with co-creation, reflect on the challenges in trying new things and demonstrating flexibility and adaptability while going against the norms of traditional teaching methods. It can be difficult for staff – especially those who are time-poor – to embrace the risk of trying new teaching methods. Similarly, non-co-creators Staff D4 and D5 each share worries about curriculum co-creation not going to plan, and the former says: 'It can go wrong, so that can in fact be more work in the long term'. Although all pedagogies may not go to plan with different cohorts, Staff A6 also shares:

It's a risky thing... I think probably the co-creation can be a bit daunting because you're letting go of some of the power the teacher would have in the classroom.

Staff A1 also speaks about how different pedagogies including co-creation have 'effects on securities and insecurities' for different teachers.

Other staff co-creators describe challenging the way teaching is done and facing resistance from colleagues, as was also described above. For instance, Staff A3 shares:

...we were wondering 'what would people at our university think of this?'. No one had done this type of work before... There was some resistance, and in some cases it didn't work.

This participant went on to reflect on an example of demonstrating flexibility when things did not work as planned. In this case, colleagues did not feel comfortable with student reviewers seeing the anonymised assessment feedback that is given to other students with the aim of them providing suggestions to improve staff feedback and benefit students. Staff A8 also describes how co-creators adapt their projects as they take place:

It is such an unknown quantity... I had no idea how it was going to go. I was excited about it, but I was also very apprehensive because I didn't

know until I got the students in the room and really until about three or four weeks in – I wasn't sure how it would turn out. It could have been a different group of students who weren't as committed. There were a lot of surprises... because things like this hadn't been done before, at least in our School.

Since each co-creation project varies based on the individuals involved and the professional relationships that they build together, participants need to be flexible and adapt throughout their co-creation projects.

Although it can be challenging to learn from things that do not work or to deal with colleagues who are resistant to new ideas, some staff such as A13 speak about the importance of resilience. Staff A11 says:

It is that openness and it is also about recognising that sometimes 'we tried that, it didn't work. We'll no' do that again!' I think there is a push in this idea of modelling the expert to never be wrong, and that is something that is detrimental to our learning more widely. ...The biggest challenge is resistance because people are out of their comfort zones. ...It is more about being able to articulate the vision and bring people along, and to do that you have to have evidence. Part of the process is about producing that evidence.

Despite challenging situations of learning from 'failure', we see again a benefit of curriculum co-creation in how it develops participants' resilience and skills to deal with complexity. While working as an innovator, this co-creator gathers evidence of what works *and* what does not work to contribute to the enhancement of co-created learning and teaching.

In addition to the time-consuming nature of some co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects mentioned above, another sub-theme of risk for staff involves how students do not always recognise the invisible work that staff engage in to prepare for the various directions in which co-created projects could be taken forward. Staff A13 states that students:

...felt cut adrift and that it was very unstructured. What I am aware of is that behind the scenes it was highly structured and thought through: every detail was identified and examined. ...The students are looking for that comfort blanket and the staff were terrified that the amount of work they had put in up front (that the students wouldn't see) wouldn't pay off, but of course it did.

This participant raises important points about different perceptions of students and staff. However, setting expectations and explaining why students are being asked to work independently can help the co-created project to succeed.

Additionally, Staff A1 says:

A lot of it just goes back to making sure that we don't look like we are being really lazy: 'there you go, create your own curriculum'. It's possible that they say, 'why are we on this course then?'

It is important that co-creation practitioners explain the added value of co-creation and how, although these methods may represent a change in normal processes and work patterns, they can benefit students in many ways. Staff D9 also shares her worries:

...that students actually give lecturers lower marks in course feedback for courses that are participatory because the impression is that the teacher is not actually doing anything.

This does not appear to be the case with co-creation-of-the-curriculum projects according to the extremely positive benefits and feedback cited by student participants in the last chapter, and the fact that all students in this study participating in co-created courses cited it as the best course throughout their degree. The way in which engagement is enacted is key, since participants have reiterated the importance of building genuine respect and trust with students.

Some co-creation practitioners do reflect on the risks for staff of feeling more vulnerable when giving up power during curriculum co-creation. Students such as B2 acknowledge how difficult it may be for staff to make themselves open to constructive critiques of their teaching during co-created courses in particular. However, some staff may not be open to being challenged, and it can take time to build respect and trust between student and staff partners. As Staff A3 describes, some staff like to think of themselves as "true" experts':

The staff felt more vulnerable with a student reviewer at first, but by the end they were seeing each other as colleagues since each was learning from the other.

Furthermore, Staff A8 reflects:

I think the ideal relationship is one of collaboration, where you feel like you are challenging them, but they are also challenging you – they are challenging you to be better, and to engage more with the material – but also one of mutual respect.

Respect is a key, underlying foundation of co-creation projects to facilitate staff and students challenging each other and overcoming vulnerabilities to improve their joint work.

This theme of vulnerability for staff in curriculum co-creation is significant as compared to the levels of vulnerability in traditional teaching where they may not rely on students to engage during a didactic course. A different type of risk for staff is when they feel

vulnerable if students do not reciprocate in sharing respect, which can result from the challenge of a consumerist culture. Staff A7 shares a difficult experience with a small number of students who challenged her, and her co-creation pedagogy. She reflects:

Sometimes students can say things with impunity. We say 'students as partners' but they can say anything they like about us and we're not allowed to say anything about them. ...If you're going to have real co-created universities, those kinds of interpersonal things really have to be addressed. How can I trust these people? I don't have any choice – it's my job. They have a choice. If they hate it so much, why don't they go to another bloody university? I guess those are the sorts of hidden things of real, genuine partnership that might stop some lecturers. ...[I had a] tiny minority of very hostile students [who wanted to be spoon-fed knowledge] ...They came up with virtually every possible criticism you can come up with, all of them groundless. ...I think they wanted me to fail. ...I needed to defend myself by anticipating what they might say, writing a document of exactly what was true, and giving it to my line manager. ...You really need to have a line manager who supports you and who values what you're doing, and possibly even colleagues as well who will be there to buck you up.

Some staff feel that curriculum co-creation can present very personal risks to their career and their reputation, and they re-emphasise the importance of support from management for their non-traditional teaching.

Despite the resilience needed for staff co-creators to implement innovative teaching methods and adapt their teaching throughout, they can also feel vulnerable if things do not go to plan. For example, Staff A2 describes:

...you need a little bit of confidence if things do go wrong. If everybody fails your module, you're confident enough to say, 'Yes this is what happened and we'll sort this out'. I wouldn't necessarily recommend it, for example, for very new academics who are just in post and are a little bit nervous and don't know the system. ...[As a senior academic now] I'm certainly much less worried about doing something wrong than I used to be... You take a risk, but actually we have lots of structures within the University which are there to mitigate that risk. Lots of people see them as some kind of ritual test of your conservative adherence to rules, but you can see it as a safety net so that's how I started looking at it.

This participant makes important comments about how teaching experience and seniority may affect the level of vulnerability that staff may feel when facilitating co-creation. However, it is inspiring to see his solution-oriented perspectives on ways to diminish that risk.

Influence on Colleagues by Disrupting Teaching Pedagogies

Several staff co-creators raise the challenge of how their pedagogy unintentionally affects their colleagues. For example, Staff A11 says:

I think that one of the biggest challenges for anybody who is introducing a learning partnership methodology is that you are going to cause problems for others. It is going to be disruptive. It is going to be extremely disruptive for people who are uncomfortable in being challenged by students or letting go of the class. I think that is what we need to recognise: it may be a great experience for some but the ripple effects are quite powerful for others when they are placed in a really uncomfortable position. You are not just changing your learning practice and the students' learning practice; you are changing others' practices.

By working with students to change their expectations of themselves and of their teachers, this participant highlights the important effects on others when students want to work in partnership with staff in other contexts. Similarly, Staff A2 says:

...if you're doing some of the more radical work without thinking about colleagues, without being collegiate with them, then that can cause problems. That's the big challenge for me and for us as an institution: this bigger picture, the programme picture. How do we take some of these ideas and embed them in programmes rather than just in isolation in pockets?

This participant emphasises the difficulties that can arise from pockets of innovation and the importance of embedding co-creation across the student experience to engage wider numbers of staff and students, as we saw in the challenges section on Upscaling Co-Creation of the Curriculum.

Risks for Students

Students' expectations can present a risk for their active engagement in co-creation of the curriculum when there are strong distinctions between their views of what they think teachers should do and what they do when co-creating curricula with students. For those students who do engage in co-creation, there are also different vulnerabilities they feel including: taking responsibility, changing their perceptions of students' roles in unfamiliar learning approaches, and co-constructing more difficult curricula. We conclude this section by looking at the important area of fair compensation for student co-creators' time and efforts.

Students' Expectations

Various participants speak about students' expectations as a challenge for embracing co-creation of the curriculum – including changing expectations before, during and after co-creation experiences. For example, Student B2 says:

Some people just like to be told 'This is what you're going to do and this is how you're going to do it'. That's a more personal issue.

Similarly, Student C1 states:

In the science department, the idea about the content itself being malleable and the students can help change it – it's a little bit far-fetched. For us, we'd like to hope that there's one version of the truth and we're going get to the other end of our degree knowing what there is to know.

These participants describe an understanding of one truth that students must learn. This doesn't acknowledge the changing nature of knowledge and new advancements, however, and this perspective does not recognise students' potential role in co-constructing knowledge or other aspects of the curriculum such as pedagogic decision-making. This may also reflect similar attitudes of staff in some disciplines.

Staff also share powerful insights that highlight the challenge of some students' expectations of being taught content knowledge. Staff A6 reflects on partnership ways of working:

It's not always easy doing this because sometimes students don't want to work in partnership. Sometimes they still expect the teacher to be up there, 'tell me what to do,' and they are the students who sit passively. There is sometimes resistance, maybe because they haven't done it before and it's a bit risky. They know how to pass exams and they know how to write essays. ...Some of them seem to want more content. They're concerned that they're not getting enough because we're spending time on the skills aspects, like learning how to learn, and they feel that's not all that important and they want perhaps the facts and figures.

Staff A7 also describes some students' learning preferences as a challenge when they prefer more familiar and rule-bound assessments such as essays or exams that are like those in secondary school:

...my colleague said, 'When they say "she hasn't told us what to do", perhaps what they mean is "she hasn't told us how to do it"'. Isn't that insightful? I think that speaks volumes for what's going wrong in universities.

This staff finds it frustrating that students want to be told what to do, and she experiences this as a challenge to creative and collaborative learning and teaching.

Some participants emphasise the importance of discussing both student and staff expectations at the beginning of co-creation projects to manage expectations. For example, Staff D9 states that staff should be explicit about why they are implementing curriculum co-creation and the benefits of students engaging; conversely, it is important for students to be open and honest with staff if they don't want to 'buy into it'. Similarly, Staff A8 states:

We've got to be really careful about managing student expectations, providing a quality experience, and being able to scale things up. I've also seen really dedicated, enthusiastic members of staff work themselves into the ground. The thing is, nobody is going to say 'stop', and a student will never say 'you know what, you've given me enough feedback' – it's always more, more, more, more!

Openly discussing expectations is important for both students and staff, and Staff A8 raises valuable concerns about students' continual desire to have more contact time and feedback from staff.

Various staff co-creators discuss challenges of managing students' expectations with respect to issues arising from lack of consistency in teaching and learning. Staff A7 reflects on using appropriate teaching methods in a variety of different contexts:

We are having great difficulty managing student expectation in general and there's a massive risk for the division of the whole: if something is happening in my module, they'll expect it to happen in theirs or vice versa. ...In the long run, I don't think everybody should be doing co-creation; it should be happening in some modules and not in others just like you shouldn't have the same assessment for everything.

This staff member raises an important point that seems to challenge the idea of scaling up so that co-creation takes place more consistently across programmes – perhaps co-creation is well suited to teaching in some modules and not others? Similarly, Staff A2 highlights the challenge of inconsistency:

...you can do some great stuff but it might in the long-term be damaging to the University because what students see is lots of inconsistency. ...It can have all sorts of unfortunate side effects on student perception.

Student C3 also states that a lack of consistency in quality of teaching can be unfair, although not all teaching can – or should – be the same. When co-creation of the curriculum can lead to pockets of innovation and many beneficial outcomes, it may be considered inequitable by some students not accessing co-creation opportunities. Therefore, it is important to consider embedding whole-cohort, co-creation opportunities more widely although upscaling in this way can also present resource challenges, as we have seen above.

Vulnerabilities

Both staff and student co-creators describe how it can be a risk for students to engage in unfamiliar learning and teaching methods that co-creation of the curriculum can present. Participants clearly highlight the need for students to take responsibility to contribute effectively in co-creation projects, which can be a risk for some passive learners who may not want to engage actively. Student B4 speaks about how taking responsibility is challenging within the context of the wider education system when students are afraid to take initiative, be creative, and make mistakes:

...you're wanting people to not just stare at the material that you're providing them... I think the education system fails people because the creativity's beaten out of us when nobody wants to be wrong. Right from primary school, you're ridiculed if you're wrong so when you get to this level still people won't put their hand up, answer the question, or talk things through with the lecturer.

This student co-creator is frustrated by her peers' lack of risk-taking, which she feels has a strong negative impact on student engagement within the classroom and could therefore be a challenge for co-creation work. Furthermore, Student B3 speaks about the difference between providing feedback on course evaluations and working as a student partner:

...it's easy on the course evaluation to just say whatever you want because you're not actually taking responsibility for the impact of what you are saying to the staff member. It goes off anonymously and you're not imagining how the staff member is going to read the feedback and how they might take it. Whereas, if you're having to sit with the person and discuss your feedback, that's a completely different level.

Some students find it difficult to take responsibility for communicating feedback directly to staff during co-creation since it removes their anonymity. However, the dialogic and relational nature of this work requires student and staff co-creators to become more accountable for their actions and, therefore, develop a sense of civic engagement.

Student B8 describes how curriculum co-creation can be challenging for some students since 'You have to be willing to put yourself out there' and how he would not normally do so, but he felt supported during the co-creation experience to engage with this challenge. Student B10 also speaks about the importance of taking risks:

I'd kind of got to the point where I didn't care about my degree mark. ...I thought at this point, it doesn't matter if I don't do well in this course because I'm just doing it for the sake of it... [For others who] were getting

consistent Firsts then it's a risk to take such a radical course whereas for me, there wasn't much risk because I'm not doing that amazingly. It is interesting that this student appears to have average achievement and be intrinsically motivated to engage in co-creation, but she describes how high-achieving peers who are extrinsically motivated by grades could see co-created courses as a threat.

Staff also recognise how co-creation can feel uncomfortable for students when they try something new for the first time. For example, Staff A6 speaks about leading co-creation of grading criteria and negotiation of assessment marks with students:

I think it is probably difficult at first because it's something they haven't done before. ...They have to write some critical comments because in the negotiations we will use these comments to justify whatever mark we give.

Similarly, Staff A12 shares:

They might be uncomfortable, and they are certainly uncertain... because it is the first time they have done this enquiry-based learning. ...It is a protein bar and not a Mars bar. It does take students time to adapt... We also need to take a step back and realise you might not particularly like this at this point but maybe next year, or the year after that you will realise why we did that.

This participant shares how staff co-creators need to empathise with students' experience of unfamiliar learning and teaching methods, and how it is important to support them to see the long-term benefits and adapt to co-created curricula.

In addition, staff speak about some students' resistance to unfamiliar assessment methods during co-creation of the curriculum, especially regarding the impact on students' marks. Staff A7 says:

It was very, very hard because right from the start because they were working in groups, doing an unusual assessment for the first time and some of them didn't want to do anything except an essay because they were used to getting A's for essays.

Similarly, Staff A8 describes how she interviewed students before offering places on her co-created course, but many who had high mark averages ultimately chose not to take the course:

They told me that they didn't want to jeopardise their average, because it was an unknown quantity and they didn't know how they would do on this kind of assessment that they hadn't had before, so they weren't going to take the risk that they might do poorly. But in fact, we found that students have done way better than they ever have in their entire university career because they have done the work and they have put the time in. ...They

have enjoyed doing it, so they haven't got as worked up about 'how do I get my First?'

It is striking that multiple participants raise the issue of risk in non-traditional assessments, especially for high-achieving students. However, it is also important that Staff A8 describes how those students who embrace this risk may experience less stress and higher achievement than in traditional assessments since they become more engaged with the enjoyment of learning.

As a result of the increased responsibility during curriculum negotiation, some participants suggest that a level of commitment and maturity is needed from student co-creators, arguing they might be best placed to engage in co-creation towards the end of their university degree. Staff A4 describes how staff support students in taking responsibility for new co-creation experiences, and he points out that it can be a 'real eye-opener' for students when it is their fault if they do not dedicate the time required to prepare their project. This can be a good learning experience in the supportive environment that staff co-creators provide. Several participants also highlight the skills needed to navigate power relationships and work effectively as partners who share responsibility. For example, Student C7 says:

Once you get up to Honours I think it would be a lot easier because you can get much more direct feedback and have more adult discussions. You tend to know more, and know what you would want to know. There're more known unknowns, instead of just completely unknowns.

Although this student suggests that it might be easier for those at the end of their studies to participate in co-creation, others scaffold aspects of co-creation throughout the degree so that this pedagogy is not too unfamiliar for students in Honours years.

Throughout the examples provided here of how students have been challenged to engage with the unfamiliar in co-creation practices and assessments, we have also seen how students have adapted to a different role as student co-creators. For instance, Student B11 shares:

...we felt like we were lost. And then slowly, slowly you would see everyone taking their roles dividing the project... I think the purpose of the module wasn't to have students feel comfortable. ...[Now] I feel a bit like I am on both sides. I have spoken to staff, I have spoken to students and seen their surprise like 'how did you get to do that?' and my response was 'I don't know, it just happened. It is about engaging, not being afraid of saying what you have to say, trusting other people, respecting other people'.

As students gain confidence with taking increased responsibility, they learn through embracing challenge and becoming resilient. It is significant that students' roles can change during co-creation so they can feel as though they are in between traditional student and staff roles. This can also change students' expectations for other courses. For example, Staff A11 shares how he taught a co-creation course but, when a colleague taught this cohort the next term, he received complaints from students:

...what was wrong for them was that they had all this freedom and it was taken away. That was how they articulated it. ...They are not willing to just sit there and be told things anymore. They want to do things. I think that was really, really telling.

Therefore, the co-creation experience can change students' perceptions of their role in learning and teaching as they embrace the ownership that they gain as active co-creators.

The last aspect of risks for students is that co-creation of the curriculum can yield more difficult curricula resulting from student input. Student B6 describes how some of her peers want clear instructions of what to do to succeed with an assessment, and she describes the increased challenge with co-creation:

Sometimes we have to work harder as students, but I think that you get more out of it at the end of the day. ...I haven't been too worried about not having an exact specification of what I have to produce at the end. I appreciated that that was going to evolve over time.

Furthermore, Staff A2 states:

...the students engaged with assessment and actually changed it so it was harder.

This participant also emphasises the importance of building strong working relationships based on trust and respect, and this foundation of support helps students embrace the academic difficulty. In addition, Student B2 shares how students working with Staff A2 co-created a much more difficult assessment:

[The teacher] had written a crap paper and got them to critique it, but they actually said, 'That's too easy. That's pointless. These mistakes won't be made in a real paper, so why don't we critique a real paper?'

These students embraced the academic challenge of a more difficult assessment to critique a published paper since they believed this was a more authentic and beneficial assessment to advance their learning. However, the unfamiliar nature, additional responsibilities, and increased difficulty of some co-created courses can present represent vulnerabilities for students that could hinder their confidence to engage in curriculum co-creation.

Fair Compensation for Student Co-Creators' Work

Only a few participants raise the challenge of student compensation for their work as co-creators, although they reflect on a wide range of examples of co-creation. There is likely to be more pressure to pay students for extra-curricular work rather than for curricular work that students would already be undertaking as part of their degree programmes. For instance, Staff A9 describes:

I know that students really, really want to do extra things but I did not want the School to be doing unpaid internships. How do you give students some of the opportunities they want to work with you? It seemed to me that you would give them academic credit if you're not paying them.

Giving students academic credit for their contributions to co-created courses that form part of their degree programme can be a solution in many cases and, in other instances, paying students for their time can be deemed appropriate if they have been selected to engage in projects in addition to their studies. However, Student B4 works in several part-time jobs but shares concerns about receiving payment for work as a student consultant:

As soon as you start paying someone, you change the motivation. For a project such as this, you want the motivation to be a helping one, developing work together with someone. You want people to be working together for good reasons, not for money. While the outcome could be still be good, I do think money changes things and it's deciding how much someone's time is worth, and how much what they're doing is worth. If you're paying someone too little, then it's not worth it and they're not valued. If you're paying someone too much, it almost seems silly and they'll be suspicious about it. You could have other incentives.

Student B4 identifies many of the key factors and concerns relating to how compensation for students' time and effort can be a challenge in co-creation.

Staff D1 also speaks about how to evaluate the value of students' work, reflecting on a co-creation initiative she knew about:

The issues that came up were around the value that you put in their contribution. There was definitely a sense from some of the students that staff get paid to design courses, and here they were designing a course collaboratively with staff support. There were definitely questions raised around if all they were getting at the end of it was a course mark – and staff were being paid for that time – how equal can that relationship be when you have people coming at it from very different angles.

The challenge of students and staff contributing in different ways to co-creation projects makes their compensation a difficult issue.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have highlighted participants' conceptualisations of key barriers that they seek to overcome whilst challenging the status quo through co-creating the curriculum. Participants focus on challenges including: academic culture and priorities; academic structures, processes, and workload as well as the sustainability and ability to upscale co-creation work; risks for staff; and risks for students. The expectations and vulnerabilities of staff and students, in particular, are important to address when trying to develop their increased and more inclusive engagement in co-creation initiatives. As a result, a growing number of co-creators can work together within and across their universities to evidence benefits and change academic culture, structures, and processes to reduce obstacles for those wanting to engage in curriculum co-creation.



Chapter 9: Discussion

Introduction

With over 223,000 words of qualitative data gathered, my thematic analysis presented above shares key themes that emerged in relation to the areas highlighted in my research questions. Although there are a wide variety of fascinating themes to discuss further, in this chapter I focus on developing the following areas: 1) I describe how co-creation of the curriculum promotes high levels of both staff and undergraduate student engagement and 2) how it develops new ways of working in learning and teaching. 3) I go on to discuss the development of student and staff identities in a space between traditional learner and teacher roles and 4) the impact of their innovative work and development of self-authorship on civic engagement within and beyond the university. 5) I also analyse conceptualisations of curriculum co-creation and offer a new definition that highlights the importance of shared values and creativity that underpin collaborative work in curriculum co-creation. 6) I then explore how curriculum co-creation can advance participants' aims for students in higher education. I conclude the discussion by briefly revisiting my original research questions.

This chapter is heavily informed not only by my analysis of the data in relation to a wide range of relevant literature but also by how I have been thinking about my work when sharing it with different audiences. This has, of course, included feedback and vibrant discussions with my research supervisors. Furthermore, I developed new ways of describing and, in particular, visualising my work when preparing for 16 presentations between 2016 and 2019 at university-based events as well as national and international conferences. My thinking evolved greatly through discussions with participants and invaluable feedback from co-authors, peer reviewers, and journal editors with respect to my 9 related publications. For instance, calls for papers in special sections and issues of journals inspired me to apply different theoretical concepts to notions of curriculum co-creation. In my publications focusing on the Third Space (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019b) and creativity (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019a), I have explored how these concepts provide new lenses for analysing co-creation of the curriculum. In this chapter, I extend my analysis of curriculum co-creation by drawing on the concepts of the Third Space and creativity, particularly in sections 2, 3, and 4 of the discussion.

High Student and Staff Engagement

Although the broad nature of student engagement is often reported in the literature (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Kuh et al., 2005; Trowler, 2010), the picture is even more complex when analysing how co-creation of the curriculum is positioned as a form of student engagement (Flint & Millard, 2018; Matthews et al., 2017; Moore-Cherry, 2019). Chapter 5 describes findings relating to the themes emphasising what staff do to engage students and what students do when they are engaging with learning, which supports the positions taken by Coates (2006), Kuh (2008), and Bryson (2014a) asserting the different responsibilities of both staff and students to facilitate student engagement. This position of staff and students' shared responsibility for student engagement contrasts with some literature that, despite trying to situate students' experiences at the forefront of discussions, focuses on students' responsibilities to engage (Astin, 1984b; Shernoff, 2013).

Themes I identified for how students engage effectively include: behavioural engagement through attendance and participation; cognitive engagement through active learning, peer learning, and engaging with the academic discipline; and emotional engagement through demonstrating confidence and initiative. This resonates with the work of Fredricks et al. (2004) on behavioural, cognitive, and emotional engagement. The key themes for staff practices that promote student engagement presented here are: valuing students and having high expectations of them; creating inclusive learning environments that facilitate engagement; offering opportunities to which students respond; and listening to and responding to students' feedback. These practices emphasise emotional and behavioural engagement in particular.

Taking together Bryson's (2014a) themes of engaging students and students engaging, these conceptualisations reinforce many of Chickering and Gamson's 'Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education' (1987). These principles include student/staff interaction, peer learning, active learning, and high expectations of students. However, the three remaining principles had a different emphasis by participants in my study describing effective student engagement. Staff giving students prompt feedback on assessments was not described, but perhaps this was an assumption by participants since they seemed to take things further by emphasising staff listening to and responding to students' feedback to enhance

learning and teaching. Students' time on task was also not described explicitly beyond attendance and participation, since the quality of student and staff engagement is often more important than the quantity of time engaging with learning. Chickering and Gamson's seventh principle 'Respects students' diverse talents and ways of learning' (1987, p. 3) is not clearly apparent in participants' conceptualisations of student engagement beyond staff creating inclusive learning environments that facilitate all students' engagement. However, aspects of care and respect underpin student engagement.

All seven principles appear to be intertwined within co-creation of the curriculum, which takes many of the principles to new levels compared to their enactment through other forms of student engagement. For example, co-creation projects do not just facilitate contact and interaction between students and staff but develop their strong working relationships as partners in not only learning but also in decision-making affecting teaching. The cooperation among students in learning is also taken to higher levels of reciprocity between not only students but also students and staff as they learn actively from and give feedback to each other while respecting their different expertise. Bovill (2013b) has previously pointed out weaker links between curriculum co-creation and Chickering and Gamson's principles of prompt feedback and time on task. However, participants in my study emphasise various aspects of reciprocal, informal, and formative feedback throughout the process of co-creating and also how this can increase time on task for students as well as staff. It is also significant that 'There is no guarantee that any particular co-created curricular initiative will meet all of Chickering and Gamson's seven principles of good practice, but the fundamental aims of students and staff co-creating curricula are certainly broadly consistent with these principles of good practice' (Bovill, 2013b, p. 472). This is also the case in examples I have studied.

Although in this study we see an ideal of students and staff sharing responsibility for student engagement, their responsibilities are seen as distinct in traditional teaching as compared to the joint values in co-creation of the curriculum that foster sharing responsibilities. As such, the distinct responsibilities of staff and students in traditional teaching are not always upheld in practice, as seen in the undertones of how examples of ineffective student engagement contrast sharply with collaborative practices in co-creating the curriculum. Fairly frequently, student participants mention

pedagogies that they do not feel are engaging, and they often suggest that teaching methods focusing on lecturing impact negatively on the opportunities for students to become engaged. Furthermore, staff describe the challenge of 'processing students' (Staff A2) through labs or needing to teach large numbers of students efficiently through lecturing without the workload allocation or other time to explore implementing more engaging teaching methods. These statements resonate with the challenges of the massification of higher education (Jenkins & Healey, 2007; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991), particularly since Bryson and Hand (2007) suggest that large class sizes can affect the pedagogies teachers use which, in turn, can affect teachers' enthusiasm for teaching and students' engagement with learning.

In addition, there is the challenge of staff who assume that students will automatically choose to take up the opportunities that staff offer for engagement. These assumptions can be seen in critiques of neoliberal views of student engagement, such as those who use engagement as marketing, compliance with performance indicators, or student surveillance (Macfarlane & Tomlinson, 2017). Another critique of student engagement presents the view that educational entertainment may not always engage students cognitively with the academic subject area (Ashwin et al., 2014; Macfarlane & Tomlinson, 2017). Students' roles in these forms of student engagement may be as passive recipients of learning opportunities that staff offer to engage students inauthentically and superficially, hoping they will choose to take up the opportunities presented. In my study, I show how staff and students should, in principle, equitably and genuinely share responsibility for different aspects of student engagement with learning. Therefore, my research supports the work of others who challenge notions of students as consumers and, instead, advocate for more meaningful positioning of students as partners who work with staff on collaborative endeavours with shared aims (Marie, 2018; Matthews et al., 2017; Moore-Cherry, 2019; Neary, 2014).

The perspective of student choice in engagement is interesting since it reflects students' agency, although this can also be challenging for staff when students actively choose not to engage. Often, staff like to think that students' choices to engage reflect the notion that engaging is a 'good thing', since staff have drawn on their expertise to set the 'rules' of engagement (Staff A1) and hope that students 'buy in' (Staff D9) and 'play the part' (Student B6) by following these expectations. The

metaphors that are associated with the term *engagement* are also fascinating in this respect, including the sense of being occupied or, in a more confrontational manner, challenged in debating topics that are important to individuals; however, engagement can also represent interest and commitment, such as a promise or appointment. When staff expect students to engage, do they promise improved learning outcomes or do they appoint students into roles as active learners?

If students choose to engage with learning, staff often hope to see them occupied behaviourally and cognitively by actively working individually and with peers to learn the subject discipline. However, students often do not take up the challenge of emotional engagement with learning when they do not feel respected and valued by staff. By contrast, co-creation of the curriculum emphasises first developing shared values that foster students' emotional and cognitive engagement, which in turn leads to greater behavioural engagement in a collaborative learning community. I found that co-creation of the curriculum minimises instances of students' non-participation and apathy that can be characterised as 'neutral' engagement (Fredricks et al., 2004) or 'inertia' (Krause, 2005). In instances of negative engagement where students do not agree with staff, discussion based on shared values and strong working relationships helps resolve issues as they may arise. It is striking that staff co-creators focus on developing relationships that tend to foster students' positive engagement, but they also create inclusive environments for conducting challenging conversations about why students may not want to engage while negotiating solutions.

In addition to cognitive and behavioural engagement, students' emotional engagement is particularly powerful since it is a key aspect of co-creation of the curriculum that stems from and is further enhanced through developing shared values and strong working relationships within learning communities. For example, staff work to invite students to 'know there wasn't an "us and them" divide' (Student B4) and 'feel part of the bigger picture' of the academic department (Student B9). Feeling part of a shared community of learning helps students to see beyond notions of 'functional' or instrumental learning (Staff A12), which supports students to become intrinsically motivated beyond their individual academic achievement to also contribute to work that has significance for their learning community or wider communities. In addition, this can have a positive impact on inspiring not only individual development but also peer learning and reciprocal student/staff working relationships promoting learning.

This finding corroborates literature suggesting that relationships based on a shared passion for the subject and excitement for learning and teaching can help students move away from instrumental learning (Bryson & Hand, 2007; Cheng, 2011) and, I argue, also help staff move away from instrumental notions of teaching.

New Ways of Working in Learning and Teaching

Just as curriculum co-creation advances various aspects of personal and professional development for both students and staff, the Third Space can facilitate what others have referred to as a *zone of proximal development* (Vygotsky, 1978). It is particularly relevant here that Gutierrez (2008, pp. 148-149) used this term to highlight the intentionality of creating a particular social environment for pedagogy that fosters development, equity, and social justice by drawing out individuals' sense of shared humanity whilst celebrating difference through meaningful exchanges within a learning community. The intentional nature of collaborative, interactive, respectful, and reciprocal processes in co-creating the curriculum similarly represents a Third Space: it promotes equity while challenging the status quo of traditional structures, processes, and ways of working in higher education. Shared responsibility and resulting forms of reciprocity – which occur throughout co-created learning environments fostering development, equity, and social justice – are seen frequently in the examples in my study from Staff A2, A3, A4, A7, A8, A9, A11, A12, A13, D1 and Students B1, B4, B6, B7, B9, B11 in particular. This finding connects closely to a variety of research highlighting that student/staff partnerships can advance a more socially just, inclusive, and democratic pedagogy (Bovill et al., 2009; Bron et al., 2016; Dickerson et al., 2016; Healey et al., 2014; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). In this section, I focus on how student and staff co-creators create new spaces in higher education – based on their development of shared values and strong working relationships – that can help them feel comfortable challenging themselves and others whilst developing personally and professionally.

Students and staff in my study emphasise four underpinning values of co-creation of the curriculum: joint ownership and responsibility; empathy; reciprocity in learning from each other's different (although not necessarily the same) expertise and perspectives; and respect. This connects closely with the work of Cook-Sather et al. (2014) who emphasise the key values of respect, reciprocity, and shared responsibility in learning and teaching partnerships. Similarly, participants in my

research focus particularly on the need for staff to respect students' contributions and help them feel valued within the learning community when they share responsibility and demonstrate reciprocity although staff often lead in presenting co-creation opportunities to students. Unlike other research included in my rapid literature review on curriculum co-creation, my work draws on theories of creativity and play (Brown, 2010; Chappell & Craft, 2011) and highlights empathy as a separate concept that underpins co-creation as a new way of working in learning and teaching that extends notions of reciprocity. For example, empathy is similar to the concepts of respect and reciprocity, but it is a distinct dimension that bridges traditional academic hierarchies between students and staff and can humanise the higher education experience. For example, co-creators' increased empathy for each other contributed to 'bridging the gap between staff and students, bringing the communities closer together... to think about it [learning and teaching] from a slightly different perspective' (Staff A10). Student co-creators came to 'understand the human side of academic staff' (Student B3) and not see them as 'gods' (Student B4) while staff co-creators came to see 'students in a new light in terms of being hugely responsible and reflective' (Staff A9).

Developing a sense of shared values is both a foundational prerequisite for the success of co-creation projects as well as an outcome that can be strengthened through the experience of working together and developing stronger working relationships between students and staff. Similarly, Bovill (2019, p. 1) states that co-creation in learning and teaching 'both relies upon, and contributes towards, building positive relationships between staff and students, and between students and students'. By contrast, both students and staff use phrases such as 'cold environment' (Student B10) and 'conservative environment' (Staff A5) that reflect their negative experiences with some traditional academic cultures and teaching processes. Traditional teaching in higher education can be characterised by entrenched hierarchies (Brew, 2007; Levy et al., 2011) that may include a 'sage on the stage' (Staff A11) lecturing to students and presenting him/herself as an expert who knows all the answers. Student co-creators reflect on the negative and often alienating impact of lecture-based and exam-based higher-education pedagogy. However, staff co-creators' pedagogies offer a stark contrast when they challenge traditional hierarchies by working in partnership with students and promoting equality in the classroom by involving students in democratic decision-making, which supports

findings in other literature (Bron et al., 2016; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Deeley & Bovill, 2017).

Student and staff participants reflect on the absence of care and respect in some traditional forms of teaching, and they note their positive effects within collaborative co-creation projects that can serve to foster social justice. I published these findings (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2016, 2018) that connect closely with early work by Noddings (2005) highlighting the importance of care, mutual respect, and responsiveness in the classroom as well as subsequent work emphasising care in co-creation and partnership work (Bovill, 2019; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018). Co-creators also acknowledge the emotions that accompany partnership work that is relationship-based and 'fun' (Staff A5 and A7, Students B1 and B5), and students describe feeling 'lucky' (B10), 'grateful' (B7), and 'proud' (B11) to be a part of co-created learning environments. Similarly, Felten (2017, p. 3) points out how emotions help us understand the experiences, interactions, and outcomes of individuals who work in partnership. An emerging area of discussion in the literature is focusing on the role of emotions in co-creation and student/staff partnerships (Hill et al., 2019; Marquis et al., 2018; Martin, 2018) and in wider higher education to recognise authenticity and support individuals through instances of productive struggle (Gilmore & Anderson, 2016; Lennon et al., 2018; Ramezanzadeh, Adel, & Zareian, 2016). Care, support, respect, and recognition of emotions are important aspects of engagement within robust learning communities that can help both students and staff feel supported as they explore new learning and teaching practices.

Co-creation of the curriculum fosters new ways of working that focus not just on the outcome of academic success but also on the rich processes of learning and teaching. Curriculum co-creation is viewed by staff and student participants as a creative, iterative, and collaborative pedagogic approach to teaching and learning methods, strategies, and decision-making that fosters students' agency through the process of creating and negotiating. Co-creation practitioners emphasise shared ownership and responsibility within a process-focused, student-centred view of the curriculum that makes space for creativity, innovation, and continual development to enhance student engagement. With respect to the four categories of staff conceptualisations of the higher education curriculum identified by Fraser and Bosanquet (2006, p. 277) and introduced in Chapter 2, co-creators' conceptualisations of the curriculum resonate with the latter two: they demonstrate views of the curriculum focusing on students'

practical learning experiences and/or staff and students' collaborative, dynamic, and emancipatory experiences of teaching and learning. The emphasis on process-based partnership work is also seen in the literature (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Matthews, 2016; Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018; Moore-Cherry, 2019) especially when referred to as a process syllabus (Simmons & Wheeler, 1995), a negotiated syllabus (Breen & Littlejohn, 2000b), or the active process of 'curriculuming' (Boomer, 1992) which can be applied in curriculum negotiation and student/staff partnerships in learning and teaching (Bron et al., 2016).

I have found that creativity is central to the process of partnership work, and I have been one of the first authors to describe the role of creativity in curriculum co-creation (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019a). Participants' rich accounts show how co-creation of the curriculum is both a process of creating, as well as a method that fosters the development of creative products. With respect to the latter, participants provide examples of collaboratively developed ideas, knowledge, and educational resources that foster academic achievement. These creative products can also benefit future cohorts of students by being relevant to students' needs and interests, and by serving as launch pads for further co-created work. This contrasts sharply with the generally private nature of essays and exams that are often not seen by others besides the student and their marker, so the potential for these assessments to have wider, positive impact is not fully embraced. However, the creative, educational products from co-created curricula are often shared widely by different communities and used actively to support wider learning – a theme that we will return to in the section below on civic impact.

Staff and students suggest that co-creation of the curriculum also facilitates inclusion through the creative process of collaborative innovation while learning from and benefiting a wide range of learners. It is particularly striking that 'average' students may benefit more from the transformative potential of co-creation of the curriculum by negotiating and enhancing curricula to incorporate their interests and motivate them to see how their academic work can positively affect others. In their respective work in arts-based and games-based learning, Eisner (2004) and Gee (2003) suggest that creativity can reframe and enhance current educational practices to engage students who learn in different ways. Chappell and Craft (2011) also emphasise that an important aspect of creativity is negotiating where cultures and values can come

together in new ways as individuals learn about differences and draw new connections. This is particularly the case in curriculum co-creation when staff learn from increasingly diverse and international student cohorts. Chappell and Craft (2011, p. 365) state that 'Empathy is key to the creative process as an emotional journey with highs and lows, which is not always about "fun"'. Important aspects of creativity can include learning about differences, discussing and drawing connections, and negotiating where cultures and values can come together in new ways (Chappell & Craft, 2011) which can in turn promote social justice in the curriculum (Case, 2016; McArthur, 2013; McLean, 2006). By respecting students and inviting them into curriculum development practices, co-creation of the curriculum is a creative process that – despite challenges – promotes inclusion of diverse perspectives while refuting the idea that students cannot be seen as experts or colleagues. This connects closely with the work of others focusing on inclusive partnerships and whole-class co-creation at course-level (Bovill, 2019; Moore-Cherry et al., 2016) and inclusive, institution-wide initiatives (Flint & Millard, 2018; Marie & Azuma, 2018). I have contributed to this body of literature by focusing on how creative and inclusive co-created learning communities can advance democratic engagement and social justice (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2016, 2018, 2019a, 2019b).

Furthermore, I have conceptualised the new ways of working in co-created learning and teaching as a Third Space, focusing on the process of learning by developing professional relationships in new spaces that are more democratic, inclusive, and reciprocal. Bhabha highlights the uncertainty resulting from changing, cultural power dynamics and suggests that the development of hybridity within the Third Space 'breaks down the symmetry and duality of self/other, inside/outside' (2004, p. 165). My research also shows how co-creation of the curriculum promotes new ways of working that promote empathy, trust, and respect in collegial relationships that support innovation through dialogue and collaboration. The creative process of involving students in aspects of curriculum design facilitates empathy as well as inclusion by allowing students to see into the 'black box of teaching' (Student B3) by making mysterious curriculum development processes more transparent. This helps students gain metacognition skills by learning about the complexities of decision-making involved in designing effective teaching and learning experiences, which is also discussed by Bovill et al. (2016), Dickerson et al. (2016), and Moore-Cherry (2019). Furthermore, curriculum co-creation importantly helps staff to learn about

students' needs and interests to enhance the curriculum by gaining new insights and ideas, although the literature tends to focus on the benefits for students rather than those benefits for staff participating in co-creation or partnership work (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017).

Although a wide array of challenges and risks are present in curriculum co-creation as examined in Chapter 8, it is notable how staff co-creators in particular work to overcome these obstacles by pursuing new ways of working that are authentic to their teaching aims. Sharing responsibility can be a 'complicated' (Staff A8) and 'difficult' (Staff A7, Student B8) experience that may be new and appear risky for both students and staff, as was discussed in Chapter 8. Co-creation can not only pose the aforementioned challenges and risks but, similarly to the Third Space of hybridity of cultures, also destabilise academic hierarchies (Bryson & Furlonger, 2018; Hancock & Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018; Marquis, 2018; Woolmer, 2018). As such, curriculum co-creation can challenge the status quo in academic culture (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2017), which is a finding that resonates with wider literature describing how co-creation and partnership work may both facilitate and also necessitate culture change in academia (Bovill, 2019; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Matthews, Cook-Sather, et al., 2018; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2018). However, these challenges are often mitigated by the benefits that come from strong working relationships, recognition of different forms of expertise, and the focus not just on educational products and outcomes but also on the process of the partnership journey. By sharing ownership and respecting others' views, co-creation of the curriculum promotes social justice by modelling empathy and democratic engagement in the classroom. Figure 7 summarises my analysis of findings in this section showing how co-creation of the curriculum promotes new ways of working in higher education in a Third Space that is distinct from traditional structures and processes.

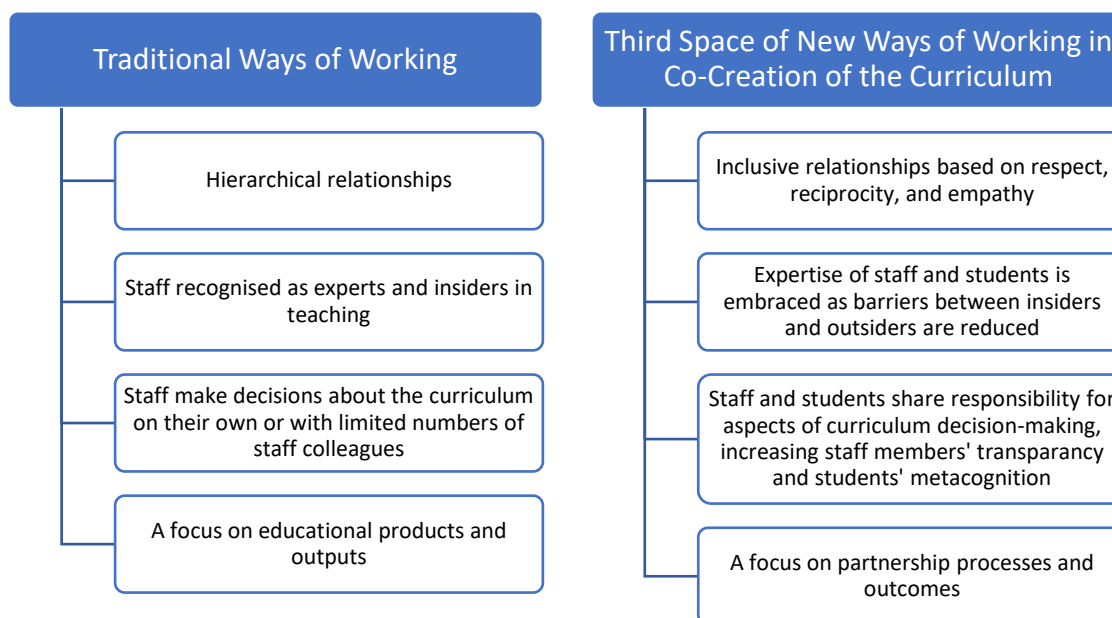


Figure 7: A Third Space of New Ways of Working in Co-Creation of the Curriculum

Student and Staff Identities ‘In-Between’ Traditional Learner and Teacher Roles

Staff and student participants reflect on the confidence and skills they develop to share power and negotiate effectively when co-creating the curriculum. As such, co-creation of the curriculum can be a strong capstone learning experience for students at the end of their degree programme where they consolidate and apply subject-specific knowledge and skills. It can also be a rewarding teaching experience for staff who are established and confident in their role to navigate challenges in academic structures and processes. However, other participants see how co-creation can be adapted to provide valuable opportunities from which both students and staff can benefit at any stage of their student journey or career, recognising the vast array of areas in which they develop both personally and professionally. This corroborates the finding from Moore-Cherry et al. (2016) that it is important to engage students in partnership work, such as co-creation, early in the student journey to be as inclusive as possible. In addition, it is significant that various individuals suggest that co-creation of the curriculum may benefit average students more than high-achieving students, particularly noting that the latter may be more risk-averse to trying non-traditional learning and teaching methods. Therefore, high-achieving students may be more likely to engage in extracurricular co-creation projects and less likely to engage in credit-bearing, co-created courses. As such, it can be important to scaffold learning

– on the part of both staff and students – to share responsibility for aspects of teaching along the spectrum of possibilities for curriculum co-creation.

An interesting theme that emerged from the data is the impact of co-creation of the curriculum on both student and staff development and identities. As discussed in the previous section, the resulting effect of co-creation of the curriculum is that it can break down hierarchical barriers to balance reciprocal student/teacher relationships. Students' personal and professional development while co-creating the curriculum is striking in many cases and includes increases in their confidence; skills including communication, negotiation, leadership, and critical thinking; and academic achievement, expertise, professionalism, and employability. This is supported by the literature describing benefits of co-creation projects including enhanced student engagement, confidence, understanding of how theory relates to practice, and student/staff collaboration and trust (Bovill, Bulley, & Morss, 2011; Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Matthews et al., 2017; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017).

Many staff co-creators describe their high expectations for students, which student co-creators not only meet but often surpass. Staff co-creators focus on students' abilities and how they can 'draw from students what they're capable of' (Staff A7), rather than taking a deficit view of students' abilities as furthered by some academic cultures using a 'banking model' of education (Freire, 1972). Many co-creators seem to draw on a 'capabilities approach' that focuses on individuals' development with the aim of supporting them to live more meaningful lives underpinned by freedom and social justice (Sen, 1999; Walker, 2005). Furthermore, staff and student co-creators describe wanting to change academic cultures that focus on 'vulnerablising students or patronising students' (Staff A11) to help others overcome prejudices about students' abilities and/or willingness to engage actively in learning and teaching. This resonates with the work of Bovill (2014) who also describes how deficit views of students can lower staff expectations for student engagement, whereas students co-creators often exceed staff expectations. In the examples of curriculum co-creation in my study, students' development of graduate attributes and wider capabilities was more profound during co-creation than in other areas of student engagement. Those experiencing co-creation found that these experiences could be transformational for students who felt respected, valued, and more confident to contribute not only in the classroom but also in wider society. A wide range of other researchers have also

noted the transformative capacity of co-creation, student/staff partnerships, and other high-impact educational practices that recognise students' talents and empower them to meet new academic challenges (Dickerson et al., 2016; Hill et al., 2016; Kuh, 2008; Moore-Cherry, 2019).

It is clear from the results presented in Chapter 7 that co-creation of the curriculum contributes not only to various aspects of students' development but also staff development. I found that staff benefit by increasing respect for students; trying new practices to enhance their pedagogic approaches; learning from students to enhance teaching; and reflecting on their professional development. Staff co-creators speak about their development in terms of values, knowledge, and activities in teaching and learning that connect closely to the UK Professional Standards Framework (Advance HE, 2011). It is notable that staff co-creators highlight their enhanced engagement with teaching, respect for students, and motivation to work with students, as well as their improved understanding and enhancement of effective, student-centred teaching. These benefits for staff are similar to those emphasised by Cook-Sather et al. (2014) including improved engagement with teaching activities and greater meta-cognitive understanding of learning and teaching processes, which contribute to the enhancement of academic learning experiences. This finding of enhanced teaching quality resulting from co-creation and partnership work also resonates with the work of others (Bovill, 2019; Dickerson et al., 2016; Matthews, Cook-Sather, et al., 2018). Furthermore, as seen in the findings presented in Chapter 8, staff co-creators can face risks in terms of trying new learning and teaching practices; discussing students' expectations; and facing sometimes very personal risks with respect to challenging academic hierarchies, structures, and processes as well as having their co-creation work affect their colleagues. However, overcoming these challenges can have powerful, transformational effects on staff by increasing their enjoyment of teaching and their confidence when they are recognised for excellent teaching and student support.

I have found that co-creation of the curriculum can contribute to both students' and staff members' development of identities in a Third Space in between traditional student and staff roles. Bhabha (2004, p. 2) describes how the Third Space can represent "in-between" spaces [that] provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood – singular or communal – that initiate new signs of identity'. Furthermore, in critiquing traditional forms of separation between students and teachers in a 'banking

model' of education, Freire (1972) also calls for 'reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers *and* students' (p. 53) which has the effect that 'the teacher-of-the-students and the students-of-the-teacher cease to exist and a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers' (p. 61).

Others have noted how co-creation and partnership work can facilitate new roles and identities for students (Bergmark & Westman, 2016; Hill et al., 2016; Matthews, Cook-Sather, et al., 2018; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2018), but I extend this argument to show how not only students but also staff take on new roles and identities through their collaboration and negotiation (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019b). Both student and staff co-creators develop their identities into in-between roles that bridge traditional positions and responsibilities of learners and teachers when they actively share power and negotiate aspects of the curriculum. I argue that working in these new ways in higher education can facilitate student and staff personal and professional development to create blurred identities in Third Spaces in-between traditional learner and teacher roles, like those described by Bhabha (2004) and Freire (1972). We have seen how curriculum co-creation helps students to become 'more than just a student' (Student B8) by promoting not only student transformation but also transforming staff approaches to learning and teaching since co-creation brings about 'the whole being more than the sum of its parts... It gives life meaning to both the student and the lecturer' (Staff A7).

In particular, bridging the boundaries between traditional learner and teacher roles can help co-creators to face instances of productive struggle and overcome challenges together when negotiating shared solutions and having open dialogue about best practices in learning and teaching. Bovill et al. (2016), Marquis, Black, et al. (2017), and Marquis et al. (2018) have also discussed how students and staff take on new roles to collectively navigate complexity and overcome challenges in co-creation and partnership work. In addition, I suggest that empathy helps students and staff come together to understand different positions and face risks associated with co-creation of the curriculum when this pedagogy challenges the status quo in higher education. as the four foundational values of shared responsibility, empathy, reciprocity, and respect can support co-creation practitioners to embrace the risks that non-traditional, co-creative pedagogy can pose for students, staff, and their institutions. For example, participants describe how curriculum co-creation can take

students and staff to uncomfortable positions that may not be enjoyable at the time if they open themselves up to institutional bureaucracy and personal risks including unfamiliar experiences and constructive criticism. However, participants also show how taking on new roles can help them overcome these challenging experiences of productive struggle by developing skills to deal with complexity, which are also relevant to the world beyond academia. Figure 8 synthesises the claims I have made in this section, which reinforce the work of Freire, Bhabha, and others to show how the shared values and experiences of more equitable working relationships in curriculum co-creation can empower both students and staff to enter a Third Space of identities.

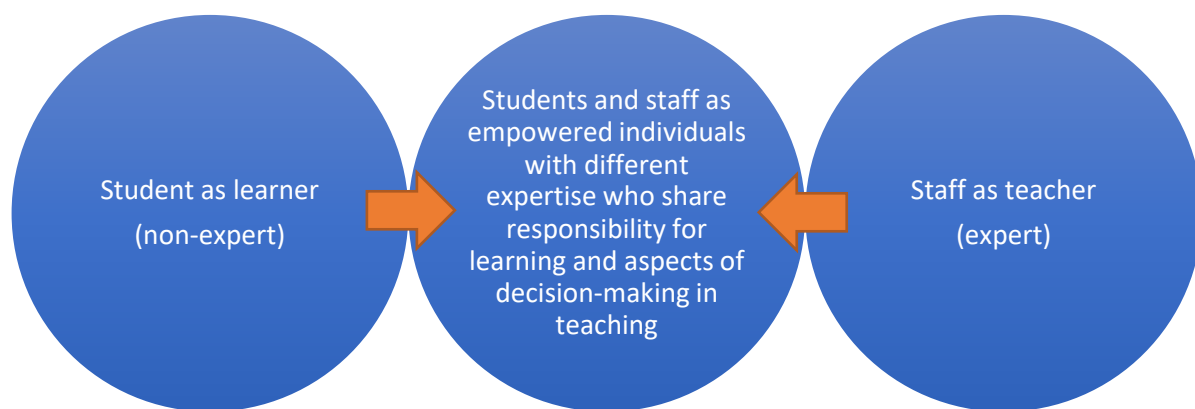


Figure 8: A Third Space of New Student and Staff Roles and Identities in Co-Creation of the Curriculum

Innovation, Self-Authorship, and Civic Impact Within and Beyond the University

In this section, I advance the understanding of how risk in innovative curriculum co-creation can contribute to the development of self-authorship, which helps individuals face complex challenges and develop stronger democratic societies. In this respect, I see strong similarities between co-creation of the curriculum and theoretical work underpinning a ‘pedagogy of play’ that values experiences for risk-taking and innovation when learners and teachers work together in supportive learning communities that do not punish mistakes and instead embrace authentic learning experiences, emotions, challenges, and successes (Dyer & Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019; James, 2019; Mardell et al., 2016). Play helps individuals to work in a supportive environment to develop and test skills that may be needed in different circumstances in the future (Brown, 2010). Co-creation allows these opportunities and also enacts many of the core aspects of play that (Blatner & Blatner, 1988) describe, such as

encouraging individuals to enjoy the process of play by taking on different roles and entering more equal spaces. Despite risk which is involved in pushing boundaries through play and some connotations of play as nonproductive, Blatner and Blatner (1988) suggest that the many benefits of play are A) personal-emotional in enhancing flexibility, self-expression, and mental health; B) social by increasing inclusion and effective communication; C) educational by developing the motivation and capacity to learn more effectively; and D) cultural by stimulating the creativity and innovation needed to meet the challenges of a changing world. I have analysed aspects of A, B, and C in other areas of the discussion above and focus on D in this section.

Co-creation of the curriculum helps individuals engage in innovation through what I call 'academic play' that connects to many of the aspects of play described above. Co-creators do this by challenging the status quo, improvising and negotiating curricula, and enjoying learning through collaborative and flexible processes that improve outcomes for both students and staff. Rather than feeling 'like the lecturers have done it a billion times already' (Student B8) as in some traditional forms of teaching, the co-creation experience helps students and staff feel that the learning and teaching experience is novel. Since it is relationship-based and tailored to the individuals involved, play develops empathy and helps individuals embrace freedom and self-expression as they reconnect to their common humanity (Blatner & Blatner, 1988; Brown, 2010) in similar ways that co-creating the curriculum helps humanise the higher education experience through developing strong learning communities based on shared values.

Brown (2010, p. 218) states that '...the most significant aspect of play is that it allows us to express our joy and connect most deeply with the best in ourselves, and in others'. In comparing co-creation of the curriculum to other curricula, many participants emphasise that the former is fun and rewarding since it helps them feel inspired and connected through professional relationships that are meaningful, authentic, and beneficial for their communities. Unlike passive views of student engagement as attendance or entertainment, curriculum co-creation is an active process that can mirror how 'playfulness is a creative process and a celebration of freedom and experience' (Blatner & Blatner, 1988, p. 162). By creatively facilitating a dialogue between students and staff to align their needs, interests, and aims, co-creation of the curriculum recognises how students' perspectives can enhance the

curriculum. Co-creation incorporates the learning needs, prior experiences, and academic interests of the diverse student body of the 21st century, which often helps students feel that their academic experience is relevant to the 'real world', which lends support to the positions of Dewey (1916/2004, 1934) and Kuh (2010) who emphasise the importance of tailoring learning and teaching the needs, interests, and aims of students.

Co-creation of the curriculum can facilitate authentic learning and teaching experiences since it enacts notions of authenticity in how it can support 'the formation of authentic being' (Barnett, 2004, p. 259) and 'give students access to valued practices for engaging the world more mindfully' (Sullivan & Rosin, 2008, p. 18). Students and staff suggest that this more authentic, collegial, and democratic relationship prepares students for the professional relationships needed to solve the world's most complex problems, which resonates with the literature on learning to live in an age characterised by 'supercomplexity', which is at the same time global, ontological, and personal (Barnett, 2004). Writing about supercomplexity, Barnett (2004, p. 253) highlights how the world is changing at a pace faster than ever before, and 'neither knowledge nor skills, even high-level knowledge and advanced technical skills, are sufficient to enable one to prosper in the contemporary world. Other forms of human being are required'. Furthermore, Kreber (2014, p. 96) suggests that academic challenge or "Strangeness" propels us to question assumptions, which opens up the opportunity for authenticity. The relationship between authenticity and "strangeness" is reciprocal'. Therefore, the process of dealing with challenges helps learning and teaching to become more authentic.

I argue that curriculum co-creation facilitates opportunities for innovation and authenticity through academic play, which helps students and staff develop the knowledge, skills, and capacity of authentic *being* to develop resilience and cope with an ever-changing, supercomplex world. For example, Blatner and Blatner (1988, p. 178) say 'The challenges of today require all of the creative resources humans can muster. ...Play offers an attitude of mind and methods for cultivating those resources by validating much-needed qualities of initiative, enthusiasm, improvisation, and inclusion.' It is through creative, playful, and collaborative processes of learning and teaching such as co-creation of the curriculum that students and staff can develop authentic *being*. Whilst dealing with risks and challenging existing processes and

power relations, both student and staff co-creators engage in authentic learning and teaching experiences that help them learn from uncertainty and even failure within supportive environments. In this way, curriculum co-creation is an approach 'giving students the opportunity to spread their wings while they've still got experienced teachers that they can call upon if they think they're going wrong. The safety net is there' (Staff A4). This helps prepare students for challenges within and beyond academia, and staff can similarly draw on 'lots of structures within the University which are there to mitigate that risk... as a safety net' (Staff A2). This connects closely with the work of Bovill et al. (2016, p. 194) who also suggest that challenges of curriculum co-creation – including resistance, institutional structures and norms, and inclusivity – can often be 're-envisioned as opportunities for more meaningful collaboration'. Co-creation of the curriculum helps students and staff develop skills to deal with complexity by drawing on safety nets where needed, which helps them learn to cope with complicated problems by working collaboratively and to generate creative, socially just, and sustainable solutions.

Barnett's philosophical conceptualisation of 'critical *being*' is similar to the concept of self-authorship in developmental psychology which was advanced by Baxter Magolda (1999), drawing on the work of Perry (1970). Baxter Magolda (1999) emphasises that self-authorship involves cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal development. Student and staff co-creators gain interpersonal aspects of self-authorship through working in partnership, respecting each other's contributions, and negotiating. They also share how they perceive aspects of cognitive metacognitive development relating to learning and teaching, including the abilities to analyse their perspectives critically, learn from each other to enhance curricula, and apply knowledge and theory to their lives and academic subject areas. Many participants describe how students develop attributes contributing to what Baxter-Magolda would describe as intrapersonal self-authorship: responsibility, initiative, confidence, and the ability to challenge authority in the classroom and the wider world.

Like Hill et al. (2016), I independently highlighted connections between how partnership and co-creation practices can develop students' sense of self-authorship (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2017). Following further analysis of my findings, I found that co-creation helps both students *and* staff to develop all three aspects of self-authorship (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2018, 2019b), which is corroborated by the work of Moore-Cherry

(2019). Although Baxter Magolda (1999) focuses on self-authorship within adolescents and young adults including university students, Barnett's notion of supercomplexity emphasises the need for individuals' lifelong learning and the continual honing of abilities in order to cope with an ever-changing world and an unknown future (2004). In this sense, I have found that co-creating the curriculum also helps staff in continuing to advance their development across all three aspects of interpersonal, cognitive, and intrapersonal self-authorship. For instance, staff develop their senses of A) interpersonal self-authorship within vibrant learning communities as they gain increased respect for and work in collaboratively by sharing decision-making power with students and B) cognitive self-authorship by learning from students to develop their professional practices and enhance their teaching. At the same time, some staff have continued to develop a sense of C) intrapersonal self-authorship by developing confidence to teach in new ways, challenging traditional academic structures and cultures, reflecting on their professional development, and evolving their identities as both teachers and learners in the role of a 'teacher-student' (Freire, 1972, p. 61). In these ways, staff as well as students (as described above) appear to develop authentic *being* and self-authorship through co-creating the curriculum.

In addition, Moore-Cherry (2019) has described how student and staff partners' interpersonal self-authorship can advance their contributions to wider civil society, which I have previously described as the positive civic impact of many co-creators both within and beyond academia (Lubicz-Nawrocka, 2019b). Curriculum co-creation examples from participants that benefitted wider university communities included educational resources for future student cohorts to clarify difficult concepts, Honours students co-creating a new introductory course for pre-Honours students, and student consultants who helped improve curricula in different disciplines from their own. Other examples from participants having a positive impact on wider communities include student/staff co-inquiry in educational research to benefit staff and students in other universities and various instances of co-created projects that were aimed at benefiting local communities including primary students, secondary students, or other community members through outreach projects.

The notion of universities' 'third mission' is relevant here since it goes beyond the primary two missions of teaching and research to highlight the important mission of

social responsibility through civic engagement (Pineiro et al., 2015b; Predazzi, 2012; Rinaldi et al., 2018). This concept has strong connections with the aforementioned literature relating to authenticity in education in making the academic experience relevant to the 'real world' (Dewey, 1916/2004, 1934; Kuh, 2010; Lempert, 1996) and literature on play providing a supportive environment for developing and testing skills that might be needed in the future (Blatner & Blatner, 1988; Brown, 2010).

I argue that co-creation of the curriculum not only develops individuals' self-authorship but also facilitates universities' third mission since it facilitates opportunities to work on projects that benefit their wider communities. Curriculum co-creation welcomes staff and students' 'porous expertise' (Potter & McDougall, 2017, p. 85) from their lived experience into the classroom by recognising their skills and abilities that they can contribute to curriculum development. Students' empowerment in a role between student and staff responsibilities can support their contributions as leaders who engage democratically to have civic impact beyond the 'ivory towers' (Lempert, 1996) of higher education institutions. During co-creation, students recognise how 'their work goes beyond themselves' (Staff A3) when they realise they have something to offer to help solve local and/or global challenges. Rather than keeping students' academic work private between students and markers, their co-created projects are instead shared to have a positive impact on others. Therefore, students and staff can bring together their different perspectives and expertise while working towards solving challenges facing their communities.

Curriculum co-creation helps to model active citizenship to students and staff who engage democratically in the classroom, which can help them become more active contributors within their wider communities. This resonates with literature showing how curriculum negotiation and co-creation can foster critical and democratic engagement (Boomer, 1992; Bovill, 2019; Bron et al., 2016; Dickerson et al., 2016; Fraser & Bosanquet, 2006; Scandrett, Crowther, Hemmi et al., 2010). Therefore, I suggest that co-creation of the curriculum can facilitate three different types of Third Space which have a positive impact on A) individuals' identities through their development, B) higher education institutions through offering new ways of working, and C) communities beyond the university through contributions to their third mission (see Figure 9).

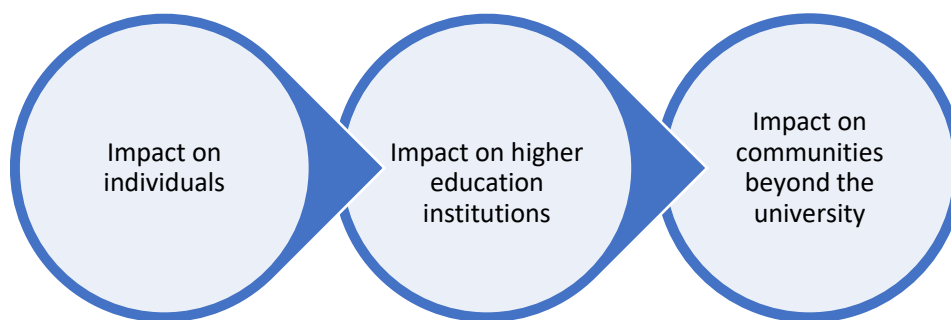


Figure 9: Three Types of Third Space in the Impact of Co-Creation of the Curriculum

New Conceptualisations of Curriculum Co-Creation

It is clear from the results above that the attitudes and behaviours of staff have a strong influence on students' levels of engagement, especially since staff often take the lead in offering students opportunities to co-create curricula. Indeed, findings from my study are congruous with the statement from Bryson and Hand (2007, p. 359) that 'At the levels of class or task, the disposition of the teacher appears to make an enormous difference to the disposition of the student. Enthusiasm by the teacher for subject and process gives rise to more engagement.' My research shows that this is especially important in curriculum co-creation where staff often need to take the lead in offering this opportunity for students to engage. This is in line with previous findings from Bovill (2013b, p. 472) that 'Staff attitudes are particularly powerful as it is only where they consider co-creation to be a possible and legitimate way of working that students will have the opportunity to be involved'. Throughout Chapter 6 on participants' conceptualisations of co-creation of the curriculum, we have seen the effort that teachers exert to create vibrant and inclusive learning communities as well as opportunities with which students want to engage. Even against a backdrop of a highly marketised and mass higher education system, an important finding in my research is that all students participating in co-creation of a course emphasise that it was the best course across their entire university degree. This was clear from students' narratives about their enjoyment of learning and the rewarding nature of these courses, as well as the many ways students developed personally and professionally through co-creating curricula.

Similarly, others have emphasised how teachers' care, commitment to engaging and supporting students, and open invitations to students to participate actively have a strong influence on students' choices and motivations to engage with learning (Bovill, 2019; Bryson & Hand, 2007; Fung, 2017; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Noddings, 2005). Therefore, effective student engagement occurs when 'The engagement process is really student and teacher engagement' (Staff D9), since students and staff share responsibility for engagement in co-creation of the curriculum. This relational dimension of staff in engaging students is extremely important across co-creation-of-the-curriculum initiatives and is also prevalent in the literature with respect to wider partnership and student engagement activities (Bovill, 2013b; Bryson & Hand, 2007; Flint & Millard, 2018; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; Marie, 2018; Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018).

In analysing how co-creating the curriculum is a distinct form of student engagement, it is helpful to reflect on how different teaching methods facilitate differing levels and types of student engagement, which can achieve different aims. Although students and staff may share different responsibilities for students' *learning* in student engagement, co-creation of the curriculum offers the opportunity for students and staff to share responsibility for aspects of not only learning but also aspects of *teaching*. Furthermore, as we have seen, co-creation initiatives vary widely in their nature and in how students and staff participate, with different levels of shared ownership over different aspects of curricula. This connects closely with the view of a spectrum of engagement (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Bryson & Hand, 2007). In particular, the 'ladder of student participation in curriculum design' (Bovill & Bulley, 2011, p. 180) described in Chapter 2 shows a range from no student engagement within a dictated, staff-controlled curriculum to significant levels of student engagement with student control of the curriculum. Co-creation of the curriculum is often conceptualised towards the top of the ladder, such as in the rungs of 'student control of some areas of choice' and especially 'partnership – a negotiated curriculum' since they involve significant student and staff engagement while sharing control over areas of the curriculum. This aspect of negotiation is important because it enables staff still to take ownership over quality assurance and other aspects of the curriculum and also create windows of opportunity for students to share responsibility over teaching decisions that affect how or what they are learning.

Throughout learning about co-creation of the curriculum, I have been interested in the key questions and choices that co-creators reflect on when starting their collaborative work. Like Bovill and Bulley (2011) and Bryson (2014a), I see a spectrum of engagement; however, I argue that it also entails a spectrum of risk. In Figure 10, I have shown some of the key variables in co-creation of the curriculum: who is the lead decision-maker; what aspects of curriculum control are shared; which staff and students participate; and how student co-creators are compensated or seen to gain from the experience. In particular, I have highlighted frequently-occurring variables, noting how many curriculum co-creation initiatives are staff-led regarding limited aspects of a course. For those initiatives involving a limited number of past students from previous cohorts, the students are often rewarded altruistically with professional development opportunities or, in cases of whole-cohort engagement as a course takes place, with course credit. Although I have aimed throughout my thesis to develop a greater understanding of trends across curriculum co-creation projects, it is also necessary to note the wide variety of variables leading to different levels of risk and engagement for both staff and students.

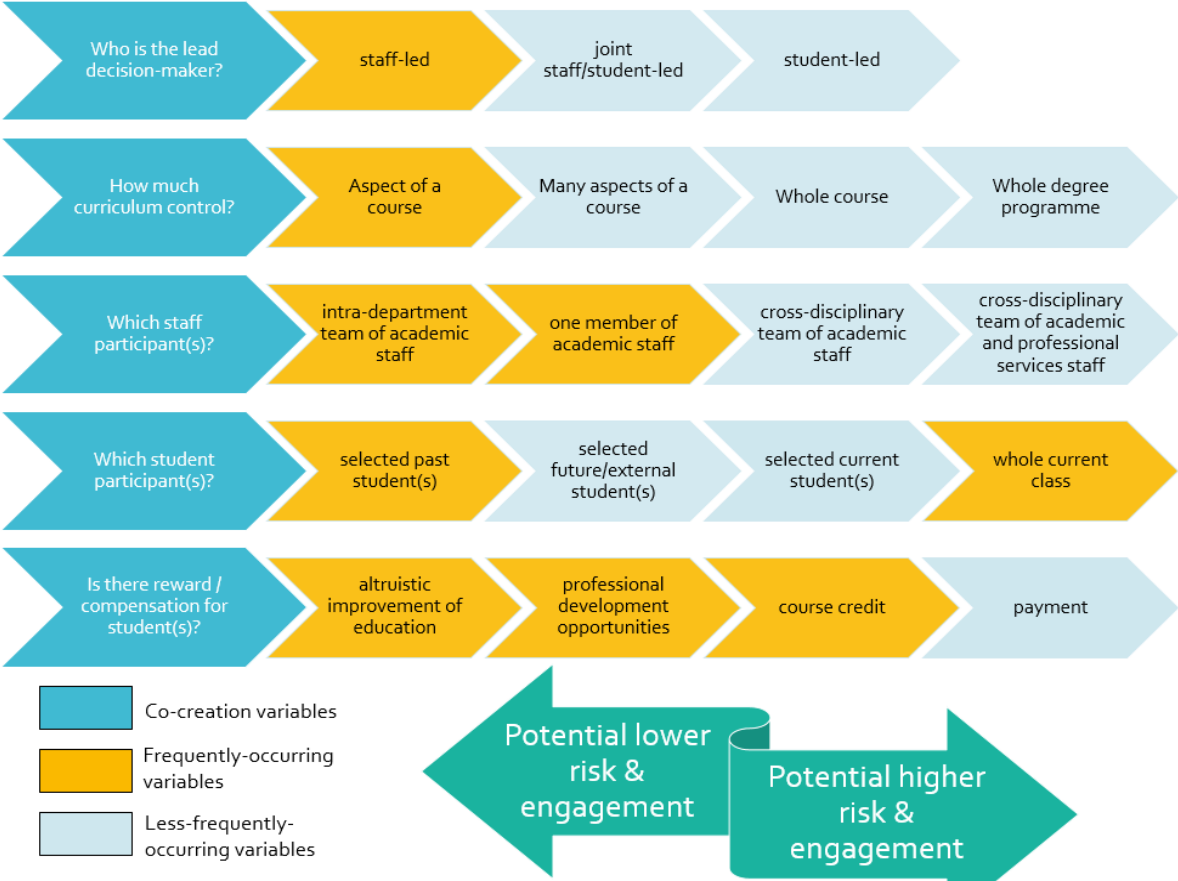


Figure 10: Key Variables in Curriculum Co-Creation

It is important to use definitions of co-creation of the curriculum that are broad enough to be inclusive of a wide range of initiatives, yet at the same time specific enough to be clear about the distinctions between student engagement, student/staff partnerships, and curriculum co-creation. Many of the definitions of co-creation of the curriculum that I presented in Chapter 1 are broad definitions of students and staff working in partnership to collaboratively develop or make decisions about aspects of the curriculum (Bovill et al., 2016; Bovill, Cook-Sather, et al., 2011; Ryan & Tilbury, 2013). As seen in these definitions of co-creation, many include the notion of partnership. For example, the widely-cited definition by Bovill et al. (2016, p. 196) – ‘Co-creation of learning and teaching occurs when staff and students work collaboratively with one another to create components of curricula and/or pedagogical approaches’ – does not focus on shared values, creativity, and negotiation in addition to collaboration. However, student representatives collaboratively discussing with staff how teaching activities were implemented and offering feedback on the learning experience could be examples of partnership, but this may depend on different views of what partnership entails.

It is challenging to create a definition that incorporates a wide range of curriculum co-creation practices, initiatives, and projects led across many different academic subject areas. Equally, it is important that the definition does not lose sight of the political nature of democratically-negotiated curricula that can challenge the status quo of academic cultures, structures, and processes and transform individuals. As co-creation of the curriculum has grown in rhetoric and practice, I agree with others such as Peters and Mathias (2018, p. 53) that ‘there is a risk that, as the idea spreads, the radical nature of partnership working can be diluted and domesticated by established power structures’. Therefore, I now offer a new definition of curriculum co-creation that extends beyond broad notions of student/staff collaborations in curriculum development. I define the term as: *the values-based implementation of an ongoing, creative, and mutually-beneficial process of staff and students working together to share and negotiate decision-making about aspects of higher education curricula*. I aim to highlight the shared values and strong professional relationships underpinning co-creation and how curriculum negotiation is a creative, reciprocal process that can benefit staff just as much as it benefits students. This definition stems from the contributions from a wide range of student and staff participants, and it can be recognised in each of the 15 examples of curriculum co-creation included in my study.

As described throughout this chapter, my discussion of each of the concepts included in my new definition demonstrates theoretical hybridity by showing how my findings relate to a wide range of established concepts and theories relating to curriculum co-creation, student/staff partnerships, and student engagement.

In addition, I hope that my new definition will provide clarity to help others to explore how findings from my particular research context may be applicable in and transferrable to other contexts so that they may reap the benefits that curriculum co-creation can offer. Co-creation can also advance a 'curriculum for supercomplexity... [where] the actual learning processes themselves will also need to be both high-risk and transformatory in character' (Barnett, 2004, p. 257), since we have seen various examples of this from both students and staff co-creators. It is powerful that student co-creators overwhelmingly reflected on the transformative and impactful nature of these experiences, and staff co-creators repeat how their experiences were rewarding not only in the short-term but also in the long-term. Although partnerships in co-creating the curriculum are not without their challenges, they can facilitate excellent teaching that may help both students and teachers become empowered to be their best selves to enhance the impact of higher education on individuals and their communities.

How Curriculum Co-Creation May Advance Student and Staff Aims in Higher Education

In the findings, themes for staff and student participants' aims in higher education – including perspectives from both co-creators and other engaged students and staff – centre around: personal and professional development, employability, lifelong learning, democratic engagement, and social justice. These aims are aligned with conceptualisations of teaching excellence and especially notions of moral, critical, and performative excellence (Kreber, 2007; Lubicz-Nawrocka & Bunting, 2019; MacFarlane, 2007) since staff co-creators demonstrate authentic commitment to engaging and supporting students to develop critical thinking and employability skills while working in partnership. In this section, I highlight examples of how curriculum co-creation can advance aims for students in higher education, which connect closely to notions of teaching excellence. It is also important to note that student co-creators without clear aims – who, as Student B5 described, 'shuffled forward' into higher education – benefit from the curriculum co-creation experience by consolidating their

knowledge, skills, and capacities whilst also enhancing their employability and acquiring a sense of purpose.

The vast majority of participants highlight the aim of helping students to develop as individuals. The results sections on the themes of development generally and also with respect to confidence, critical thinking, and independent thinking highlight examples from many staff (A1, A6, A9, A13, D1, D3, D4, D7) and many students (B2, B5, B6, B7, B10, C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C8, C9, C14, C15). In particular, it is significant that participants such as Student B7 describe how 'a big part about going to university is not just what you learn but it's an environment where you can develop personally and intellectually and that is not solely something done by yourself'. There are strong connections between this aim of development and the work of Baxter Magolda (1999) and Barnett and Coate (2004), which I described earlier in the discussion chapter to show how curriculum co-creation can support students' development of not only skills and knowledge but also authentic *being* and self-authorship. Student B7 highlights the importance of interpersonal development, reflecting an aim that higher education should provide opportunities for learning from and with others that reflect added value and a greater potential for growth as compared to independent learning outside of universities. Especially in the context of the massification of higher education, curriculum co-creation experiences can provide profound and, at times, transformational, development opportunities by advancing both individual and collective aims within co-created learning communities.

With respect to the aims of employability and lifelong learning, I noted earlier in this chapter the finding that the examples of curriculum co-creation in my study fostered students' development of graduate attributes and wider capabilities in more profound ways during co-creation than in other experiences of student engagement. I found that curriculum co-creation helped students to reflect on and articulate their transferable skills to employers in job applications and interviews. Key themes presented in the results chapter relating to the benefits of co-created curricula are that they enhance students' communication skills including negotiation and public engagement abilities; confidence and leadership skills; and sense of expertise, professionalism, and employability. Examples from staff (A3, A5, A7, A8, A9) and students (B1, B3, B6, B7, B8) show how curriculum co-creation advanced students' employability skills. In particular, Student B9 described how the co-creation

experience could be used as a 'selling point I would use for myself if I was applying for a job or further study' and Staff A7 noted how student co-creators started 'describing their skills and experience in ways that the employer can understand, seeing what they can bring to the table'.

I found that curriculum co-creation promotes staff and students' enjoyment of learning in ways that advanced participants' aims for students' development of character, values, and social justice as they developed a passion for lifelong learning and worked to have a positive effect on their communities. This is in line with Freirean aims of education for social justice (1972), which may motivate some staff and students to choose to co-create the curriculum (Bovill et al., 2009; Kehler et al., 2017; Peters & Mathias, 2018). Those choosing to participate for other reasons also benefit from how co-creation can advance both their individual aims as well as their senses of civic and democratic engagement and social justice. Staff A2 and A11 note the challenge that students' active roles in democratically co-created courses can affect their expectations for roles in other university courses. However, student co-creators often benefit from becoming more active, independent contributors with strong leadership skills and the ability to be resilient when dealing with challenges. Many authentic learning and teaching experiences gained through curriculum co-creation facilitate democratic engagement of students and staff, helping them to meet their aims by putting social justice into practice and have a positive impact on their wider communities.

Summary: Returning to the Research Questions

In this section, I revisit my sub-research questions that, cumulatively, help me answer my principal research question: *in Scottish universities, how do undergraduate students and staff conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum, and how do these conceptualisations relate to their aims for students within higher education?* Drawing on key aspects within my discussion above, I summarise my findings succinctly below.

Conceptualisations of Co-Creation of the Curriculum

How do students and staff conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum?

Staff and students conceptualise co-creation of the curriculum as a collaborative form of teaching and learning that is underpinned by the shared values of joint ownership and responsibility, empathy, reciprocity, respect, and a sense of working towards

equity. In addition to shared values, conceptualisations of curriculum co-creation emphasise creativity, innovation, academic play, and supportive learning communities while individuals learn from diverse ideas and negotiate power in the student/teacher relationship. Based on my research findings, I contribute a new definition of curriculum co-creation: *the values-based implementation of an ongoing, creative, and mutually-beneficial process of staff and students working together to share and negotiate decision-making about aspects of higher education curricula*. Through this definition, I aim to highlight the shared values and creativity underpinning co-creation and how curriculum negotiation is a reciprocal process. The aspects of empathy, creativity, innovation, and civic engagement and impact are particular contributions that my research makes to deepen current understandings of co-creation of the curriculum.

Roles in Co-Creation of the Curriculum

How do students and staff view their respective roles in co-creation of the curriculum as compared to other forms of student engagement?

It is clear from the findings presented that student and staff participants want to share responsibility for student engagement, although often in practice they each take responsibility for distinct aspects of engagement that support students' learning. However, their roles in co-creating the curriculum focus on developing their working relationship to facilitate the iterative process of sharing responsibility over not only learning but also aspects of teaching. Although students and staff develop personally and professionally throughout their participation in other student engagement activities, their development while co-creating the curriculum tends to be much more profound and – often – transformational. As students and staff each take active roles in negotiating curricula, their personal and professional development facilitates their roles emerging in a Third Space that blurs their identities in-between traditional learner and teacher roles. The development of self-authorship and authentic *being* throughout curriculum co-creation has wider implications than supporting individuals' development since their democratic engagement often also leads to leadership skills and positive civic impact across their university and their wider communities.

Choosing to Participate in Co-Creation of the Curriculum

Why do students and staff want (or not want) to co-create the curriculum?

It is important to recognise the challenges that curriculum co-creation can present to academic cultures with neoliberal and research-focused priorities as well as traditional views of learner and teacher roles. However, it is enlightening to see how staff and students often re-frame challenges as learning opportunities that benefit students, staff, and their universities in many different ways. Staff co-creators are often motivated by aims of democratic engagement and social justice; these motivations can have a strong influence on their attitudes towards and expectations of students. In turn, staff attitudes and expectations play a key role in their willingness to offer the opportunity of co-creating the curriculum to students. Staff and students reflect on the skills – but especially the confidence to deal with challenges – needed by each to share power and negotiate effectively when co-creating the curriculum. This said, it is powerful that every student participant who was enrolled in a co-created course stated that this was the best course throughout their degree programme. Additionally, other student and staff co-creators overwhelmingly reflected on the rewarding, transformative, and impactful nature of these experiences that promote many dimensions of teaching excellence.

Aims of Higher Education and Co-Creation of the Curriculum

How does co-creation of the curriculum help students and staff work towards achieving their aims in higher education?

Staff and student participants describe their aims in higher education focusing on personal and professional development, employability, lifelong learning, democratic engagement, and social justice. The values-based implementation of co-creation of the curriculum especially advances their aims of development, democratic engagement, and social justice. The ongoing, creative, and mutually-beneficial process of staff/student collaboration facilitates inclusive learning communities that promote individuals' development of transferable skills and their enjoyment of lifelong learning where they apply theory to practice in authentic ways. Finally, sharing and negotiating decision-making about aspects of higher education curricula facilitates students' reflection on their values and character development while engaging democratically within their learning community and putting into practice their aim of social justice to have a positive civic impact on their wider communities.



Chapter 10: Conclusion

Concluding Thoughts on the Research Methodology

By incorporating a range of qualitative methods and approaches, my research methodology has been consistent with the topic of study and my stance as a researcher, and it has enabled me to answer my particular research questions. The multi-phase approach allowed me to learn first from the expertise of staff and student co-creation practitioners during in-depth interviews about their experiences. However, it was also important to me that I did not just speak with current practitioners but that I also learnt in subsequent data collection phases about the perspectives of other engaged students and staff to gain their insights about the feasibility of expanding opportunities for co-creation of the curriculum. Although I had worried that non-practitioners may be more resistant to adopting co-creation of the curriculum (and in fact there was some resistance in a few instances), in actuality co-creators themselves expanded at greater length about the challenges of co-creating curricula to help improve transparency about the risks as well as the benefits of these practices. As previously noted in my methodology chapter, it is likely that those most resistant to co-creation of the curriculum would not have agreed to participate in my research in the first place and it is always challenging to engage those who are less engaged. Furthermore, the non-practitioners who participated were already highly engaged in other learning and teaching enhancement activities and were perhaps more receptive to the idea of co-creation; this study helped them learn more about these learning and teaching practices.

I have reflected in the methodology chapter about the beneficial nature of incorporating co-inquiry methods into my research, as well as an arts-based approach using photo-elicitation methods. In particular, co-inquiry was extremely beneficial to help me experience what it feels like to work with student co-researchers on a project, which enriched my methodology to validate my research analysis. In addition, it increased my understanding of co-creation practitioners' experiences and allowed me to learn from student partners' perspectives and trends in other sectors outside of education that adopt co-creation and co-production methods. Both co-inquiry and photo-elicitation methods complemented my research topic of curriculum co-creation to facilitate an engaging, democratic, and inclusive approach.

Furthermore, the photo-elicitation methods facilitated student and staff non-practitioners to share in greater depth their aims for students in higher education although staff co-creators had also reflected on this topic and were able to provide detailed responses. However, since student co-creators did not appear to have reflected as much on this topic, it would have been useful to include the photo-elicitation activity during interviews. Since using an arts-based approach was new to me and I was worried that the activity would take up too much time during interviews, I chose not to incorporate it into Phase 1 of the data collection. On reflection, I would have liked to incorporate photo-elicitation methods throughout all phases of data collection to elicit richer responses and use a more consistent approach for learning about participants' aims in higher education.

In the results chapters on student engagement and co-creation of the curriculum, I have noted how different categories of participants had more to share about different research themes. For example, it is understandable that, based on their experiences, co-creation practitioners had the most to share about conceptualisations of curriculum co-creation practices, benefits, and challenges. However, non-practitioners' views on benefits and challenges also reinforced some of the themes relating to these aspects of co-creation. It is interesting that student non-practitioners, who emphasised the benefits of staff respecting students' democratic engagement, also cautioned that staff need to take leadership over quality assurance processes. In addition, they noted challenges focusing on the risks for students and the prevailing culture in universities, where research is prioritised over teaching. Staff non-practitioners had the most to say about co-creation of the curriculum regarding benefits of respect and reciprocity between students and staff, promoting enjoyment of learning, and developing students' critical thinking and leadership skills; they also noted challenges focusing on the research culture, academic structures and processes, risks in relationship-based working, and risks for staff. All participants – co-creation practitioners and non-practitioners alike – had much to contribute regarding conceptualisations of excellent teaching and roles in facilitating effective student engagement. Overall, the research methodology I developed worked extremely well to provide a wealth of valuable data to answer my research questions, and I would change only small aspects if repeating this study.

Significance of the Study

My work offers an original contribution by synthesising participants' conceptualisations of how curriculum co-creation can advance student and staff aims in higher education within one national context. This contrasts with most other research on co-creation and student/staff partnerships, which focuses either on an in-depth analysis at one institution or on case study vignettes citing examples at universities worldwide. In addition to providing a new definition to clarify the concept of curriculum co-creation, my thesis extends discourse on this concept by providing a new analysis of the notions of creativity and Third Space within co-creation of the curriculum. In particular, I have explored the significance of creativity and innovation in promoting staff and students' enjoyment of learning and teaching while overcoming challenges and working to have a positive impact on their communities within and beyond the university.

My study draws connections between co-creation of the curriculum and theories of the philosophy of education (Barnett, 2004, 2007; Kreber, 2014), adolescents' psychological development (Baxter Magolda, 1999; Vygotsky, 1978), adult learning (Blatner & Blatner, 1988; Cevero & Wilson, 2001; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Shernoff, 2013), and academic development (Bovill, Cook-Sather, et al., 2011; Cook-Sather, 2014; Cook-Sather et al., 2014). I highlighted in the introduction how the topics of curriculum co-creation and student/staff partnerships have burgeoned in the last ten years, with strong overlaps between these terms and with the latter becoming an overarching, umbrella term that encompasses many different types of curricular and extra-curricular collaborations. My study is a timely contribution to revisit conceptualisations of curriculum co-creation to offer a new definition.

Like other studies that show the benefits of student development through curriculum co-creation and student/staff partnerships, my research reinforces the findings of students' increased confidence, transferable employability skills, metacognitive skills and awareness of how they learn, and belonging within academic learning communities (Bovill, 2019; Dickerson et al., 2016; Matthews, Cook-Sather, et al., 2018; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Moore-Cherry, 2019). I contribute to this literature by emphasising how: student co-creators' development of confidence in their expertise also facilitates their leadership skills; co-creation work helps students reflect on and better articulate their transferable skills and employability; and students'

increased empathy and understanding of teachers' and peers' experiences can be key elements in advancing their metacognitive skills, sense of community, intrinsic motivation, and enjoyment of learning. Participants also share that the enjoyment of learning and teaching that they gain through the co-creation experience is not a frivolous aspect of student satisfaction but instead is key to motivating students become independent, lifelong learners. I also suggest that co-creation may have the potential to enhance student retention and academic achievement, although these areas need to be explored further. However, by giving students freedom to develop their agency, intrinsic motivation, and responsibility for learning and aspects of teaching, it appears that student co-creators participating in my study developed to become more creative, independent, and critical thinkers who were successful in higher education.

The literature infrequently focuses on how curriculum co-creation facilitates staff development (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017), but my work resonates with that of Cook-Sather et al. (2014) who find positive outcomes for staff that include: new ways of thinking about teaching, understandings of different perspectives, and views on the collaborative processes of learning and teaching. Additionally, my findings emphasise how staff gain respect for students through their co-creation work, and this often promotes staff reflection on their enhancement of teaching and their own professional development. Again, as in the case of students, staff enjoyment of the learning and teaching experience through curriculum co-creation is a key finding and should not to be taken lightly since the rewarding nature of this work can motivate them to engage more with learning, teaching, and student support which are at the core of universities' work.

The advancement of creativity and innovation through co-creation of the curriculum is another important contribution of my study. Creativity and play are under-studied aspects of higher education curricula, although they are prevalent in early years and primary education. Furthermore, despite the words 'co-creation' and 'creativity' sharing the same etymology, aspects of creativity do not appear to have been analysed previously within the literature on curriculum co-creation. In my study, I found it beneficial to apply theories of play and creativity to analyse the skills and capacities that student and staff co-creators gained when they participated in academic play. It is perhaps most striking that their sense of intrinsic motivation and

enjoyment of learning appears to affect their willingness to embrace risk. Innovation in curriculum co-creation supports opportunities for students and staff to learn from surprises and even failures within a supportive learning community.

Like Hill et al. (2016) and Moore-Cherry (2019), I show how providing sufficient challenge in learning and teaching through pedagogic partnerships can be transformational for students when they develop cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal senses of self-authorship. I extended this argument by analysing the ways in which curriculum co-creation can advance both student and staff self-authorship and their sense of authentic *being* as they develop resilience, deal creatively with supercomplexity, and work collaboratively to find solutions for the complex problems facing society today.

I have also contributed a new analysis of how curriculum co-creation can represent different types of Third Space in higher education. I suggested that curriculum co-creation facilitates three different types of Third Space which have a positive impact on: A) individuals' identities through their development, B) higher education institutions through offering new ways of working, and C) communities beyond the university through contributions to their third mission. The ways in which co-creation and student/staff partnerships promote new ways of working and aspects of student and staff development have been documented elsewhere in the literature but not always framed as Third Spaces (Cook-Sather et al., 2014; Hill et al., 2016; Matthews, Dwyer, et al., 2018). By drawing on theories of Third Space, I contribute new perspectives to these academic debates. However, what is perhaps most striking is the positive effect of co-creation of the curriculum in communities within and beyond academia, and these themes of social responsibility and democratic engagement have begun to emerge in the literature (Bovill, 2019; Bron et al., 2016; Dickerson et al., 2016). I have drawn new connections between the concepts of Third Space and the third mission of universities to explore how curriculum co-creation can be transformational for individuals and increase their capacity to have a positive impact on society through democratic engagement and civic impact.

Implications of the Study

My research focuses on co-creation of the curriculum within the Scottish higher-education sector; however, it is likely that findings could be relevant to other contexts

since this research reproduces findings from other relevant research on co-creation and pedagogical partnerships in other internationalised higher education institutions around the world. Scotland's higher education sector is small, consisting of fifteen universities and three other institutions with higher education provision. Since education is a devolved power, Scotland is independent in setting its own educational initiatives although the nation also adheres to advancing the wider UK Government's educational priorities in a united approach with other nations. In contrast with the three-year undergraduate programmes that are typical at English universities, the four-year undergraduate degree at Scottish universities is publicly funded for Scottish students tends to promote social responsibility and is traditionally grounded in a liberal arts higher education model that allows more time for students' formative education experiences. As such, this model may lend itself to facilitating curriculum co-creation approaches to learning and teaching. Furthermore, the Scottish sector has a strong focus on an enhancement-led approach to quality assurance and a democratic approach to governance through student representation, and national agencies including the Quality Assurance Agency Scotland, National Union of Students Scotland, and Student Partnerships in Quality Scotland (sparqs) support various forms of student engagement and student/staff partnerships. These agencies tend to focus on engaging student representatives in decision-making relating to their higher education experience ranging from university-level governance to course- and programme-level enhancement of the academic experience. Although student representation and whole-class curriculum co-creation can work towards achieving similar aims, some participants in my study noted that there can be tensions between these different approaches to student engagement. Even though the Scottish sector facilitates different forms of student engagement, it is similar to other sectors internationally that face the challenge of the massification of higher education with large class sizes and high tuition fees for some students (in this case, non-Scottish students).

The notion of transferability is consistent with my social constructivist epistemology since it empowers others to examine how my particular research findings with participants at Scottish universities may be relevant to and applicable in other contexts. As I discussed in the methodology chapter, the notion of statistical-probabilistic generalisability is not congruent with my epistemology, but other 'generalizabilities' (Smith, 2018) including analytical generalisation and its categories

of concept generalisation and theoretical generalisation reinforce how my results relate to established concepts and theories of curriculum co-creation, student/staff partnerships, student engagement, and student development. Furthermore, I hope my research also has provocative generalisability by empowering others working within and beyond higher education to think about the possibilities that curriculum co-creation could offer in different contexts.

My inductive analysis shares participants' valuable, first-person accounts of how co-creation of the curriculum is both a process of creating, as well as a pedagogy that fosters the development of creative products. Creativity is a central aspect of the co-creation process that can promote empathy and inclusion, which is significant with respect to diversifying and internationalising the higher education curriculum to meet the needs of diverse students. Creativity in collaborative curriculum development also has implications for social justice in higher education by incorporating non-traditional approaches that can benefit 'average' students in particular who may not always excel with traditional forms of assessment focusing on exams and essays. Collegiality, empathy, and partnership also help shift the culture of universities to humanise the higher education experience, which is important in building meaningful professional relationships between students and staff despite rising student numbers and the massification of higher education.

Curriculum co-creation also has implications for students and staff, including not only academic staff but also academic developers, professional services staff, and university managers. The significance of the benefits that students and staff co-creators experience shows how curriculum co-creation can have a strong, positive impact on higher education if this approach is adequately supported. The majority of co-creation initiatives in this study were grassroots examples that were led by passionate academics working independently to implement co-creation into their teaching. The remaining two cases were inspired by top-down, institutional initiatives at some of the five Scottish universities where co-creation was identified prior to 2015. I cannot vouch for the quality of each of these co-creation initiatives since I did not conduct an in-depth inquiry into each and, instead, focused on the perceptions of identified participants. This said, it appears that each of these co-creators found ways to navigate the challenges of university cultures, structures, and processes and they have started to change the perceptions and expectations of some resistant staff

colleagues – as well as some students – to show what is possible when co-creating curricula. Therefore,, my study shows the need for university managers to support co-creation of the curriculum in a top-down manner by making academic structures and processes more amenable to those wanting to engage in co-creation initiatives to help wider numbers of staff and students to share ownership over aspects of teaching. In addition, academic developers have a key role to play in supporting academic staff to become aware of the opportunities that curriculum co-creation presents and to facilitate both staff and student development to realise the potential of these opportunities.

Recommendations for Further Study

It is important to examine what aspects of support or development are needed to enable staff and students who are new to curriculum co-creation to engage in these practices. As we have seen, some student and staff co-creators suggest that it is important to scaffold and build in increasingly engaging aspects of co-creation throughout a degree programme since they recognise the importance of the skills and capacities that students develop through co-creating curricula. However, others suggest that curriculum co-creation is most beneficial as a formative experience or as an optional experience for those students who have the skills and confidence to engage in extracurricular opportunities for co-creation or in co-created option courses in Honours years since they believe it could be too challenging for some students. As for staff, some co-creators suggest it is better if they engage in curriculum co-creation as mid-career or experienced professionals so that they have the confidence to navigate any challenging university structures or perceptions of others about these practices. Therefore, further study is needed to learn how an individual's stage in their student journey or staff career affects the co-creation experience, and how academic developers can support this work most effectively. It is important to pay attention to the support needed to engage effectively in curriculum co-creation at different stages, as well as which staff choose to lead co-creation initiatives and which students self-select to participate in optional curriculum co-creation opportunities, including both extracurricular projects as well as whole-cohort option courses. These topics that emerged in my study have implications for inclusion, equality, and diversity and are also important themes that other researchers are starting to explore.

Within the thirteen pedagogical co-design projects that I included in this study's fifteen identified curriculum co-creation initiatives, different aspects of the curricula were negotiated. While the focus of my study was on themes of conceptualisations, benefits, and challenges of curriculum co-creation across this sample, it is also important to examine further how much of the curriculum is up for negotiation and which aspects of the curriculum are co-created most often. Understanding the depth and breadth within pedagogical co-design projects will help the sector better understand aspects of risk for both staff and students. One particularly interesting aspect of further study relates to risk in curriculum co-creation with respect to high-achieving, average, and low-achieving students. It would be helpful to gain a better understanding of which students are most likely to choose to participate in curriculum co-creation based on the perceived risk involved, and the implications for academic achievement and retention of different cohorts of students. Findings from my study started to suggest correlations between co-creation of the curriculum and increased academic achievement, as well as decreased instances of students choosing to drop out of university in several cases. However, it would be important to explore these topics on a larger scale and in other contexts.

In my research, I also started to explore the effect of curriculum co-creation on student and staff democratic engagement and civic impact within and beyond the university. Since these themes have important implications for increasing individuals' resilience and ability to deal with adversity, it is important for further studies to explore these themes. Furthermore, the question of how to upscale meaningful, relationship-based curriculum co-creation opportunities is key to examine further. Although some co-creators suggest that it is easier to engage in smaller-scale curriculum co-creation initiatives, it is important to see how the benefits of these practices can be experienced by greater numbers of staff and students – and, especially, more inclusive partnerships in whole-cohort co-creation of courses – whilst also not losing sight of the shared values that underpin curriculum co-creation so that it does not become tokenistic when upscaled.

[Recommendations for Curriculum Co-Creation and Final Thoughts](#)

As we have seen, the nontraditional methods of curriculum co-creation can present a variety of risks and challenges. Some risks can feel like extremely personal vulnerabilities for both staff and students when co-creation practices challenge their

pre-conceived notions of roles, identities, and expectations of themselves and others. It is important to have institutional support from senior managers who can encourage curriculum co-creation from an institutional level and help those wishing to engage to make the time and space to discuss the potential that curriculum co-creation can have in different contexts. These factors are important in supporting staff, in particular, to learn about and engage in curriculum co-creation since staff often serve as the gatekeepers who take the lead in offering these opportunities to students. Although engaged staff co-creators participating in my study did not focus on access to staff development opportunities to support co-creation of the curriculum initiatives, this could be a challenge for others interested in starting new co-creation initiatives in the future. Having honest conversations within departments and with academic developers about how co-creators can work together can help them minimise fears and overcome obstacles. Therefore, support from senior managers, facilitation from academic developers, and the different perspectives that various professional services staff can bring – from course administrators to learning technologists to careers service staff – can help a wider array of academic staff learn about and explore the possibilities of curriculum co-creation. Then, I hope that staff and student co-creators will have the courage to collaborate and embrace risks together, which should ultimately benefit them as individuals and may also have a positive impact on their communities.

Since all co-creators in this study described the experience as a rewarding one and all students co-creating courses described them as the best courses throughout their degree programme, we need to take notice and explore how to increase opportunities for engagement. However, the selection and self-selection of student and staff co-creators is an extremely important area to consider, as other researchers have also indicated (Bovill, 2019; Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017; Moore-Cherry et al., 2016). Since co-creators benefit in a myriad of ways from the experience, it is clear that curriculum co-creation experiences need to be as inclusive as possible. These opportunities can be constrained by time and financial resources, as well as individuals' perceptions and aversion to risk. This said, it is important to acknowledge that some students may find it more difficult to engage due to structural, socio-cultural, and economic inequalities that may negatively affect their opportunities to engage in co-creation of the curriculum. Therefore, I recommend that individual staff scaffold a wide range of curriculum co-creation opportunities and especially those including the

entire class to help students (and staff) to develop confidence and become more comfortable with innovative learning and teaching approaches. To support this recommendation, senior managers should provide the institutional support and resources that will help interested staff and students to become – and continue to be – engaged as co-creators.

The professional relationships underpinning co-creation of curricula present some of the most prominent benefits but also some of the most significant challenges for co-creators and pedagogical partners (Matthews, Mercer-Mapstone, et al., 2018). Therefore, I recommend that co-creators themselves as well as researchers continue to share their work as widely as possible. Sharing challenges can provide transparency and help others gain a greater understanding of shared obstacles so that we can work together to overcome them. Equally, sharing the benefits of curriculum co-creation can deepen the discourse of enjoyment of learning through partnership work so that we can gain inspiration from each other's diverse work since each initiative is unique and tailored to both the participants and their particular educational context. Therefore, further sharing examples of curriculum co-creation in practice can help those not yet engaging in these practices to gain greater awareness of them. I hope my research will support more staff and students to identify and share existing curriculum co-creation work and to be inspired to engage in new, curriculum co-creation initiatives.

My research offers a new definition of curriculum co-creation that helps to clarify this concept, and my thesis advances academic dialogue about how curriculum co-creation can offer Third Spaces that promote new ways for students and staff to engage more authentically, enjoy the creative processes of learning and teaching, and innovate while contributing to their communities. As we have seen, notions of authenticity and autonomy in education, curriculum negotiation, pedagogical partnership, and co-creation of the curriculum are not new in higher education. The field of co-creators appears to be growing rapidly across the sector, and my work has tried to inspire others to look critically at the opportunities that curriculum co-creation presents while taking steps to engage further. As Giroux (2018) has said so eloquently, education should 'be a site that makes a claim on the radical imagination and a sense of civic courage' (p. 13) and one that connects 'equity to excellence, learning to ethics, and agency to the imperatives of social responsibility and the public

good' (p. 15). Curriculum co-creation can achieve these aims by empowering students and staff to have the courage to 'live the values which are a bit more liberatory and democratic' (Staff A2) so that their work is 'actually making a difference' (Student B8). I hope we will have the civic courage to do what is right for students, for staff, and for our wider communities so that we can work together to co-create a bright future within and beyond our universities.



Appendix

Appendix Item 1 - Phase 1 Interview Questions for Staff

Approach to teaching

1. What has been your favourite course to teach, and why?
2. Generally speaking, what do you especially like about teaching?
3. How do you usually go about designing a course? (Content, pedagogy, assessment, etc.)
4. What does effective teaching and learning look like for you, and how does it make you feel? (What type of learning environment do you try to create?)
5. What impact do you hope your teaching has on students? (short-term and long term)

Students and student engagement

6. Generally speaking, how would you describe your students?
7. What is the ideal student like, in your view?
8. If a class goes particularly well, what happens and how does it make you feel?
9. What suggests to you that a student is fully engaged? (What do you observe?)
10. What responsibilities do your students have as learners?
11. Do you feel responsible for student engagement, and in what way? (In what ways do you try to engage students with their learning?)
12. How do you characterise the ideal teacher/student relationship? (Is this generally the case with your students?)
13. Do you consider yourself to work in partnership with your students?

Co-creation of the curriculum

14. When you hear the term 'curriculum', what do you take it to mean?
15. I am particularly interested in the idea of student/staff partnerships in co-creating the curriculum. What would you consider this term to mean?
16. I tend to characterise co-creation of the curriculum as a type of student engagement that facilitates student and staff partnerships in which each have a voice and a stake in the curriculum. Do you consider yourself to be co-creating the curriculum with your students? (If so, in what way?)
17. [If yes: Why did you decide to work in partnership with students to co-create the curriculum, and how have you found this experience?]
18. What do you think are positive aspects of partnerships in co-creating the curriculum with students? (long-term and short-term)
19. What do you think are the main challenges?
20. Do you think that co-creation of the curriculum could help promote student engagement and motivation? Why or why not?
21. What outcomes do you think co-creation helps students achieve? (In what ways do you think it helps prepare your students to meet their goals for the future?)
22. Do you think that co-creation helps you achieve your aims of teaching more effectively compared to more traditional staff-created courses?

Perceptions of others

23. How do students tend to react to your new teaching practices?
24. How do your colleagues tend to react to the idea of co-creation of the curriculum?
25. What have you learnt from these experiences? (Would you encourage others to do try co-creation?)
26. To wrap up the interview, if you had a magic wand to make a change to improve undergraduate learning and teaching in the future, what would it be?
27. Do you have any other things you would like to add?
28. Would you feel comfortable referring any of your students who have participated in co-creating the curriculum to speak with me?

Appendix Item 2 - Phase 1 Interview Questions for Students

Approach to learning

1. Why did you decide to go to University as opposed to pursuing other options, and how did you decide to study at XX University?
2. What has been your favourite university course so far, and why?
3. Do you think your teachers understand your goals and make their relevant to you? (Does that matter to you?)
4. How would you describe effective teaching?
5. How does it make you feel when teaching is effective like that?
6. What is the ideal teacher like, in your view?
7. How would you characterise the ideal teacher/student relationship? (Is this generally the case with your teachers?)
8. What do you want your university degree to help you with in the long term? (Do you feel that teachers generally help you work towards these goals?)

Teachers and student engagement

9. What does the term 'student engagement' mean to you?
10. What makes you feel engaged in a course, and how does that make you feel as a learner?
11. What responsibilities do you think you have as a student and a learner when taking a course?
12. Who do you feel is responsible for student engagement, and in what way?
13. Do you consider yourself to work in partnership with any of your teachers?

Co-creation of the curriculum

14. I am particularly interested in the idea of student/staff partnerships in co-creation of the curriculum. What would you consider this term to mean?
15. I tend to characterise co-creation of the curriculum as a type of student engagement that facilitates student and staff partnerships in which each have a voice and a stake in the curriculum. Do you consider yourself to be co-creating the curriculum with any of your teachers? (If so, in what way?)
16. What do you think are positive aspects of partnerships in co-creating the curriculum with your teachers?
17. What do you think are the main challenges?
18. Do you think that co-creation of the curriculum makes you feel more engaged and motivated with your studies? Why or why not?
19. In what ways do you think co-creation of the curriculum helps you prepare to meet your goals for the future?

Perceptions of others

20. How have other students reacted when they heard about you co-creating the curriculum with staff?
21. How do teaching staff tend to react?
22. What have you learnt from these experiences? (Would you encourage others to do try co-creation?)
23. To wrap up the interview, if you had a magic wand to make a change to improve undergraduate learning and teaching in the future, what would it be?
24. Do you have any other things you would like to add?

Appendix Item 3 - Phase 1 Focus Group Questions with Co-Creation of the Curriculum Practitioners

Student Engagement

1. Students: why did you decide to go to university as opposed to pursuing other options, and how did you choose this university?
2. Staff: what led you to work at this university, and what long-term impact do you hope your teaching has on students?
3. I know a bit about the project that you worked on together to co-teach last year. Why did you each decide to work on this project together?
4. During the course, if things were going particularly well, what happened and how did it make you feel?
5. What suggested to you that everyone was fully engaged?
6. What responsibilities do students have as learners?
7. Do you personally feel responsible for student engagement, and in what way?
8. How do you characterise the ideal teacher/student relationship? Was this the case?

Co-creation of the curriculum

9. When you hear the term 'curriculum', what do you take it to mean?
10. I am particularly interested in the idea of student/staff partnerships in co-creating the curriculum. What would you consider 'co-creation of the curriculum' to be?
11. I tend to characterise co-creation of the curriculum as a type of student engagement that facilitates student and staff partnerships in which each have a voice and a stake in the curriculum. Did you consider your course to be co-created?
12. What do you think are benefits of partnerships in co-creating the curriculum for both students and staff?
13. What do you think are the main challenges?
14. What long-term outcomes do you think co-creation helps students achieve?

Wrapping up

15. What have you learnt from these experiences, and would you encourage others to do try co-creation?
16. To wrap up, if you had a magic wand to make a change to improve undergraduate learning and teaching in the future, what would it be?

Appendix Item 4 - Phase 2 Student Focus Group Plan

Agenda:

13:00 – 13:10 Arrival, informed consent forms, introductions, and lunch

13:10 – 13:30 Arts-based activity with images and discussion about aims of HE (question 1)

13:30 – 14:25 Focus group discussion (six questions and possibly a seventh if time allows)

14:25 – 14:30 Information about opportunities to be a student consultant, thank you and close

Arts-based activity: I will begin with an arts-based activity where students will engage with images of animals that, to them, represent how they want to feel when they have successfully completed their undergraduate degree. Each student will choose one image of a real or mythical animal and then describe why they chose that and how it represents their idea regarding the dreams they hope higher education will help them achieve in the future. Student participants will use these visual representations to discuss the knowledge, skills, and other attributes this graduate has developed. The researcher has some influence over the choice of images but using images of animals will help to elicit discussion that does not superimpose too much about the researcher's views about the purpose of higher education.





This activity of selecting an animal image will help students to use an abstract, unrelated piece of art to reflect on the purposes of higher education and promote dialogue about their personal aims and what they want to feel like at the end of their higher education journey.

Choose one image that represents, to you, how you want to feel at the end of your university degree and what dreams you hope higher education will help you achieve in the future. Why? (Does current teaching help you towards this goal?)

Focus group discussion:

After the initial arts-based activity, I will lead a discussion about students' perceptions of current teaching practices at their university and explore their views about co-creation of the curriculum.

Effective teaching and student engagement

1. Thinking about the best classes that helped you learn the most, what does effective teaching look like here at Edinburgh University? (During a course if you are feeling like you are learning a lot, what is happening and how does it make you feel? Do staff understand your goals?)
2. What does the term 'student engagement' mean to you, and what does that look like in your classes? (Who has responsibility for student engagement?)

Co-creation of the curriculum

3. Some students and staff work together to co-create the curriculum of a course. This is a partnership of students and staff in which each have a voice and a stake in developing the curriculum. Some examples are:
 - a. when students develop learning materials to be used by the rest of the class,
 - b. when students and staff decide together on what content to study during part of a course or the aims of an outreach project in the community,
 - c. when they work in partnership to design assessment or develop marking criteria.

Have any of you ever considered yourself to co-create the curriculum with staff?

4. Thinking back to the image that you chose of what you want your university experience to help you achieve, do you think participating in co-creation of the curriculum would help you achieve your aims more effectively than in more traditional courses? Why or why not? (What are the benefits?)
5. What do you think are the main challenges of co-creation of the curriculum, and what would staff need to do to support you in participating in it?
6. Would any of you be interested in co-creating the curriculum of a course with staff?

Wrapping up (only if time allows):

7. (To wrap up, if you had a magic wand to make one change to improve learning and teaching at Edinburgh University, what would that change be to improve your academic experience?)

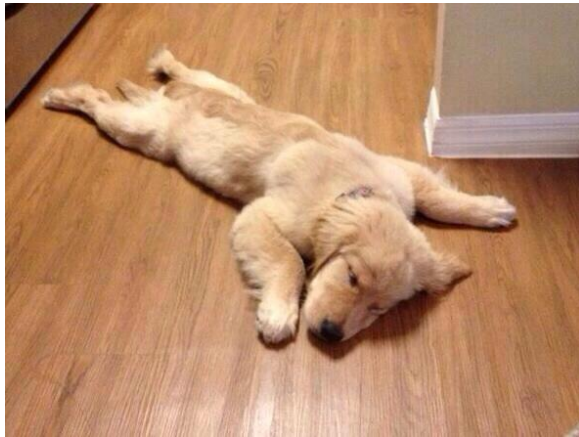
Appendix Item 5 - Phase 3 Staff Focus Group Plan

Agenda:

- 12:30 – we arrive and check who is doing which part so we are all on the same page
- 13:00 – 13:10 Participants arrive, lunch, informed consent forms
- 13:10 – 13:30 Arts-based activity with images and discussion about aims of higher education (questions 1 & 2)
- 13:30 – 14:00 Focus group discussion (questions 3 – 19)
- 14:00 – 14:25 Student Co-Researchers presentation student perceptions of co-creation and lead discussion on co-creation
- 14:25 – 14:30 Thank you and close

Arts-based activity (led by Student Consultant 1):

Note: images were co-selected with student consultants, including the same ten images used in the student focus groups plus two additional images of a puppy and a lion.



1. Please choose two images: one will represent your general perception of the students you teach, and the second will represent how you want students to feel at the end of their university degree and what you hope higher education will help them achieve in the future. Why did you choose these images?
2. To what extent do you think that traditional teaching practices including lectures, seminars, essays, and exams help students work towards these aims?

Student engagement (led by Student Consultant 2):

3. What does the term 'student engagement' mean to you, and what does that look like in your classes?
4. What responsibilities do students have in your classes?

Co-creation of the curriculum (led by the PhD researcher):

5. Short presentation about co-creation of the curriculum and examples:
 - a. when students develop learning materials to be used by the rest of the class,
 - b. when students and staff decide together on what assessment would best help them show that students had learnt something from the course,
 - c. or when they work together to develop marking criteria.

Have any of you considered yourself to co-create the curriculum with students?
If yes, how so?

6. What do you think are the short-term and longer-term benefits of participating in co-creation of the curriculum?
7. What do you think are the main challenges of co-creation of the curriculum for staff and students? (What support may be needed from the university to overcome these challenges?)

Student perceptions of co-creation of the curriculum (led by both Student Consultants):

Presentation of student perceptions of aims of higher education, co-creation benefits, and co-creation challenges

8. Thoughts? Are you surprised by this?

Wrapping up (led by Student Consultant 1):

9. To wrap up, if you had a magic wand to make one change to improve learning and teaching at Edinburgh University, what would that change be to improve learning and teaching?

Appendix Item 6 – Thematic Coding

Bold indicates code themes and un-bolded text indicates sub-codes in the hierarchy.

Code Name	Number of Sources (interviews / focus groups)	Number of Total References
Aims in HE	24	127
Gaining Direction for Future Career - As Planned or Not	9	16
Positive Impact on Society - Civic Impact	11	26
Student Development of Skills and Attitudes	21	62
Subject Expertise	7	9
What others tended to do	9	13
Challenges in learning and teaching	19	114
Consumerist view of HE	9	21
Teaching in medicine and vet-med	3	8
Teaching in sciences	4	10
Teaching in social sciences and humanities	6	9
Teaching large classes	11	17
Teaching small classes	3	5
Co-creation of the curriculum	25	627
Co-creation benefits	25	230
Academic achievement	14	33
Applying theory to practice	11	16
Authenticity of learning	18	45
Creativity	17	72
Democratic and civic engagement	16	36
Empathy and bridging gaps b/w students & staff	18	50
Enjoyment or satisfaction of learning	16	55
Learning from diversity of individuals or practice	8	23
Peer learning	14	38
Personal development and confidence	23	98
Professional development	9	19
Staff devpt. & learning from students	17	40
Rewarding or fulfilling	14	37
Shared ownership and responsibility	18	47
Skills to deal with complexity or risk	16	47
Transparency and improving learning & teaching	7	13
Valuing students and high expectations	16	31
X Co-creation impact	25	80
Co-creation challenges	25	184
Balancing roles with research and teaching	17	42

Code Name	Number of Sources (interviews / focus groups)	Number of Total References
Challenging the status quo general	17	108
Challenging the status quo	4	12
Relationship-based - personalities	5	8
Risk	3	3
Constraints of the curriculum	5	8
Negotiating power in teacher/student relations	20	74
Building staff capacity for co-creation	12	33
Dependent on personalities	5	10
Staff appearing lazy	2	3
Building student capacity to co-create	19	66
Compensation for students	3	4
Time-consuming nature of projects	13	29
Wider co-creation at scale	12	21
Co-creation definition	23	43
Beyond subject area but limits too	5	5
Co-creation vs partnership	5	7
Grassroots democratic engagement	4	4
Student-centred process of engagement	10	14
Co-creation motivations	23	85
Co-creation timing in career	11	14
Co-creation timing in student journey	17	32
Disenfranchised elsewhere in HE	1	1
Enabler of co-creation: confidence	1	3
Enjoyment of learning and teaching projects	6	6
External initiatives - Students Association	2	2
Intrinsic motivation & growth mindset	19	40
Paying students	2	2
Research and scholarship of teaching	5	7
Social justice values	8	11
Student interest in teaching	6	8
Co-creation project description	22	80
Gender in co-creation	2	2
Staff reactions to student perspectives of co-creation	1	1
Curriculum definition	12	18
Curriculum design	12	28
Describing students	23	111
Care for students	6	9
Describing ideal students	12	16
Diversity	8	16

Code Name	Number of Sources (interviews / focus groups)	Number of Total References
Students' reactions to co-creation	21	44
Describing teachers	24	215
Colleagues' reaction to co-creation	19	38
Educational research projects	8	23
Favourite teaching experiences	12	27
Learning from students	18	45
Professional development	8	16
Reasons for becoming an academic	3	3
Staff projecting into student mindset	16	21
Student descriptions of effective teachers	10	35
Effective teaching characterisations	25	421
Current teaching - effective or not	4	32
Effective teacher and student relationship	24	106
Favourite teaching experiences	21	54
Learning community development	18	43
Learning from failure	10	20
Meeting outside of class	8	13
Online learning support	4	9
Partnership in learning and teaching	22	55
Transformational learning	5	9
Trust in student - teacher relationship	9	18
Ethical aspects of teaching	3	5
Magic wand improvements to HE	23	34
Massification of HE	9	15
Political pressures on HE	6	18
Reflecting on changes in HE	3	7
Reflection	6	11
Student engagement	25	186
Responsibility for student engagement	24	70
Student representation	12	30
University processes and procedures	1	3

Appendix Item 7 – Participant Consent Form for Phase 1 Data Collection

Project title: Undergraduate Student Engagement in Theory and in Practice

Researcher's name: Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka (PhD Candidate)

Supervisors' names: Professor Carolin Kreber and Dr Daphne Loads

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and I understand the nature and purpose of the research project and my involvement in it. I agree to take part.
- I understand that my participation in the interview or focus group is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- I understand that the data collected by the researcher will appear in publications relevant to this area of research. I understand that my name will not appear in any published document relating to this study. I give permission for anonymised excerpts of the interview to appear in the published work of the author.
- I understand that I will be audio recorded during the interview or focus group (unless otherwise discussed), and I have the right to listen to the recording. The researcher will subsequently provide me with a written transcript and I will have the opportunity to check its accuracy and comment on the transcript.
- I understand that data will be stored in a secure, password-protected data storage area which will be accessed only by the above-named researcher and research supervisors.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Officer of the School of Education, University of Edinburgh, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed (research participant)

Print name **Date**

Signed (researcher)

Print name ...Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka..... **Date**

Contact details

Researcher:

Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka (s1475432@ed.ac.uk)

Supervisors:

Professor Carolin Kreber (carolin.kreber@ed.ac.uk) and Dr Daphne Loads

(daphne.loads@ed.ac.uk)

Moray House School of Education Research Ethics Officer:

Dr Jane Brown (j.a.brown@ed.ac.uk)

Appendix Item 8 – Participant Consent Form for Phases 2 & 3 Data Collection

Project title: Co-Creation of the Curriculum: Opportunities and Challenges in Undergraduate Learning & Teaching

Researcher’s name: Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka (PhD Candidate)

Supervisors’ names: Professor Carolin Kreber and Dr Daphne Loads

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and I understand the nature and purpose of the research project and my involvement in it. I agree to take part.
- I understand that my participation in the focus group is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
- I understand that the data collected by the researcher will appear in publications relevant to this area of research. I understand that my name will not appear in any published document relating to this study. I give permission for anonymised excerpts of the interview to appear in the published work of the author.
- I understand that I will be audio recorded during the focus group, and I have the right to listen to the recording or request a written transcript to check its accuracy.
- I understand that data will be stored in a secure, password-protected data storage area which will be accessed only by the above-named researcher, student consultants, and research supervisors.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisor if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Officer of the School of Education, University of Edinburgh, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed (research participant)

Print name **Date**

Signed (researcher)

Print name ...Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka..... **Date**

Contact details

Researcher:
Tanya Lubicz-Nawrocka (s1475432@ed.ac.uk)

Supervisors:
Professor Carolin Kreber (carolin.kreber@ed.ac.uk) and Dr Daphne Loads (daphne.loads@ed.ac.uk)

Moray House School of Education Research Ethics Officer:
Dr Jane Brown (j.a.brown@ed.ac.uk)

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