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BECOMING: REALIZING SELVES THROUGH PARTICIPATING IN PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIP

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Becoming is a process—the process of coming to be. The word and the ways it is used highlight creation, emergence, development. Most becoming is a slow process, an unfolding over time, a growing into. Because of the movement inherent in the term, it evokes unfinishedness—the quality that Paulo Freire (1998) argued makes us educable. The process itself and the awareness of the process make learning possible—indeed, perhaps constitute learning.

The stories of becoming—of realizing selves—included in this issue of *Teaching and Learning Together in Higher Education* focus on the two senses of “realize”: to become aware of and to make happen. They are six stories of how student consultants in the Students as Learners and Teachers (SaLT) program became aware of themselves and their processes of development and brought into being new versions of those selves. Each story captures the way in which such becoming and such realizing are complex intersections of intention and accident, choice and circumstance.

Baxter-Magolda (2007) defines *self-authoring* as “the internal capacity to define one’s own belief system, identity, and relationships” (p. 69). Matthews et al. (2018) have suggested that engaging in pedagogical partnership is a form of self-authorship, with the emphasis on “how each participant in partnership creates herself” (p. 9). But such self creation is not accomplished alone, especially not in the context of pedagogical partnership. About her book, called *Becoming*, Michelle Obama explained: “[In sharing my story, I hope to create space for other stories and other voices, to widen the pathways for who belongs and why.](#)” That spirit is behind some of these stories, too—sharing to inspire and to make way for others to tell their stories of pedagogical partnership in particular—to give voice to the unique experiences this group of six student partners had and to invite other voices to tell their stories.

In “[FROM LISTENING TO RESPONDING TO LEADING: BUILDING CAPACITY THROUGH FOUR PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIPS](#),” Amaka Eze, Bryn Mawr College Class of 2019, traces how she developed skills and capacities through participating in four partnerships, each in a different discipline and with a different set of challenges and possibilities. She focuses on how deep listening, carefully modulated responding, and ultimately a kind of leadership informed by both have come to define the capacities she has developed through this work.

In “[AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BECOMING: COMMUNITY, MENTORSHIP, AND PARTNERSHIP AS A MEANS FOR SELF-REALIZATION](#),” Marley Asplundh, Haverford College, Class of 2019, traces her becoming, moving “from a quiet, passive student into one who sees the value and impact of my voice in my own and others’ education.” She describes how her work as a student consultant in the Students as Learners and Teachers program helped her claim the abilities she has built as student as her own successes.

In “[TRANSFORMATIVE SELF-CENTERING THROUGH PARTNERSHIP](#),” Jake Ogata Bernstein, Haverford College, Class of 2019, describes the process through which he came to generatively center himself. He is clear that this is not about being self-centered but rather about strengthening lines of communication with the self in order to be able to communicate better with others. He describes the growing inner awareness and self-affirmation that made it possible for him to support his faculty partner in becoming.

In “[WHERE I COME FROM: GROWTH AND INCLUSION THROUGH SUCCESSIVE PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIPS](#),” Mercette Ohlwiler, Haverford College Class of 2019, puts the insights they gained through their pedagogical partnerships with two different faculty members into dialogue with one another. Their goal is to “reflect on the circumstances behind each one as a means of discovering my overall growth through pedagogical partnership.”

In “[CARRYING PARTNERSHIP SKILLS BEYOND FORMAL PARTNERSHIPS: WHEN CONFLICTS GROW INTO CONNECTIONS](#),” Yeidaly Mejia, Bryn Mawr College, Class of 2019, discusses how she developed new skills for working across differences—of power, of identity, of pedagogical commitment—through a partnership with a faculty member outside the formal structure of the SaLT program. Applying the skills she had developed as a student consultant and through other equity work, she addresses how empathy for others and the courage to act on one’s own convictions need to be in conflict with one another.

In “[HOW PARTICIPATING IN PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIP HELPED ME GROW AS A PERSON AND AS A STUDENT](#),” Carol Lee Diallo, Haverford College, Class of 2019, describes how her participation in a pedagogical partnership contributed to her growth as a person and as a student—growth both in awareness and in the ways she interact with others.

Each of these essays offers a different version of a story of growth—of coming to be through self-authoring, in dynamic relationship with others, embracing unfinishedness as the basis for perpetual learning and development.

References

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