

## Case Study 20

# Contradictions and compromises: Putting guiding principles into practice

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The University Library is fundamental to the student experience at the University of Newcastle. We have developed a University Library Students as Partners Framework, which outlines the Library's approach to engaging and collaborating meaningfully with our students through partnership and employment, in order to achieve our strategic aims of enhancing the student experience and contributing to the life-readiness of our graduates. The Framework sets out a set of key considerations/guiding principles intended to guide thinking and decision making when students and staff have ideas for engagement opportunities or are embarking on student partnership within the Library. These key considerations thus serve as a foundation for our approach moving forward.

1. Inclusiveness: proactively seek diverse representation
2. Expertise: acknowledge and value students' lived experience as expertise
3. Learning: centre learning opportunities and acknowledge teaching and learning as reciprocal
4. Agency: nurture power-sharing relationships (Matthews, 2017)
5. Recognition: credit, reward and remunerate student contribution
6. Relevance: create meaningful and relevant opportunities with reciprocal benefit and value

7. Expectations: agree realistic expectations and provide appropriate support
8. Reach: consider ways to increase the number of students who benefit
9. Perspectives: incorporate a range of student voices and perspectives
10. Accountability: ensure access to opportunities is equitable, transparent, and accountable

But trying to apply all of these principles to their fullest extent can throw up some contradictions/paradoxes. The reality of putting Students as Partners theory into practice in the real (imperfect) world, is seeking and hopefully finding balanced compromises between sometimes contradictory priorities and working within rather than against the paradoxes this can create. This presentation will explore some of the tensions between these key considerations, which can/do arise when putting SaP theory into practice, by drawing from examples from our experiences in the University Library at the University of Newcastle.

### References

Matthews, K. (2017). Five Propositions for Genuine Students as Partners Practice. *International Journal for Students as Partners*, 1(2), <https://doi.org/10.15173/ijsap.v1i2.3315>

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