Working towards a connected future; understanding the changing dynamics in the relationships between students and teachers in higher education

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Aims of this presentation

To introduce a theoretical model that offers a medium through which to articulate, chart and analyse an understanding of the changing dynamics and developing partnerships, between students and staff.

To stimulate debate around a number of key but contested terms and concepts within pedagogic debate such as;

- Power;
- Equality;
- Empowerment;
- Control.
Background

The model was initially developed to describe staff/student working relationships based on our experience of collaboration with students as producers.

For example;

- **‘From enjoyment to employment’** - A research project (HEA funded) exploring how student volunteering activity influenced employability. The research team comprised four undergraduate student researchers and four academics;

- **‘Open Educational Resources (OER) for students and educators on professional awards’** – one part of an institution-wide project (JISC and HEA funded), undergraduate and post-graduate students as partners in the project group and engaged in production of OER;

The model has evolved following consultation and discussion with a range of stakeholders at an interactive workshop (Crawford et al, 2013)
The model

- facilitates a challenge to the prevalent views of students as consumers, and academics as performers and deliverers of knowledge (Neary and Winn 2009);
- is applicable across a range of staff/student relationships in Higher Education;
- poses a number of questions regarding who ‘drives’ or controls the co-production of knowledge;
- seeks to describe and explore ‘partnership learning communities’ (Healey, Flint and Harrington 2014) by concentrating on a micro analysis of the pedagogic relationship.
Student participation continuum

Staff participation continuum

PASSIVE

IN CONTROL

Paternalism?

Partnership?

Emancipation?
Key messages

- As we develop our practices and prepare for learning futures, the student-staff partnership needs to be understood, articulated and developed at all levels and by all stakeholders.

- Pedagogic relationships are not static, they are dynamic and evolve over time.

- Pedagogic relationships incorporate and are influenced by elements of power and control which fluctuate over the course of the relationship according to the nature, context and content of the activity and related decisions.

- The nature, context and content of pedagogic relationships can usefully be described, debated and analysed to support understanding of the dynamics and development towards meaningful partnerships.
References

