

Maximising Student Success: Partnership, Innovation, and Belonging

Jack Hogan, Lecturer in Academic Practice, Abertay University

Context

Part A: My Experiences

Part B: Examples in Practice

Part C: Recommendations & Conclusions



Part A: My Experiences

From Student to Staff

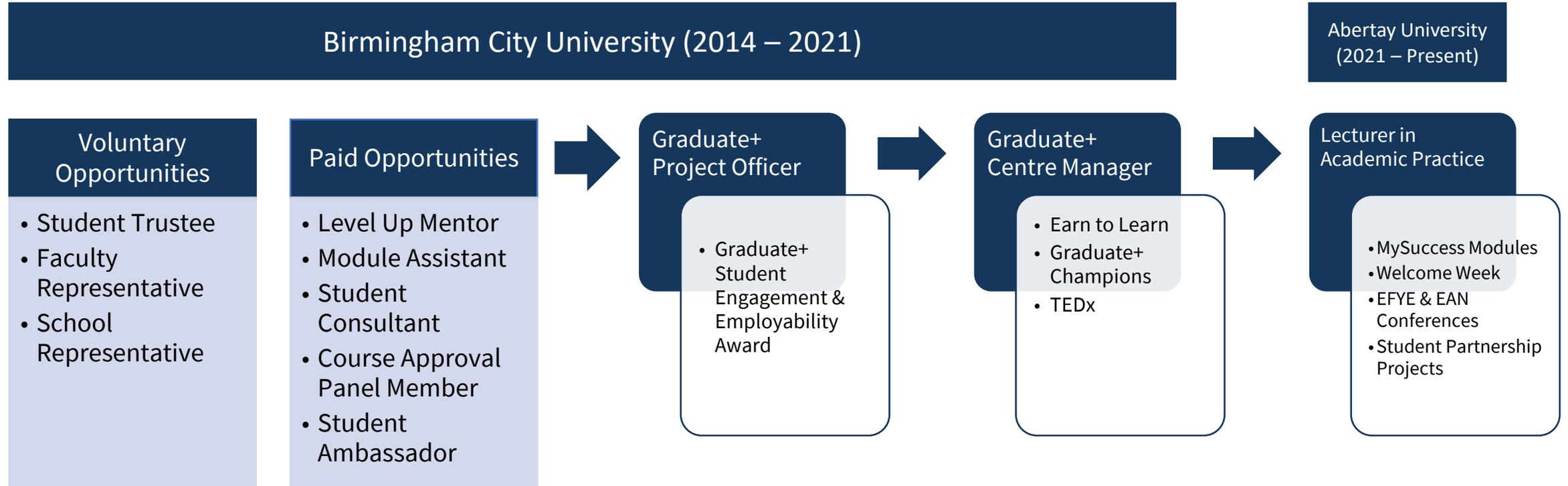
Level Up Transition Mentoring



Level Up Transition Mentoring



My Experiences...



“Partnership is understood as fundamentally about a relationship in which all involved – students, academics, professional services staff, senior managers, students’ unions, and so on – are actively engaged in and stand to gain from the process of learning and working together. Partnership is essentially a process of engagement, not a product. **It is a way of doing things**, rather than an outcome in itself.” (Healey et al, 2014, p.12)

Students as...

Collaboration

- Students as Partners
- Students as Co-Creators
- Students as Teachers
- Students as Collaborators

Leadership

- Students as Leaders
- Students as Advocates
- Students as Ambassadors
- Students as Champions

Knowledge

- Students as Researchers
- Students as Consultants
- Students as Advisors
- Students as Experts

Community

- Students as Colleagues
- Students as Mentors
- Students as Representatives
- Students as Facilitators

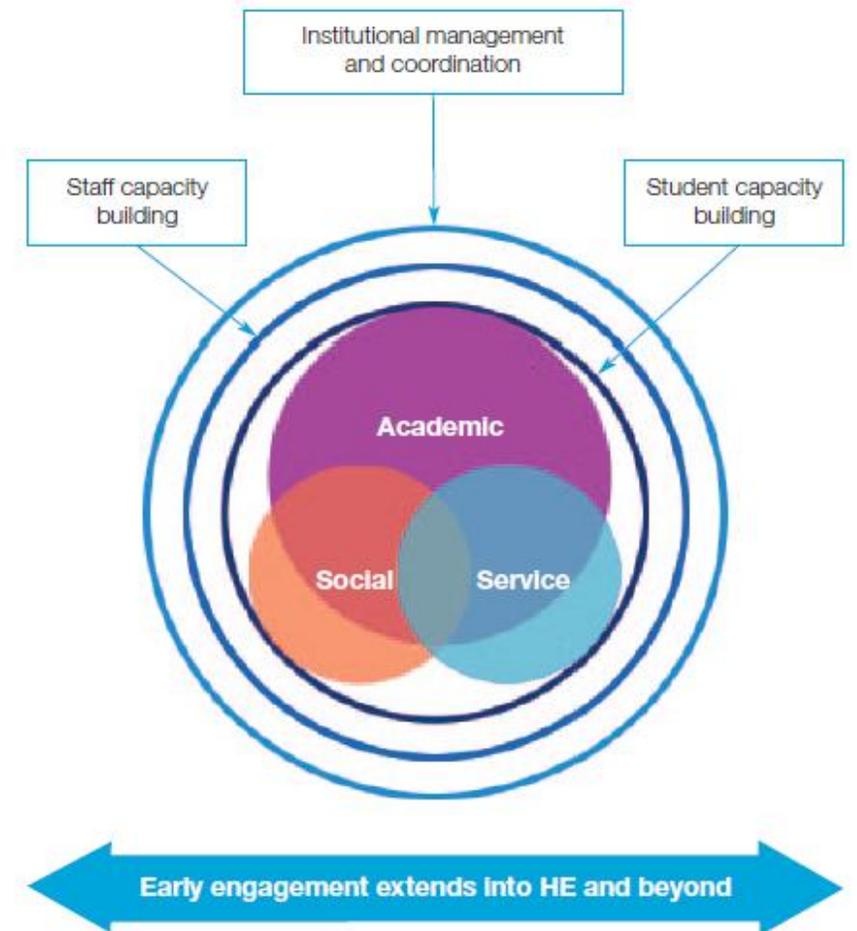
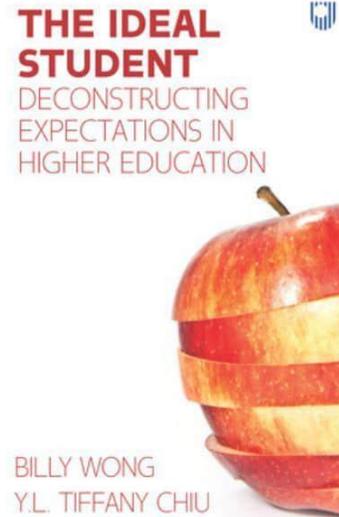
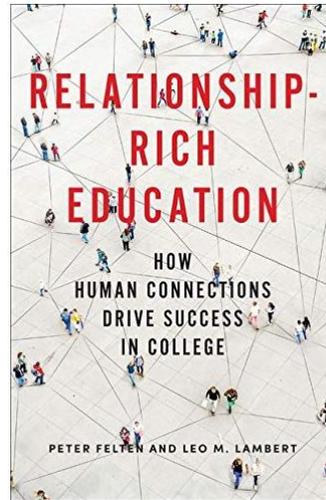
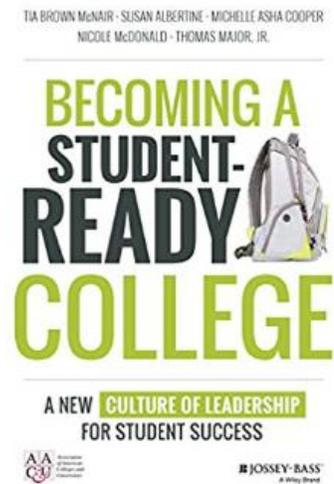
(1) consultant... (2) co-researcher... (3) pedagogical co-designer... (4) representative....

(Bovill et al, 2016)

Part B: Examples in Practice

MySuccess Modules

MySuccess Modules: Building the Foundations of Social & Academic Success



ABE101 - Being Successful at Abertay

Abertay Learning Enhancement Academy

ABE102 - Successful Writing at Abertay

Learner Development Service

ABE103 – Digital Skills for University & Beyond!

Technology Enhanced Learning Support Team

ABE104 – Dundee & Me

Built Environment & Life Sciences

ABE105 – Research & Enquiry Skills for the Digital Age

Learning Resources

ABE106 – How to Sell your Ideas!

Built Environment & Life Sciences

ABE107 – Planning your Future Career

Careers Service

ABE108 – Your Student Life

Abertay Students' Association

ABE109 – Wellbeing Tools & Tricks

Student Services

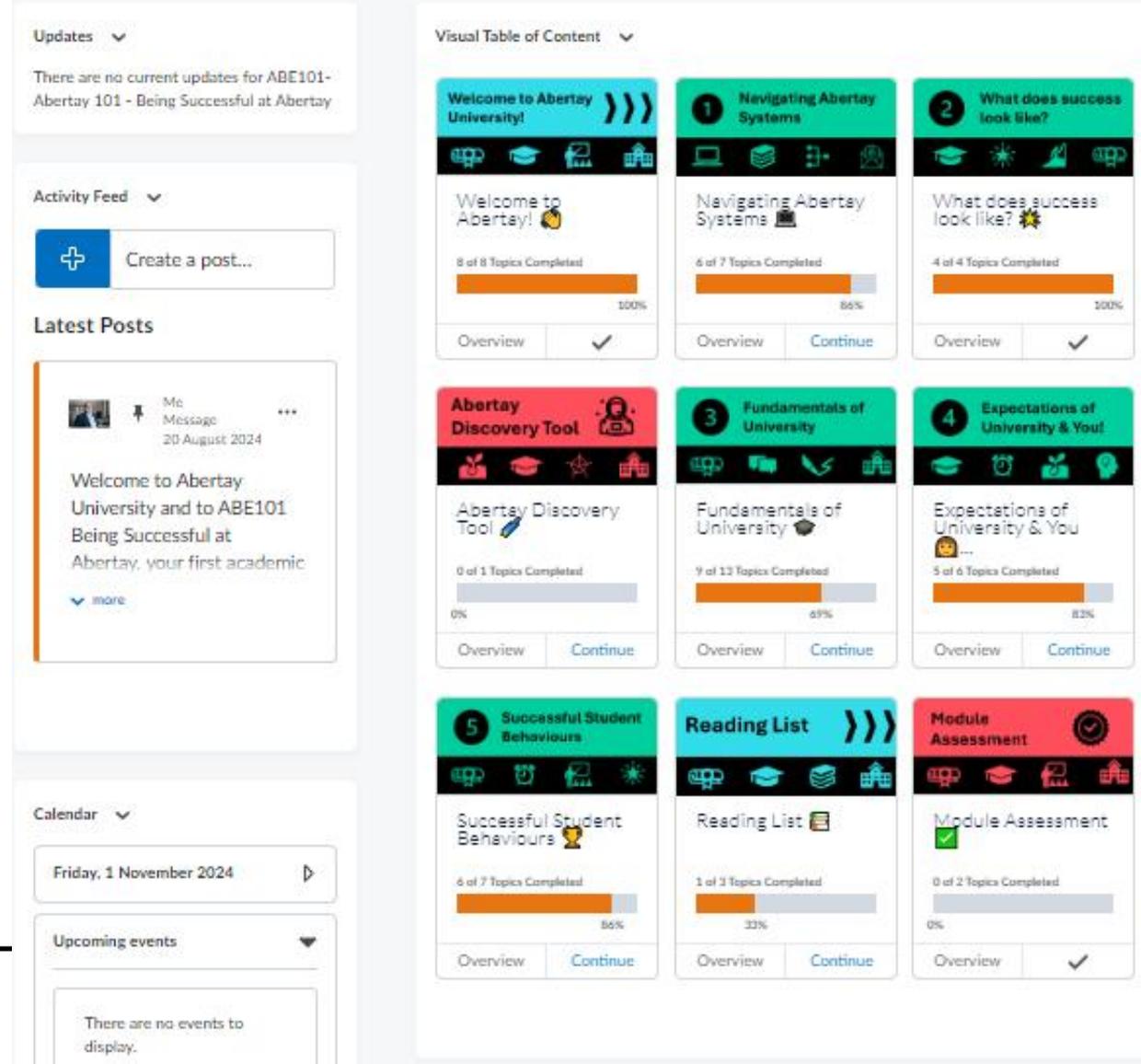
ABE111 – Numbers for Everyday Life

Built Environment & Life Sciences

ABE101 - Being Successful at Abertay

Module Aim: To prepare you for a successful future at Abertay by enabling you to develop successful student habits through accessing supporting resources and guidance.

- Welcome to Abertay!
- Navigating Abertay Systems
- What does success look like?
- Abertay Discovery Tool
- Fundamentals of University
- Expectations of University & You
- Successful Student Behaviours



The dashboard displays the following progress for each topic:

Topic	Progress	Status
Welcome to Abertay University!	8 of 8 Topics Completed (100%)	Completed
Navigating Abertay Systems	6 of 7 Topics Completed (86%)	In Progress
What does success look like?	4 of 4 Topics Completed (100%)	Completed
Abertay Discovery Tool	0 of 1 Topics Completed (0%)	In Progress
Fundamentals of University	9 of 12 Topics Completed (75%)	In Progress
Expectations of University & You	5 of 6 Topics Completed (83%)	In Progress
Successful Student Behaviours	6 of 7 Topics Completed (86%)	In Progress
Reading List	1 of 3 Topics Completed (33%)	In Progress
Module Assessment	0 of 2 Topics Completed (0%)	In Progress

MySuccess Module Assistants

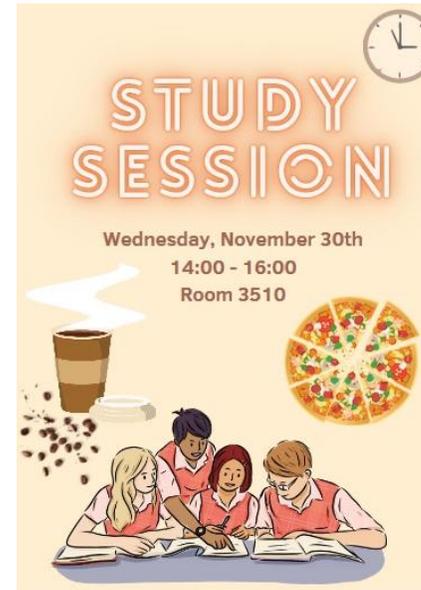
Each microcredential is supported by 2 x MySuccess Module Assistants.

The roles includes:

- Providing 1:1 support
- Creating additional module material
- Running drop-ins/events (Pizza Parties etc)
- Responding to discussion boards
- Monitoring engagement

“The module assistants formed a bridge between the everyday management of the module and the students studying it by responding to students through discussion boards and ensuring students were engaged.”

Dr Rebecca Wade, ABE104 Module Leader



Module Assistant Activities

ABE101 Daily Drop-ins

Each day whilst this module is running, you have the opportunity to attend a drop-in session. Some of these will be themed whilst others will be an opportunity for you to ask questions about the module, meet the module tutor and assistants, and meet other new students. Below is a list of the times the drop-in sessions will be running:

Monday 29th August - Friday 2nd September:

Day	Date	Time	Theme	Link to access
Tuesday	30th August	12:00 - 13:00	What is the Students Association?	Click here to access
Wednesday	31st August	14:00 - 15:00	Meet the Dean of Teaching & Learning	Click here to access
Thursday	1st September	16:00 - 17:00	Welcome to Abertay!	Click here to access
Friday	2nd September	11:00 - 12:00	ABE101 Q&A	Click here to access



Off campus student

Anonymous posted 08 September 2021 1:35 PM [\(Show Author\)](#) [★ Subscribe](#)

I am worried that as a student who lives/works part time in Fife and won't be staying on campus I might not be able to make full advantage of my university experience and make as close relationships as others within my course. Is it normal to feel this way?

[Reply to Thread](#)



Lauryn Baldie

09 September 2021 2:13 PM

Hi!

I'm one of the module assistants, and I'm also a 4th year student. Although Jack already replied to this, I wanted to share my experience. I am in a similar position: I live with family, so I've never lived in student accommodation or even in the city centre, where the university and a lot of students are. However, I've also met other students at Abertay who travel in from Fife or nearby areas, so you're definitely not alone in this.

I had the same concerns before I started, but I've still managed to be very involved in university life and meet a lot of people. If you do struggle to get to know people on your course, [societies](#) are always an option, and they allow you to meet a broad range of people from other courses. They also run activities at different times, and hopefully you could find things that fit around your part-time work.

It can feel strange trying to settle in to university life when you don't live on (or near) campus, but it is possible with a bit of time management and a willingness to try some new things.

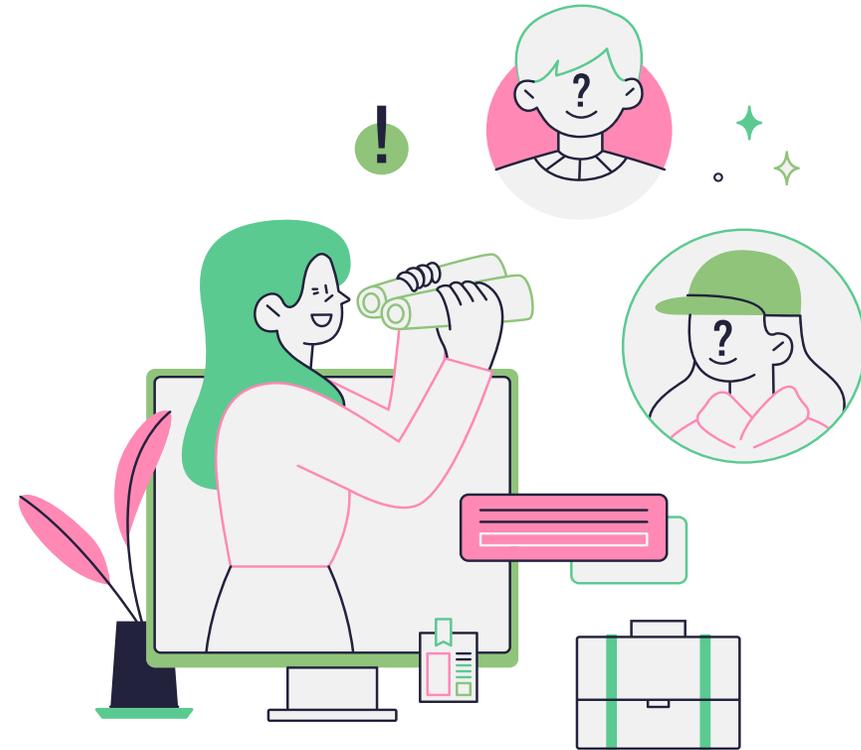
Good luck with starting uni,

Lauryn :)

[← Reply](#)

Case Study: ABE108 Redevelopment

- Name didn't resonate with students ('Welcome to the CommuniTAY')
- Student Feedback expressed a desire to be taught about living independently and managing finances
- Students weren't engaging with discussion boards.



Case Study: ABE108 Redevelopment

- The number of students on the module increased by 177% (66 students to 183 students)
- Percentage of students enrolled increased (11% to 26%)
- Students engaged much more with activities such as discussion boards.



Part C: Recommendations & Conclusions

Recommendations (Advance HE, 2019)

Policymakers & Leaders

- Provide opportunities for internal funding
- Build a community of practice

Researchers

- Measure Impact
- Consider routes of dissemination to reach a wider audience

Teaching Staff

- Give it a go
- Evaluate and share the good and bad

Students

- Consider why you are doing it
- Do not compromise

Implications for Academic Developers

1. Develop a strong working relationship between academic development and the SU.
2. Embed Students as Partners into University strategy and policy documents.
3. Explore opportunities to deepen student learning from work-based partnerships.
4. Disseminate effective Students as Partners approaches.
5. Recognise and reward partnership work.

(Curran & Millard, 2016, p.73)



Conclusion

- **Purposeful Design:** Clear vision and parameters.
- **Empowerment and Flexibility:** Team members empowered to make changes to systems and processes.
- **Continuous Learning and Development:** Ongoing development through 1:1s, development workshops.
- **Support and Collaboration:** Centrally coordinated.
- **Reward and Recognition:** Students and Staff.

“As a sector, we know all the potential **positives** to come out of a **fully engaged** student and staff community. Now we have to rise up to the challenge to fully **embrace a changed mindset** and systemically embed student engagement and partnership in to our organisations.”

(Blackwell Young & Millard, 2023, p.76)

Over to you...

- In what ways do students work in partnership with staff to make changes to the student experience. **How do students and staff engage in genuine dialogue** to explore challenges and develop solutions together and do students and staff value the expertise each brings to the discussion?
- To what extent are **student views integral to strategic decision making?** Do students play a key role in identifying themes and priorities at all levels of the institution and in enacting changes?
- How are **students recognised and rewarded for the role** they have played in student partnership and for the impact they have made on current and future students.

(Student Learning Experience Model, sparqs, 2024)



#BeAbertay

References:

- Blackwell Young, J., & Millard, L. (2023). Reflections on 15 years of working in student partnerships: Successes, challenges and the future possibilities. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.56433/jpaap.v11i3.597>
- Bovill, C., Cook-Sather, A., Felten, P., Millard, L., & Moore-Cherry, N. (2016). Addressing potential challenges in co-creating learning and teaching: Overcoming resistance, navigating institutional norms and ensuring inclusivity in student–staff partnerships. *Higher Education*, 71(2), 195–208. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-015-9896-4>
- Curran, R., & Millard, L. (2016). A partnership approach to developing student capacity to engage and staff capacity to be engaging: opportunities for academic developers. *International Journal for Academic Development*, 21(1), 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1360144X.2015.1120212>
- Felten, P., Lambert, L.M. (2020) *Relationship-Rich Education – How Human Connections Drive Success in College*. John Hopkins University Press.
- Healey, M., Flint, A., & Harrington, K. (2014). Engagement through partnership: Students as partners in learning and teaching in higher education. Higher Education Academy. <https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/engagement-through-partnership-students-partnerslearning-and-teaching-higher-education>
- McNair, T.B., Albertine, S., McDonald, N., Major, T., Cooper, M.A. (2022) *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success*. Jossey-Bass.
- Peart, D., Rumbold, P., & Fukar, E. (2023). Student engagement through partnership: A literature review. *Advance HE*. <https://advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/student-engagement-through-partnership-literature-review>
- sparqs. (2024) *Student Learning Experience Model*.
- Thomas, L. (2012). *Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change*. Paul Hamlyn Foundation. <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/building-student-engagement-and-belonging-higher-education-time-change-final-report>,
- Wong, B., & Chiu, Y. (2021). *The ideal student: Deconstructing expectations in higher education*. Open University Press.