COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
FACULTY AND STUDENT AFFAIRS PROFESSIONALS: A CASE STUDY

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In this constructivist collective case study, the collaborative relationships of faculty and student affairs professionals co-teaching were examined. Bowling Green State University was selected as the site, and four pairs of co-instructors for BGSU1000, a first year seminar, each with a faculty member and a student affairs professional, were the participants. A Vygotskian framework was used to consider the individual by herself or himself, and in interaction with a partner. An individual interview was conducted with each participant, was followed by an interview with each pair, and concluded with a final individual interview with each participant. Participants explained that prior relationships, common values, common goals, common backgrounds and experiences, and common styles promoted the development of their collaboration and relationships. Participants said that establishing comfort and trust was also important. Participants functioned as colleagues, mentors-mentees, family, and friends. Participants’ roles were complex and situational and communication affected how their relationships and collaboration functioned. Communication included assumptions, discussion, overlap, and compartmentalization. Participants noted that their relationships impacted their collaboration and vice versa and that time also influenced this interaction. Most participants believed they were able to achieve more in partnership than they would have been able to accomplish individually. Ultimately, prior relationships, commonalities (in values, goals, background experiences, and personality styles), and developing comfort and trust were important to good collaboration. Roles were more complex and situational than expected. Those
who are responsible for building or fostering collaborative relationships should note that partnerships should be intentionally developed and supported.
This dissertation is dedicated to my mom and dad.

My dad held me on his lap and read the picture dictionary to me, helping me sound out each word. He bought me my own tool set and taught me the value of hard work.

In the persistence with which I stayed the course,

I felt him every day.

My mom gave me a book for every holiday, took me to the public library, and encouraged my creative writing. When I was interested in dance, computers, singing, drawing, rowing, or poetry, she found a way to support it.

In my dedication to learning everything that I could,

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pass me with their brilliance, hard work, and dedication to making the most of life. They make me proud every day. It is their steadfast support and love that have held me up.

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I once interned at an institution where the school was considering allowing social Greek organizations for the first time. It was a heated issue on campus and in the city, and as a result the president held open forums for all college constituencies—students, staff, faculty, parents, local citizens, city officials, and others who felt their interests were at stake. In the midst of one of the contentious forums, an elderly man stood up and said that he had his opinion, but regardless of the outcome, he was proud of the school. He explained that the school was demonstrating true community in that although there was much disagreement, each person was working with another to help solve the problem. The best communities, he suggested, are those that work through the difficult situations to become even better in the future. The same could be said of effective collaboration in higher education. Regardless of those involved, how they came together, and their purposes, people in partnership are different individuals working together. In ideal circumstances, there is agreement in work-style, motivation, and goals such that the collaboration is productive and rewarding. In more challenging situations, partnerships may resemble a tug-of-war. By understanding the relationship of those individuals working together, collaborators may better move through the difficult situations toward a common goal.

Learning and Collaboration in American Higher Education

The interest in collaboration in American higher education is no passing fad. There have been frequent calls for collaboration (AAHE, ACPA, & NASPA, 1998; ACPA, 1994; Keeling, 2004, 2007; LEAP 2007; NASULGC, 1997; Wingspread Group, 1993); moreover, the modern, diverse world with a global economy and endless knowledge supply requires it. Both organizations and individuals need to be skilled in collaboration to be successful in the modern world. There is even a term that describes the benefit to organizations that are able to achieve
these partnerships: “collaborative advantage” (Kanter, 1994, p. 96). Kanter (1994) defined “collaborative advantage” in this way, “In a global economy, a well-developed ability to create and sustain fruitful collaborations gives [organizations] a significant competitive leg up” (p. 96). Collaboration is important in today’s society and specifically in higher education settings.

At an individual level, the 21st Century demands that students think across the curriculum and co-curriculum and that higher education supports this seamless learning through synergistic relationships (Arcelus, 2008). Arcelus (2008) further explained the connections among the modern world, seamless learning, and collaboration for student learning. He suggested that students interacting in the modern world require synergistic learning. Synergistic learning requires integrative education, which requires a shift in roles for academic affairs and student affairs. This shift requires collaboration between these two groups. Thus, for students to be well-prepared for a modern world, collaboration is needed.

**Learning in American Higher Education**

As stated by Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, and associates (2005), “Virtually all colleges claim to be committed to student learning” (p. 65). This is both an admirable and expected quality in higher education, although what actually constitutes student learning has been contested since the establishment of higher education (Thelin, 2004). However, accepting that student learning is the purpose of higher education means that enhancing student learning should be at the heart of any efforts in post-secondary education. Despite this proclaimed outcome, historically, higher education has attempted to achieve student learning through focusing on teaching rather than learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995). The difference between these two paradigms may be understood simply as changing focus from how to teach better to how to produce better learning, “by whatever means works best” (Barr & Tagg, 1995, p. 13). In this shift from an
instruction paradigm to a learning paradigm, Barr and Tagg (1995) acknowledged the importance of learning being holistic, using a broad context to learn across the curriculum and co-curriculum. Research about college outcomes, the brain, cognition, and student development, suggests that students learn best across the curriculum and co-curriculum when learning is synthesized and integrated (Ewell, 1997; Newton & Smith, 1996; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2007; Zull, 2002).

Collaboration as a Strategy to Promote Learning

Ultimately, students do not designate where they learn, nor do they care (Shushock, Henry, Blalock, & Sriram, 2009). If students learn best when knowledge is synthesized and integrated, providing an environment where students can easily connect information seems vital. The Boyer Commission (1998) claimed seamless learning environments are the right of every student (Boyer Commission, 1998). Kuh (1996) listed the following principles for creating a seamless learning environment that enhance integrated learning:

1. Generate enthusiasm for institutional renewal
2. Create a common vision of learning
3. Develop a common language
4. Foster collaboration and cross-functional dialogue
5. Examine the influence of student cultures on student learning
6. Focus on systemic change. (pp. 137-141)

Collaboration, called for specifically by Kuh (1996), could be a structure by which to integrate varying experiences, thus promoting a seamless learning environment. As Arminio, Roberts, and Bonfiglio (2009) explained,
A campus that shares responsibility for student learning is characterized by continual, cooperative learning on the part of faculty and staff, a pervasive attitude that the campus is a learning organization, engagement with community and larger societal issues, and a widespread willingness to adapt to changing conditions. (p. 17)

Ultimately, there are many groups of people who work together to run an institution. However, faculty and student affairs staff members are arguably the two groups most responsible for student learning. Student affairs and academic affairs partnerships focused on student learning may especially promote student learning.

Student affairs is particularly equipped to collaborate with academic affairs to enhance learning outcomes that may include effective citizenship, democratic ideals and democracy; cognitive, interpersonal, and organizational skills; the development of community and its maintenance; self-discipline, self-understanding and responsibility for self and community; and the necessity for and the value of deferred gratification and hard work, honesty, and integrity. (Bloland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1996, p. 219)

Gaining a better understanding of collaboration for student learning between these two groups may serve to improve the efficacy of their work together, and therefore contribute to promoting a seamless learning environment.

It is also important to note that not only may collaboration promote learning, but learning about collaboration may promote collaboration (Kezar & Lester, 2009). Students, faculty, and staff can develop “an understanding of the nature of collaboration and development of the skills necessary to practice it” (Kezar & Lester, 2009, p. 195). Kezar and Lester (2009) explained that as those in higher education learn about the process of collaboration, the people, the skills, the interpersonal dynamics, the complexity of issues, and gain an improved understanding of an
organization or higher education in general, they foster collaboration and become better about practicing it. This cyclical nature of learning and collaboration reinforces the argument for collaboration as a means to promote learning. To best affect learning, higher education must purposefully manage the environment to give students, faculty, and staff opportunities to discover and grow—and collaborative partnerships for student learning may be effective ways to accomplish this purpose.

**Relationship, Partnership, and Collaboration Defined**

Three terms are used extensively in this study. Relationship, partnership, and collaboration are often used synonymously in research and anecdotally, but it is important to understand the distinction among them as they will be used in the study. Relationship happens when “two individuals create a set of shared experiences and understandings that are unique to them” (Schrage, 1995). Partnership and collaboration can be understood as types of relationships. Partnership is a formalized relationship (McKimm, Millard, & Held, 2008; Schrage, 1995). McKimm, Millard, and Held (2008) stated that partnership was a formalized “agreement between individuals or organizations to work together within the bounds of the agreement” (pp. 34-35). Collaboration is instead a purposive relationship (McKimm, et al., 2008; Schrage, 1995). Kemp (2001) described collaboration as individuals coming together to achieve goals that they might not be able to achieve separately.

Partnership describes an official working association wherein individuals benefit separately; collaboration describes a process of developing a common understanding to produce an outcome beneficial to the individuals separately and together. One term is about the structure, the other is about the process. Understanding collaborative relationships could provide information that may allow those in partnerships to improve their work together. Although more
research needs to be conducted with all kinds of partnerships in higher education, I focused specifically on collaborative relationships between faculty members and student affairs professionals co-teaching a first-year seminar.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the collaborative relationships of faculty and student affairs professionals co-teaching to help students learn. With a better understanding of collaborative relationships, those designing collaborative partnerships or in collaborative partnerships of student affairs professionals and faculty working towards improving student learning may use the results of the study to better their interactions to make the most of their experiences. Although there is research about some areas of collaboration and partnership in higher education, there is a dearth of research about the relationships between individuals in collaboration and how these relationships develop and function, specifically those relationships of faculty and student affairs professionals in partnership to benefit student learning. Therefore, this study addressed a specific interest in individual faculty and student affairs professionals collaborating for student learning to increase the effectiveness of collaboration and its process.

**Statement of Problem and Significance of the Study**

Although collaboration has been called an “imperative” (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Wingspread Group, 1994), and “interest in enhancing academic and student affairs collaboration at colleges and universities has increased across the country” (Kezar, 2003a, p. 1), collaborative efforts are not always successful (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Magolda, 2005). Difficulties with development, implementation, and institutionalization seem widespread (Kezar & Lester, 2009). Without good planning and good design, research suggests over 50% of collaborations will fail (Doz, 1996). While concern about collaboration success is applicable to many groups of people
who work together to run an institution, in this case its relevance is specific to faculty and student affairs staff members who are arguably the two groups most responsible for student learning. Therefore, “We need to better understand how to support this work and make it successful” (Kezar & Lester, 2009, p. 5). Ultimately, gaining a better understanding of the collaborative relationships between these two groups may improve the efficacy of their work together. This study adds to the limited research about the nature of relationships and collaboration between faculty and student affairs professionals in partnerships to improve student learning in higher education. Specifically, it focuses on three areas that are important to collaboration: the development, function, and interplay of collaboration and relationship of those involved in collaboration.

In the 1990s, higher education as a whole lacked integration within and between the curriculum and co-curriculum and was criticized for failing to meet societal needs. In a report on American higher education sponsored by the Lilly Foundation and Pew Charitable Trusts, the Wingspread Group (1993) wrote about their concerns, “A disturbing and dangerous mismatch exists between what American society needs of higher education and what is receiving” (p. 1). The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), through the Kellogg Commission, reported similar concerns. The Commission’s concerns highlighted the focus on narrow, disciplinary concerns that had “little relationship to the challenges facing our society” (NASULGC, 1997, p. 4). The division between student affairs and academic affairs did not help the problems in higher education. Although those in academic affairs acknowledged this concern, most of the pressure to collaborate for student learning was provided by those in student affairs. In response to the segregation and calls for reform, the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), produced *The Student Learning Imperative* (1994). This
document highlighted that student affairs professionals collaborate with other institutional and extra-institutional constituents. Its authors noted,

As with other units in a college or university, student affairs divisions often are highly specialized, compartmentalized, fragmented units that operate as "functional silos": that is, meaningful collaboration with other units is at best serendipitous. The learning-oriented student affairs division recognizes that students benefit from many and varied experiences during college and that learning and personal development are cumulative, mutually shaping processes that occur over an extended period of time in many different settings. The more students are involved in a variety of activities inside and outside the classroom the more they gain. (The learning-oriented student affairs division, para. 3)

The National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA) also published documents that focused on the importance of student affairs working with academic affairs to benefit student learning, including *Reasonable Expectations* (1995) and *Principles for Good Practice in Student Affairs* (1997). In an act of modeling, ACPA joined with NASPA and the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) to create *Powerful Partnerships: A Shared Responsibility for Learning* (ACPA, NASPA, & AAHE, 1998). *Powerful Partnerships* called directly for collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs to benefit students, writing, “This report makes the case that only when everyone on campus—particularly academic affairs and student affairs staff—shares the responsibility for student learning will we be able to make significant progress in improving it” (p. 1). However, despite these calls, institutions still struggle with both the concept and the practice of collaboration.

Although there are some aspects of collaboration that have been researched extensively, other aspects are less understood. There is a significant amount of research on characteristics of
collaboration generally, collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs (e.g., factors that identify, promote, and hinder collaborative work), and outcomes of collaboration (Dunlop & Holosko, 2004; Kezar, 2003a; Kuh, 1996; Nesheim et al., 2007; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2007; Saxton, 1997). However, there has been a relative dearth of research on the development or process of collaboration in higher education, whether for student learning or other purposes (Doz, 1996; Kezar, 2005; Kezar & Lester, 2009). The minimal research that exists about the development and processes of collaboration in higher education generally presents organizations as a whole or individuals’ characteristics. There is currently no higher education research considering the nature of the development or process of relationships between or among individuals participating in the collaborative venture regardless of purpose (Doz, 1996). By understanding the processes by which relationships develop in collaborative partnerships, specifically those whose purpose it is to positively impact student learning, future collaborators will be able to make more informed decisions about their efforts and interactions with other collaborators (Kezar, 2005; Ring & Van de Ven, 1994; Tudge & Hogan, 1997).

Although understanding the general collaborative processes of organizations is necessary, acknowledging the importance of individuals in emerging, growing, and disolving collaborative relationships is vital (Ring & Van de Ven, 1994). Arcelus (2008) found that relationships provide a foundation for student affairs and academic affairs collaboration. Relationships among colleagues in higher education are vital to the health of the field. Higher education is ultimately about individuals in interaction. “Because higher education institutions are professional organizations where individuals are greatly influenced and persuaded by peers and rewards are less important than prestige, this may account for why networks and relationships are a key lever” (Kezar, 2005, p. 857). While understanding relationships are key to understanding
collaboration in partnerships between student affairs professionals and faculty, these interactions have been generally neglected in higher education research, and therefore missing from efforts to promote partnerships. More specifically, there has been little distinction between general collaboration between student affairs professionals and faculty and collaboration between these two groups whose specific purpose it is to promote student learning. While there may or may not be a difference in collaborative efforts depending on purpose, looking specifically at collaboration designed to specifically enhance learning will provide further clarification and information.

This study is important not only because it contributes to the literature of collaboration between student affairs professionals and faculty in higher education purposed for student learning, but for its opportunity to reflect a value of collaboration that is not often represented in research. Studies in collaboration broadly are needed because traditionally, research in collaboration in higher education has focused on the characteristics of the individual person and the individual organization. This is in large part due to the individualistic values of American society. Individualistic values often contradict the nature of collaboration and therefore challenge research in this area (Kezar & Lester, 2009; Pope, Reynolds, & Mueller, 2004). These individualistic values are privileged in that systems and structures in American higher education and American society reinforce individual work and recognition as the best ways to achieve success. Therefore, research investigating more collective work such as collaboration may be less represented. This might explain why research into collaborative partnerships has been explored less frequently. A better understanding of collaboration between student affairs professionals and faculty attempting to promote student learning allows us to give voice to those who have not always been heard.
This study affords a better understanding of collaborative partnerships between student affairs professionals and faculty working together to improve student learning, that will provide administrators, faculty, and students with additional information to more successfully develop collaboration and interact in collaboration. Moreover, this research allows for more voices to be heard and contributes to the relevance and significance of post-secondary institutions in educating citizens who can work effectively with others in the modern world.

**Research Questions**

The primary research questions addressed in this study were:

- How did their relationships develop and function?
- How did their collaboration develop and function?
- What was the interplay between collaboration and relationship?
- What did they experience by being in this partnership?
- How did their collaboration affect student learning?

**Summary**

Collaboration is often espoused in higher education; however, literature suggests it is not very well understood, and therefore not well-enacted. Quality collaboration benefits students’ learning and could therefore benefit students even after they leave higher education. Collaboration may be improved if it is better understood. Little is known, however, about the relationships that are at the base of how collaboration develops and evolves. This study contributes to a better understanding of the collaborative relationships between faculty and student affairs in their efforts to enhance and improve student learning. Moreover, with this appreciation, collaborative efforts may be better guided and supported.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review has two main parts. The first section provides a history of collaboration in higher education and reviews prior studies about collaboration, to provide a context for collaboration, including environments and characteristics that support collaboration, barriers to collaboration, outcomes of collaboration, and benefits of collaboration. The second section structures the framework of the study, including information on the importance of considering relationships in the process of collaboration.

Collaboration

Before Collaboration

The use of the term collaboration in American higher education might be relatively recent, but the concept is not. To best grasp the current conversation about collaboration, an understanding of the underpinnings of collaboration in higher education is needed. Historically, the roles of faculty and student affairs were more connected. In antiquity, proctors or rectors were elected to serve as treasurer and enforce rules and regulations for the guild and students (Lucas, 2006). In Bologna, specifically, the “primary executive duty of the rector—to which he was bound by solemn oath—was to exercise both civil and criminal jurisdiction over students and professors” (Lucas, 2006, p. 46).

The residential colleges at Oxford and Cambridge were perhaps the earliest examples that fed into American higher education. Faculty lived in each of the houses as administrators of student behavior and manners (Lucas, 2006). American higher education, at least in its earliest years, was no different. While faculty and administrators primarily served as guardians for the boys, by the late 1700s, a more specific role in discipline and managing the “extracurriculum” had become of utmost importance (Thelin, 2004). By the 1840s, there was a “marked tendency
toward the professionalization of American education, and . . . a new understanding of studenthood began to emerge” (as cited in Jackson, 1995, p. 37). While students were expected to learn inside the classroom, life outside the classroom began to become important to the higher education experience. Those experiences that are currently directed by numerous faculty, staff, and administrators were once taught and managed by a small group of faculty who were responsible for students’ education inside and outside the classroom (Thelin, 2004).

Collaboration was not an issue because educational components were not separated in the same way they are now.

**Separation of Education Inside the Classroom and Outside the Classroom**

After the 1700s, student life in higher education grew increasingly complex, especially as post-secondary institutions generally, and faculty specifically, focused on research. As scholarly emphasis increased, so did faculty obligations, leaving less time to manage student life (American Council on Higher Education, 1937). As such, a new educational position was created that focused directly on the personal lives, as opposed to the scholarly lives, of students. In 1890, LeBaron Russell Briggs, a young English professor at Harvard University, was hired by the president to serve as a student dean (Rhatigan, 2000). As deans struggled to define their role, they would eventually adopt the core idea of educating the whole student (Sandeen, 2004). As student affairs became more specialized and professionalized, so did faculty scholarship (Zemsky, Wegner, & Massey, 2005). Although the two sides of the divide focused on different areas of student life, their means of ensuring their future were the same—specialization. Faculty came to understand that their professional status depended on their discipline and student affairs staff increasingly emphasized their departmental specialties (Zemsky et al., 2005). Competition
for resources only increased this divide. While this separation allowed for the emergence and
growth of a beneficial profession, not all outcomes were positive:

Although the emergence of the student affairs profession allowed faculty to devote more
time to their scholarly interests, educational programming, once delivered holistically,
was now bestowed in parts. In the classroom, students were inundated with facts by their
professors. Outside the classroom, the same students were advised, counseled, and
disciplined by student affairs educators. The profession of higher education had fractured
into base camps, academic affairs at one site and student affairs at the other. Neither
camp seemed to lament the void this distinction created for students; cognitive learning
was separated from affective learning. As time passed, the two camps became
increasingly discrete and found it more difficult to communicate. In a sense, academic
affairs and student affairs had quickly become second cousins in the academy who spoke
to each other only, if at all, on special occasions. (Philpott, 1998, p. 5)

This separation of learning environment was in contrast to calls for a seamless learning
environment.

**The Seamless Learning Environment and Collaboration**

Research has shown that the setting for collaborative partnerships is quite important for
their success. As described above, a seamless learning environment is key to achieving the
learning outcomes of higher education, and collaboration contributes to a positive learning
environment. As Kuh (1996) noted,

In seamless learning environments, students are encouraged to take advantage of learning
resources that exist both inside and outside the classroom (ACPA, 1994; Kuh, 1994b);
faculty and staff use effective instructional practices (Chickering & Gamson, 1987); and
students are asked to use their life experiences to make meaning of material introduced in classes, laboratories, and studios, and to apply what they are learning in class to their lives outside the classroom (Strange, 1992). (p. 136)

In these kinds of learning environments, it is the connection of material within and across the curriculum and co-curriculum that is important. Structures, such as partnerships between faculty and student affairs professionals collaborating for student learning, offer a concrete way to making those linkages.

While the context of an institution may encourage or inhibit collaboration, collaboration may be an important factor in promoting a positive learning environment. Schroeder and Hurst (1996) examined three documents promoting optimal learning environments. The authors looked at Blocher’s (1978) seven core conditions of an optimal learning environment, Boyer’s (1990) six principles associated with a healthy community, and ACPA’s (1994) *Student Learning Imperative* and found three key commonalities, the last of which is that traditional structural boundaries that exist between departments, colleges, and divisions must be bridged to create a true learning environment. They suggested collaboration as a primary way of addressing this issue. The authors also noted the importance of attending to both the macro and microenvironment in promoting learning, and highlighted collaboration as a means of encouraging learning at both these levels.

In terms of those environmental factors that promote success, Kezar (2005) explained there are eight factors elemental to context for collaboration, “(1) mission; (2) integrating structures; (3) campus networks; (4) rewards; (5) a sense of priority from people in senior positions; (6) external pressure; (7) values; and (8) learning” (p. 844). In their book considering organizational context for collaboration, Kezar and Lester (2009) confirmed these features with
some variation, including vision and educational philosophy with mission, changing campus
networks to social networks, and removing item number five. They noted that mission and
vision, campus networks, and integrating structures were absolutely vital and that, “Without
them collaborative activities will fail” (Kezar & Lester, 2009, p. 60). Other environmental
characteristics found to be conducive to collaboration included leadership, cross-institutional
dialogue, setting expectations, generating enthusiasm, creating a common vision, staff
development, planning (Kezar, 2003a), past history, legitimacy (Dunlop & Holosko, 2004), prior
affiliation, shared decision making, similarities between partners, and trust (Saxton, 1997).

**Barriers to Collaboration**

There is no question that there are significant barriers to collaboration and collaborative
partnerships between faculty and student affairs. Perhaps one of the most enduring barriers
began with the foundation of American higher education—its purpose. While it might seem a
singular purpose on the surface—educating students—the history of American higher education
demonstrates there were actually a variety of purposes at different points in time and from
different educators. From institutions created to instruct ministers, to those intended to liberally
educate future leaders, to those whose function was to train the workforce, to those who believe
that development of the whole student is as important the development of the mind,
disagreement about the purpose of higher education is longstanding. The incredible diversity of
institutions and the numerous services and majors available to students today highlights the
variety of purposes of higher education (Geiger, 1999). While these differences occur across
institutions at the broad level, disagreement of purpose may be seen at cultural and individual
levels as well. This lack of clarity in purpose is reflected in the cultures that developed in
academic affairs and student affairs.
Kuh and Whitt (1988) described culture as “the social or normative glue based on shared values and beliefs that holds an organization together” (p. 10). They noted different kinds of cultural forms including rite, ceremonial, ritual, symbol, language, physical setting, and artifact. Academic affairs and student affairs cultures have their own set of each of these forms. In his study, Arcelus (2008) found distinct role and concern differences between academic and student affairs cultures. Academic affairs administrators and faculty were mostly concerned with the intellectual climate, the quality of student the university recruited, student levels of academic engagement, and academics. Student affairs staff saw their role as generally undervalued and struggled with the role balance of service provider and educators. While his study is recent, Arcelus’ (2008) findings are not surprising. Differences in roles and concerns may be significant challenges to collaboration. While these differences do not inherently inhibit collaboration, cultural differences may lead the two groups to struggle with issues of understanding each other and feeling marginalized. Marginalization may lead a group to feel “denigrated, ignored, or misperceived” (Fried, 1995, p. xvii), and thus less likely to want to work with the affronting group. This is even more challenging when both groups feel marginalized in the presence of the other (Blake, 1996).

The differences between academic affairs and student affairs, though no small obstacle, is just a part of the picture. As Magolda (2001) suggested, forming partnerships and then working together is not easy. Common barriers to collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs include organizational fragmentation and division of labor (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Ferren & Stanton, 2004; Kezar, 2003a, 2005, 2006, 2009; Schroeder, 1999a, 1999b; Streit, 1993); specialization among faculty and staff (Kezar, 2006; Schroeder, 1999a, 1999b); lack of common purpose or language between faculty and staff or administration or between areas of
administration and faculty (Kezar, 2003a, 2006; Streit, 1993); history of separation of units (Kezar, 2003a, 2006; Schroeder, 1999); varying cultures (Ferren & Stanton, 2004; Kezar, 2003a, 2006, 2009; Streit, 1993); different priorities and expectations among various employee groups (Boland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1996; Ferren & Stanton, 2004; Kezar, 2003a, 2006; Streit, 1993); competing assumptions about what constitutes effective learning (Kezar, 2003a, 2006, 2009; Kuh, 1991; Schroeder, 1999a, 1999b); mistrust (Ferren & Stanton, 2004; Schroeder, 1999a, 1999b; Streit, 1993), competition for resources (Ferren & Stanton, 2004), lack of time (Kezar, 2001), faculty resistance (Kezar, 2001) and lack of training and support (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Kezar, 2009).

**Overcoming Barriers to Collaboration**

Just as there are barriers, there are generally ways to overcome them. Magolda (2001) suggested that we often collaborate with those who are like us or share commonalities with us. He challenged this concept, saying we must overcome obstacles to truly develop collaborative relationships. He said,

> Too often in education, a common kind of collaboration involved working on a project with persons or institutions that subscribe to similar ideologies and share common goals. Throughout such undertakings, differences are minimized, harmony and consensus are valued, and desired outcomes agreed upon. Such collaborative efforts do not require members of the collaborative teams to move beyond their borders or outside their comfort zone. (Magolda, 2001, p. 353)

But, he noted, collaborators must "cross borders and begin to renegotiate realms of meaning, social relations, knowledge, and values, which is no easy task" (Magolda, 2001, p. 357). In doing so, partners may begin the process of better understanding different perspectives, asking
difficult questions, and probing important questions. Often, this process might become an effective and productive collaboration, but even if it only promotes understanding amongst those working together, that is a positive end in itself.

Arcelus suggested that partnership, in spite of these cultural differences, happens through relationship. Through intergroup dialogue, individuals in academic affairs and student affairs may get to know one other and come to learn more about the assumptions of the culture (Arcelus, 2008). Other possible ways to overcome these obstacles include strategic planning (Ferren & Stanton, 2004; Streit, 1993); conferences and consultants (Ferren & Stanton, 2004); support (Ferren & Stanton, 2004; Streit, 1993); hunger for ongoing learning and exploration of new ideas and personal gains (Bohen & Stiles, 1998); vision and leadership (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Kezar, 2001; Streit, 1993); institutional commitment (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Streit, 1993); incentives/rewards (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Kezar, 2001; Streit, 1993); financial support (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Kezar, 2001; Streit, 1993); inclusiveness in decision making (Streit, 1993); considering all needs of students (Streit, 1993); individual relationships (Arcelus, 2008; Kezar, 2001); cross-institutional dialogue, common language development and mission, generating enthusiasm, and staff development (Kezar, 2001).

Understanding these barriers and how to overcome them is challenging, but "leaders will not be effective in creating partnerships unless they understand that the structures that undergird most post-secondary institutions prevent collaboration” (Kezar, 2009, p. 21). Despite the growing evidence of the need for collaboration, border crossing and overcoming the barriers to collaboration is difficult. In fact, “a shift to holistic, seamless, collaborative learning environment requires risk-taking on the part of faculty and staff” (Arcelus, 2008, p. 26) and thus
real change requires academic affairs and student affairs to overcome both individual and systemic obstacles.

**Outcomes and Benefits of Collaboration**

Despite the fact that collaboration is not always needed (Kezar, 2009), research has established that when utilized effectively, collaboration has clear outcomes and benefits. Students seem to be one of the groups that benefit most. Generally speaking, collaborative partnerships between faculty and student affairs in higher education have been shown to be beneficial because students have increased opportunities for learning and spend more time with educational professionals (Kezar, 2003a). A positive impact on student engagement and student learning is arguably the most important benefit of collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs. In what is one of the largest studies of outcomes for student affairs academic affairs partnership programs, Nesheim et al. (2007) found four categories of student outcomes: (a) acclimation to the institution (i.e., effective transitions, sense of community, persistence in college); (b) engagement (i.e., campus involvement, academic engagement, interactions between faculty and students); (c) student learning (i.e., make connections between in- and out-of-class experiences, think critically, take responsibility for learning, understand themselves, understand others), and (d) academic and career decisions (i.e., choice of college, choice of major, choice of career). As a summary, the authors noted, “Overall, evidence suggests that partnership programs foster learning outcomes for students” (Nesheim et al., 2007, p. 446).

In their book studying student success, Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, and Whitt (2005) found that collaborative structures were prominent on campuses that highly engaged students. Curriculum development shared across units and disciplines by faculty, first-year experiences, residential programs, and service learning developed and managed by academic affairs and student affairs
promoted engagement by students (Kuh, et al., 2005). Collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs may lead to shared structures that promote student learning, such as learning communities. Learning communities generally connect education inside and outside the classroom (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2007). Pascarella and Terenzini (2007) found evidence to suggest that participation in learning communities is “linked with student perceptions that they are deriving greater benefit from the academic experiences during college” (p. 109). Pascarella and Terenzini (2007) also found studies to support a positive effect of learning communities on general education gains.

Service involvement as part of a curriculum has also been shown to be beneficial to students. Pascarella and Terenzini (2005) found that students who participated in service as a curricular component had better grades and were more likely to say they had learned to apply curricular principles than students who did not participate. Service opportunities are often examples of collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs because frequently faculty utilize student affairs professional in arranging the logistics of service related to the curriculum. Comprehensive support programs that attempt to support students’ work inside and outside the classroom, such as TRIO programs, have documented a statistically significant and positive effect on student persistence (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2007). First-year seminars, efforts that are primarily located in the classroom with collaborative support outside the classroom for curricular components, have indicated a positive and statistically significant benefit to students in terms of persistence and grades (Pascarella & Terenzini, 2007). While not all cases of integrated curricular and co-curricular learning experiences are a result of collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs collaboration, research has suggested that “students are more likely to thrive and learn when support comes from multiple sources that are working together” (Kezar &
Lester, 2009, p. 15). Academic affairs and student affairs collaborators may very well be those sources.

The positive impact of collaborative relationships between academic affairs and student affairs extends not only to students, but to the entire institutional community. Colleges and universities are multifaceted institutions that require cognitively complex faculty and staff who use multiple frames to understand any given situation (Bolman & Deal, 2003). As institutions become more diverse organizations with more diverse populations, more diverse thinking is needed to appropriately manage new ways of thinking, feeling, acting, and interacting (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Nidiffer (2006) suggested that administrators can “increase their cognitive complexity by broadly consulting multiple views, examining multiple sources of data, remaining open to evidence that disconfirms their own views, and actively seeking information about campus functioning” (p. 116). Collaboration offers an opportunity for multiple perspectives. When faculty or staff attempt to solve a problem without an accurate picture of the situation, they “may form superficial analyses and leap on solutions nearest at hand or most in vogue” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 33).

Additionally, collaborative relationships may increase innovation, learning, and cognitive complexity; create better service; promote more and varied solutions; have better cost effectiveness and efficiency; enhance communication and campus relationships; support a campus of trust; combine various areas of expertise; and lead employees to be more motivated (Dotolo & Noftsinger, 2002, Kezar, 2001, 2003a, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Schroeder, 1999a, 1999b). Bensimon and Neumann (1993) listed benefits of collaboration as more creative solutions from a group of individuals; more direct, efficient, and informal communication;
appropriate attention to important tasks by through delegation; and professional development through shared expertise.

Collaborative partnerships also allow more voices to be a part of the conversation of higher education. Collaboration may provide varied perspectives in making decisions, establishing values and priorities, and creating culture (Fried, 1995). As has already been discussed, student affairs and academic affairs have specific cultures that have specific powers and privileges that play a role in most organizational structures and decisions (McEwen, Roper, Bryant, & Langa, 2005; Pope, Reynolds & Mueller, 2004). If these groups ignore the influence of their cultures in understanding a problem, they will likely ignore many possible perspectives and solutions that become available through using cognitively complex thinking (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993). Overly simple frameworks and narrow understandings lead to general rules, styles, and techniques that are applied to all, even when complicated situations, populations, and organizations need more complexity, thus resulting in poor administration. Collaboration sets administration in the hands of many as opposed to one. This process of empowering through collaboration intentionally includes multiple perspectives and realities.

Models of Collaboration

It is important to comprehend how collaborative relationships have been understood in organizations inside and outside of higher education. This is difficult, because as Kezar (2005) suggested, “Very little research has focused on the process of collaboration or its development” (p. 834). Kezar (2003a, 2003b, 2005) has explored the use of models to better understand collaboration. Higher education is certainly not the only organization in which understanding relationships is vital to understanding the organization itself. Both more structured organizations (business) and more flexible organizations (creative fields) have found that relationships are vital
Ring and Van De Ven (1994) investigated how inter-organizational relationships (IORs) emerged, grew, and dissolved. In doing so, they created what they called a “Process Framework” (p. 97), of the development of cooperative IORs. The authors argued that these relationships “are socially contrived mechanisms for collective action, which are continually shaped and restructured by actions and symbolic interpretations of the parties involved” (p. 96). In their model, relationships developed in a cyclical process of negotiation, commitment, and execution and back again. Concepts prevalent in their model included risk and trust, formality and informality, and role and personal interaction, with personal relationships supplanting role (professional) relationships (Ring & Van De Ven, 1994). The authors suggested seven propositions related to collaboration:

**Proposition 1:** Congruent sense making among parties increases the likelihood of concluding formal negotiations to a cooperative IOR [interorganizational relationship].

**Proposition 2:** Congruent psychological contracts among parties increases the likelihood of establishing formal commitments to a cooperative IOR.

**Proposition 3:** If the individuals assigned to a cooperative IOR do not change, personal relationships increasingly supplement role relationships as a cooperative IOR develops over time.

**Proposition 4:** Informal psychological contracts increasingly compensate or substitute for formal contractual safeguards as reliance on trust among parties increases over time.

**Proposition 5:** When the temporal duration of interorganizational relationships is expected to exceed the tenure of agents, informal understandings and commitments will be formalized.
Proposition 6: As the temporal duration of a cooperative IOR increases, the likelihood decreases that parties will terminate the relationship when a breach of commitment occurs.

Proposition 7: When significant imbalances between formal and informal processes arise in repetitive sequences of negotiation, commitment, and execution stages over time, the likelihood of dissolving the cooperative IOR increases. (pp. 101-108)

Although the analysis focused on organizations as a whole, the authors acknowledged the importance of individuals in relationships as partnerships emerge, evolve, grow, and dissolve. They explained how informal relational processes become formalized, and that this possibility depended upon the kinds of relationships that existed. Specifically, the personal relationships defined the organizational relationships as partners shared and established ideas and values. Others have confirmed that relational characteristics such as trust, previous collaboration, informality, local interaction, communication and conflict have been shown to be important to collaboration (Dunlop & Holosko, 2004).

More related to a traditional understanding of relationships, Kanter (1994) used the analogy of romantic relationships to explain how collaboration works: courtship—where the collaborators meet, are attracted, and discover their compatibility; engagement—where collaborators draw up plans and close the deal; setting up housekeeping—where newly partnered companies discover they have different ideas about how to operate; bridging differences—where partners develop techniques for getting along; and old-marrieds—where collaborators discover that they have changed internally as a result of the accommodations and ongoing collaboration.

Kezar (2003a) looked more specifically at collaboration in higher education. She initially explored how institutions facilitate collaboration. She explained that facilitating
collaboration required change and wanted to understand which strategies best facilitate that change. She specifically examined cultural strategies and structural strategies. Cultural strategies refer to those parts of an institution related to people and their cultures such as cross-institutional dialogue, staff development, vision, attitudes, personalities, and cooperation. Structural strategies refer to more organizational and systematic aspects such as fiscal resources, planning, accountability, reward systems, and duties. Kezar (2003a) looked at those strategies that were most successful in facilitating collaboration and found most people gave cultural reasons for participating in collaboration. Participants stated that they used both structural and cultural strategies to achieve collaboration. Additionally, Kezar found that the number of successful collaborations was significantly related to structural strategies. In discussing her study, she concluded that the best approaches to facilitate collaboration uses a combination of structural and cultural strategies.

Kezar (2003b) further explored factors related to successful collaboration when she compared specific models of change to promote academic affairs-student affairs collaboration. In her study, she compared three models of change: one that targeted values and beliefs, one that targeted leadership and planning, and one that targeted structural alterations. Kezar (2003b) surveyed senior student affairs officers to learn about several issues, including the factors that made collaboration successful and the structures or processes that were used to facilitate collaboration. She found that those institutions that used the model that targeted values and beliefs—what she described as the model most closely related to human relations—resulted in the highest number of successful collaborations. Additionally, she found that although most senior student affairs officers described using leadership and planning models the most to facilitate collaboration, they perceived using the values and beliefs model as contributing most to
achieving collaboration. Kezar (2003b) suggested that a model combining a focus on values and beliefs with a focus on leadership and planning would seemingly be most successful in facilitating collaboration.

In her qualitative study of collaboration, Kezar (2005) explored the reasons for collaborating and developed a model of collaboration in higher education. Kezar considered the “driving force in the development” (Kezar, 2005, p. 835) of collaboration, using assessment, learning, and relationships as prominent reasons. She asked, “How does the context for collaboration emerge, grow and become implemented and succeed or fail?” (p. 840). Kezar (2005) built a model for collaboration including three stages: building commitment, commitment, and sustaining. One of Kezar’s main findings was the importance of relationships in all phases of the development of collaboration.

The common element in the inter-organizational relationship (Ring & Van De Ven, 1994), romantic relationship (Kanter, 1994) and “commitment” collaboration (Kezar, 2005) models is the importance of considering collaboration in terms of relationships. Although business has considered relationships more directly, higher education is only beginning to explore the importance of relationship. Kezar (2003a, 2003b, 2005) has identified relationships as an important aspect of collaboration, but the understanding of relationships between collaborative partners is still quite vague.

**Co-Teaching**

While the research was initially conducted studying collaborative partnerships, upon analyzing the emergent data, an additional way of considering collaboration was discovered which is examined here in the literature review. Although collaborative relationships are the focus of study, in this particular case, co-teaching collaborative partnerships were examined.
Therefore, it is appropriate to provide a synopsis of literature on co-teaching to best set a framework for the study.

Co-teaching became a popular teaching technique in the 1960s as a form of progressive education (Villa, Thousand, & Nevin, 2008). In the 1970s, co-teaching was reinforced as way of addressing the more diverse student population and in the 1990s co-teaching was further supported through research that documented the effectiveness of school-based collaboration (Villa, et al., 2008). Co-teaching was defined as “two or more people sharing responsibility for teaching some or all of the students assigned to a classroom” (Villa, et al., 2008, p. 5).

Although co-teaching was described in various ways in different areas of the literature, there were common elements that persisted throughout most explanations. Having shared values and a common conceptual framework was an important starting place from which co-teachers should work (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Roberts & Pruitt, 2009; Villa, et al., 2008). Roberts and Pruitt (2009) highlighted significance of common beliefs when they explained, “As schools work toward developing learning communities, it is important to keep in mind that shared values and norms are the cornerstone on which the community rests” (p. 10). While the authors were describing learning communities generally speaking, they focused on educators co-teaching.

Having a clear, common goal was also described as a vital element of co-teaching (Bess, 2000; Buckley, 2000; Eisen, 2000; Villa, et al., 2008). Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2008) explained that establishing common goals that were documented and agreed upon publicly can help co-instructors avoid any hidden agendas that might exist. When developing categories for team teaching, Eisen (2000) suggested a typology that was goal-based, noting that co-teachers often come together for a common purpose. She provided eight team types including interdisciplinary or multicultural education, collaborative learning, community action and co-
learning, action learning, specialized delivery, professional development, research, and writing. Although the list was not exhaustive, and was set in the framework of adult education, it is relevant to undergraduate students as well.

As Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (2008) quipped, “two heads are better than one” in co-teaching (p. 16). One of the most common elements mentioned in the literature of team teaching is the potential of bringing together two individuals with two different perspectives, strengths, interests, areas of expertise, and access to resources (Bess, 2000; Buckley, 2000; Eisen & Tisdell, 2000; Nash, 2009; Villa, et al., 2008). This element is one of the primary reasons team teaching can be so beneficial for students. Students do not learn at the same rate, benefit from varied educational experiences, and have more access to resources by which to learn when a team of instructors is engaged in teaching them (Buckley, 2000). Moreover, instructors who co-teach benefit in that their strengths are combined and their weaknesses minimized (Buckley, 2000). Ultimately, co-instructors highlight the best of what learning can be. As Eisen and Tisdell (2000) said,

Teaming honors the multidirectionality of learning—the fact that no one person can be an expert on everything—and it also acknowledges that teachers can be learners and learners can be teachers. Team teaching and learners have the capacity to create new knowledge collaboratively—knowledge that is both embedded in and transcends their individual disciplines or life experiences. (p. 1)

Parity happens “when co-teachers perceive that their unique contributions and their presence on a team are valued” (Villa, et al., 2008, p. 6). Parity was another essential element of co-teaching. When an environment of trust was created, co-instructors felt comfortable in experimenting with innovative teaching techniques or in opening up to the class (Bess, 2000;
Buckley, 2000; Eisen, 2000; Nash, 2009; Tisdell & Eisen, 2000; Villa, et al., 2008). Co-instructors knew they could risk mistakes or failure because they were valued for what they brought to the team. An environment with parity allowed instructors to engage in “dual roles of teacher and learner, expert and novice, giver and recipient of knowledge or skills” (Villa, et al., 2008, p. 5) increased problem solving and learning for both the co-instructors and the students.

Another factor that is prominent in the literature about co-teaching is the concept of roles and power dynamics (Bess, 2000; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Nash, 2009; Villa, et al., 2008). As Buckley (2000) suggested, “team teaching cannot be one-size-fits-all” (p. 5). Therefore, co-teaching relationships may look very different from partnership to partnership. Because there is such variety in teaching relationships, there are many different kinds of roles, as well. Determining and understanding roles can be confusing or difficult, therefore. Golde and Pribbenow (2000) specifically described the challenges of faculty and student affairs professionals understanding their roles in informal team teaching in the residence halls. They suggested that faculty had little understanding of what those in student affairs did, let alone the curricular role student affairs professionals could play in the classroom. Moreover, student affairs professionals often had misunderstandings about the roles faculty could play in the residence halls. Issues with power dynamics can come into play with roles as team teachers determine who should do what. Teams may be more comfortable when there is minimal interpersonal competition for power (Bess, 2000). Nash (2009) suggested that crossover pedagogy may be a useful perspective in those circumstances. As he explained, crossover pedagogy:

Assumes that all of us in the academy, whatever our official designations and functions, have the potential to become crossover educators. We train, develop, rear, teach, instruct,
inspire, inform, exemplify, model, mentor, supervise, prepare, and edify, each in our own ways. Moreover, education occurs in multiple settings throughout our institutions, at times simultaneously and in some cases spontaneously; thus, we all must know how to maximize learning in various places and times. (pp. 4-5)

While some literature suggested that one way of team teaching is no better than another (Villa, et al., 2008), other literature encouraged more equality in roles (Bess, 2000; Nash, 2009).

Compatibility, interpersonal skills, and relationships were frequently mentioned as key to co-teaching experiences (Buckley, 2000; Eisen, 2000; Tisdell & Eisen, 2000; Nash, 2009; Villa, et al., 2008). While partners do not have to have an established relationship to co-teach, the literature suggested it is beneficial to develop a relationship if one is not already established (Eisen, 2000; Tisdell & Eisen, 2000; Villa, et al., 2008). This can be difficult if co-teachers are incompatible (Buckely, 2000). This compatibility cannot be undervalued. Tisdell and Eisen (2000) described the importance of building a relationship to their work together on their book. They explained that finding mutual interests, compatible personal styles, complementary backgrounds and sharing their personal lives helped establish trust and ensure positive personal and professional feedback.

Less frequently mentioned, though still an important factor in co-teaching, was the impact of co-teaching on professional development (Bess, 2000; Buckley, 2000; Eisen, 2000; Tisdell & Eisen, 2000; Villa, et al., 2008), communication (Buckley, 2000; Villa, et al., 2008), students (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000), time (Buckley, 2000; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000), and the zone of proximal development (Villa, et al., 2008).

Although this study examined partnerships as a collaborative function, the particular collaboration of co-teachers offers another level that can be further examined through literature
in educational pedagogy. This valuable insight gives a more thorough context to co-teaching collaboration in higher education.

**Relationships as a Framework for the Study**

In much the same way that instruction has been the central paradigm in education, much of our understanding about how people work has been set in an individual context (John-Steiner, 2000). Jean Piaget suggested that individuals construct knowledge to best understand the world (John-Steiner, 2000). While this has been accepted as truth for many, this position neglects the concept that development happens in concert with others (John-Steiner, 2000). Lev Vygotsky, a teacher and psychologist from Russia, offered another possibility. Vygotsky, interested in the idea of human development as mediated by social tools and in social interaction, suggested that people cannot achieve their potential alone (John-Steiner, 2000; Moll, 1990). While seemingly simple, this idea has enormous potential. As described by John-Steiner (2000),

> In contrast to a maturational theory of the self, this analysis emphasizes the potential of stretching one’s identity through partnerships, through sustained and varied action through the interweaving of social and individual processes. This process is well captured by Vygotsky’s concept of the zone of proximal development. (pp. 188-189)

The zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1930-1960/1978) is essentially the area of potential development for each person. Vygotsky believed, however, that the individual can only reach this potential in social interaction with others (John-Stein, 2000; Moll, 1990; Vygotsky, 1930-1960/1978).

Three areas of development are key in using a Vygotskian framework—individual, interpersonal, and cultural-historical (Tudge & Hogan, 1997). These areas are interwoven and integrated. The Vygotskian framework considers the individual by herself or himself, in
interaction with another person, and in interaction with history and culture and how all these factors work together. Development, learning, and understanding in individuals and in partnerships are complex and complicated. As such, the process of relationships is important in the Vygotskian framework, not just the effects of collaboration. A Vygotskian framework offers just what is missing from current literature about collaboration in higher education, specifically collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs in that the evolution and process of collaboration is largely neglected as well. Moreover, a Vygotskian framework demonstrates that individuals in collaboration behave differently than individuals working alone. Their interaction in and of itself—the relationship—is of vital importance.

Vygotsky would have argued that to understand collaboration, it is critical to understand relationships in higher education and in other settings. Although both faculty and administrators may highlight the importance of student learning, this focus may not provide the paths needed to improve higher education that relationships might. While learning might be the espoused motivation behind higher education, those who work in higher education may be more motivated by people than goals, management, or rewards (Birnbaum, 1988). Therefore, understanding all of these factors is important.

Motivating factors such as people or relationships are evident in many areas of higher education. As part of a study to better understand how post-secondary institutions navigated change through collaboration, Kezar (2005) considered various models of collaboration development. She looked at those who viewed collaboration through three different lenses: assessment, learning, and relationships. After interviewing twenty different faculty, staff, and administrators at four different locations, Kezar (2005) created a model that demonstrated the importance of assessment, learning, and relationships to the process of collaboration. She found,
however, that those in higher education were more likely to base collaboration on “well-developed relationships” (p. 856) than learning. Kezar suggested that, “It might be the difficulty of creating learning that resulted in people using relationships more as a strategy for moving the organization toward collaboration” (p. 853); relationships may be more foundational than originally believed to be.

Relationships are central in many kinds of collaboration. This is in part because collaboration is socially constructed (Creamer, 2003, 2004; John-Steiner, 2000; Ring & Van de Ven, 1994). John-Steiner (2000) explained the connection among organization and individual collaboration and social construction: “The relationship between the ‘cultural organism’ and the development of persons is another manifestation of the dynamics of collaboration, of the interdependence of the social and the individual, of their shared growth” (p. 191). John-Steiner explicitly acknowledged the impact of Vygotsky on her work. As such, she used the Vygotskian model of zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) to describe how relationships impact collaboration. Vygotsky (1978), who popularized the concept of zone of proximal development, used the term to refer to “the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problems solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). Although Vygotsky used the concept primarily to refer children and young adults, the idea is still valid for adults in the collaboration. John-Steiner described how adults provide interaction that allows the individuals the ability to solve problems they may not be able to solve independent of each other. While the zone of proximal development for each individual was limited by her or his current level of development and intellectual capabilities, working together to push each
other could provide the impetus to reach the utmost possibilities in each situation (Chaiklin, 2003; Wertsch, 1985)

John-Steiner suggested that in collaborative partnerships, each person helps the other move beyond her or his initial level of development to achieve her or his potential level of development. This occurs through both engagement with the other as well as through “learning through the consequences of their actions and from their partner” [italics in original] (p. 188). Moreover, the risks that the partners take are spread amongst two or more people, allowing for a greater range of possibility in what the partnership may achieve.

Ultimately, collaborative relationships can be bridges between individual development and organizational development. Collaboration “enable[s] participants to engage in the co-construction of knowledge as interdependent intellectual and emotional processes” (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 196). Although collaboration has been studied from an organizational standpoint and an individual standpoint, appraisal of relationships among the individuals involved in a partnership has been neglected (Creamer, 2003, 2004; John-Steiner, 2000). Using a relationship framework to understand collaboration both adds to the understanding of collaboration, and makes theoretical sense. Individuals in collaboration construct understanding and act together. Another layer of insight is provided by considering how the nature of the partnership impacts the collaboration.

Summary

Although much is known about collaboration in some areas, a better understanding of collaborative relationships in the context of collaboration in higher education is needed. This understanding could provide a number of benefits. Collaboration involves people who are in and of themselves complicated and unpredictable. Research in collaboration has explored
environment and characteristics, barriers, and outcomes and benefits; however, much less is understood about how people in collaborative relationships for student learning function. By providing a context of student learning, a framework of Vygotskian perspective and a relationship framework, I attempted to demonstrate that understanding organizations and individuals in collaboration is not enough. We must also reflect and explore how the nature of individuals in collaboration in an organization may impact each other and the collaborative relationships.
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study was set in a constructivist paradigm. It was guided not only by assumptions about research, but by the nature of the research conducted. In this chapter, I explain the constructivist paradigm, the role of the researcher, and the methodology of the study. Then data collection procedures are described, including case and site selection and data gathering strategies. Then the process of data analysis is reviewed. Finally, the measures by which the quality of analysis was ensured, as well as ethical considerations and data analysis are discussed.

Review of Research Questions

As established in the introduction, there is a dearth of research about the development of relationships in collaborative partnerships between faculty and student affairs professionals working to enhance student learning. The research questions for this study reflected my interest in this topic. The research questions addressed in this study were:

For partnerships between faculty and student affairs professionals promoting student learning:

- How did their relationships develop and function?
- How did their collaboration develop and function?
- What was the interplay between collaboration and relationship?
- What did they experience by being in this partnership?
- How did their collaboration affect student learning?

Constructivist Paradigm

This study was grounded in a constructivist paradigm. Patton (1987) explained, A paradigm is a world view, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world. As such, paradigms are deeply embedded in the
socialization of adherents and practitioners: paradigms tell them what is important, legitimate, and reasonable. (p. 203)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) were more succinct in their description, saying that paradigms “represent a distillation of what we think about the world (but cannot prove)” (p. 15). A paradigm is so elemental to our approach to inquiry that it is often overlooked or assumed. Instead, this approach and the assumptions held therein were made explicit. The primary axioms by which the study was guided answer ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Guba & Lincoln, 1989b; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ontology refers to the nature of reality and how it is understood. A constructivist approach assumes that there is no single reality. Instead, “there exist multiple, socially constructed realities ungoverned by natural laws” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b, p. 84). Realities are created in interaction with others and “are defined depending on the kind and amount of prior knowledge and the level of sophistication that the constructor brings to the task” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 86). This is especially relevant for studying relationships from a social constructivist standpoint (Denzin & Lincoln, 1989; Gergen, 1985). From a social constructivist standpoint, reality is based in “intersubjectivity shared, social constructions of meaning and knowledge” (Schwandt, 1989, p. 240).

Epistemology refers to the relationship between the knower and the known. If there exists a single reality, one that can be known (whether currently found or not), then objectivity is important to best understand the single “Truth” without subjective opinion or feeling (Denzin & Lincoln, 1989). However, from a constructivist approach, if reality is relative, then all knowledge can only be subjectively known, created and constructed through interaction with people (Denzin & Lincoln, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978). Ultimately, what can be known and the
knower are entirely interconnected. Therefore, the epistemology of a constructivist standpoint is subjectivist and transactional (Denzin & Lincoln, 1989; Guba & Lincoln, 1989b).

The methodological question asks how the inquirer will go about finding the answer to the question involved (Denzin & Lincoln, 1989). The constructivist would answer that the approach should be dialogic in discussion, analysis, and creation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1989; Guba, 1990). This is important because the understanding of a concept, experience, or idea may be different from one person to the next; therefore, “individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989a, p. 207).

**Role of the Researcher**

As the researcher in this study, I was also the instrument by which information about the case study was collected. Merriam (1988) stated, “Naturalistic inquiry, which focuses on meaning in context, requires a data collection instrument sensitive to underlying meaning when gathering and interpreting data. Humans are best-suited for this task” (p. 3). The human instrument is sensitive, it is flexible and able to “discern what is salient (in the emic views of the respondents) and then focus on that” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b, p. 3). Not only is the researcher the best choice for data collection in a constructivist approach, a human instrument offers unique insight in studying collaborative relationships. Lincoln and Guba (1985) captured this subtle distinction when they said,

Because of the understanding that all instruments interact with respondents and objects but that only the human instrument is capable of grasping and evaluating the meaning of that differential interaction; because the intrusion of instruments intervenes in the mutual
shaping of other elements and that shaping can be appreciated and evaluated only by a human instrument. (p. 41)

As such, if there is interaction between respondents and instruments that may be lost without the ability to “grasp and evaluate,” there is no question that the intricate and subtle interaction amongst subjects in a particular case would be lost without a specific sensitivity to such interactions.

Stake (1995) described the role choices that must be made by a researcher, including:

a. How much to participate personally in the activity of the case
b. How much to pose as expert, how much comprehension to reveal
c. Whether to be neutral observer or evaluative, critical analyst
d. How much to try to serve the needs of anticipated readers
e. How much to provide interpretations about the case
f. How much to advocate a position
g. Whether or not to tell it as a story. (p. 103)

Stake’s (1995) choices are not easily made. However, it is part of the experience of the qualitative researcher to struggle with just such questions; therefore, the responses are provided herein. I was in a unique position in this particular case study. I participated in the activity of each case to varying degrees. As a graduate assistant for the administration of BGSU 1000, I worked with participants during early information meetings, summer and semester-long learning community meetings, assessment opportunities, and regular communication. This clearly impacted my interaction with participants. However, I was not directly involved with their collaboration or relationship with their partnership otherwise. In terms of revealing my expertise, no attempt to hide any level of expertise was needed. I did not expect to serve as a
guide in terms of collaboration, though it was possible the participants might ask questions. In this situation, resources were shared, but no specific advice was provided.

Stake’s third choice was not inclusive of all possible roles. I did not expect to be a neutral observer or an evaluative, critical analyst. Questions were asked to better understand the particular cases and topic of study. As a human instrument, I had my perspective and assumptions that were impossible to lay simply aside. I attempted to recognize my perspective and move past that to best present the participants’ perspective. As a researcher, I probed this perspective, analyzing the data provided. I explored the data until the emic perspective of the collaborative partners and partnerships was captured. Peer debriefers also aided in this process.

The needs of the reader were served while still protecting and respecting the participants of the study. To serve these needs, research questions were answered; thick, rich description was provided; and cases were explored and analyzed thoroughly. Hopefully, participants benefited from a better understanding of their experience and readers benefited from a better understanding of the topic. An interpretation of the case is provided, though participants believed their experience was truly captured. Although something may have been presented with which a participant disagreed, this was acknowledged in the study. In this particular study, there was no need to advocate for a particular position. The data are presented less as story than as thick, rich description of the participants’ experiences. Decisions were made as to how the data would be presented as themes emerged.

Not only must researchers make decisions about their roles, but researchers bring their own experiences, attitudes, values, and ways of making meaning to a research study. While some methodologies encourage the bracketing of experiences (Creswell, 2007), wherein researchers “set aside their experiences, as much as possible, to take a fresh perspective toward
the phenomenon under investigation” (p. 59-60), I have, instead, acknowledged that my experiences, background, and understanding of the world affected my interest in the research, the selection of the case and participants, the questions and observations, and the construction of the emic perspective. As such, it was important that the reader understand my interests and experiences with the topic to provide a foundation for my construction of this research study. I have therefore provided this information in the following section.

**Interest and Experiences**

I have often been characterized as a “peacemaker.” Since childhood I have attempted to find places of common understanding between and among friends, classmates, coworkers, and anyone in conflict. This want of peace led to a more practical ability to sit comfortably “on the fence” during discussion, in considering ideas, and when developing solutions. I am rarely happy choosing one side without consideration of the other. This personal interest and drive followed me into my professional career. As a resident assistant, I was drawn to the position that worked with learning communities wherein faculty and staff worked with students in an environment that crossed traditional boundaries. Then, I understood these boundaries as more physical obstacles—residence halls versus classrooms. As a graduate student in a student affairs program, we often talked about how students learned, developed, and grew outside the classroom. However, at the time I was also teaching a first-year seminar class as well as working in housing, and I was able to see these changes both inside and outside the classroom. In my last year in my master’s program, I worked full-time in a residence hall that held four living-learning communities. Not only was I able to see these connections between learning inside and outside the classroom, but I facilitated it and could see the benefits. This interest
solidified when I concluded my graduate program with a problems paper that considered the most beneficial learning communities.

In my next professional position, I supervised three residence halls that included a living-learning community program, an honors house, and an international house. I worked closely with faculty; we learned from each other and I believe we created a very positive environment for collaboration. While this collaboration was designated by my position, I intentionally sought to better understand faculty culture. I arranged a meeting with one of the more well-known faculty who also directed the Center for Teaching Excellence. I asked questions about faculty culture and she answered them. Then I reciprocated by answering questions about student affairs culture. It was an enlightening conversation.

While I had many opportunities to collaborate and better understand collaboration working professionally, it has been in my assistantship during my doctoral program that I have been able to have intentional and thoughtful conversations about the nature of collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs. In my assistantship as a faculty consultant, I have worked one-on-one with faculty, led discussions and workshops, and participated in learning communities where faculty were able to share their perspectives of their role in higher education, their joys and frustrations, the concerns and confusion, and their passion for their discipline and usually their students. I have been able to hear faculty stories about working with students, other faculty in other departments, parents, student affairs staff, academic affairs staff, and upper administration. Additionally, I have been able to share my perspectives, experiences, and knowledge about higher education; student affairs; administration; and student learning, growth, and development. I have also had the unique opportunity to observe various and interesting examples of student affairs and academic affairs collaboration through observing instances of
teaching, committees, and program development. While my experience prior to returning to school has been entirely embedded in student affairs, my research and assistantship experiences since beginning the program have been almost entirely situated in faculty experience and academic affairs. My questions have been drawn directly from these experiences.

**Educational Background**

While my interest in collaboration has been long-standing, my educational background supports my ability to conduct a research study about collaboration. I have completed two years of coursework in higher education administration. Additionally, during my coursework I successfully conducted a qualitative research class wherein I conducted a qualitative study of a faculty member whose teaching had changed. Through this study, I was able to practice and better understand the constructivist paradigm, case study methodology, and qualitative methods to best gather the emic perspective and construct meaning with my participant.

Additionally, my doctoral cognate has been focused on college teaching and learning. My cognate coursework reinforced the concept that student learning occurs both inside and outside of the classroom and is best understood and supported when these two environments are connected. My courses in contemporary theory and research in education, college teaching, the curriculum, and a directed reading all served my understanding of how student learning is related to collaboration. Contemporary theory and research introduced concepts about how student learning occurs, including how much learning occurs outside of the traditional classroom and traditional methods. College teaching provided more in depth analysis of faculty culture, student affairs staff members as educators, and structural support for collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs. The curriculum course gave an overview from multiple perspectives and philosophies of how education has been designed to promote student learning through
history. These three courses generated both a breadth and depth of knowledge about facilitating student learning in higher education. Finally, in my directed reading, I was able to focus more specifically on several subjects related to college teaching and learning, including learning sciences, assessment, diversity, technology, and methods. Without fail the concepts of connected learning, integrated environments, and structural support of learning arose.

Synthesizing my cognate classes with my core and research coursework has provided me with a strong foundation from which to pursue this study.

Although the human instrument is the ideal way to collect data in qualitative research due to the sensitivity and flexibility of the researcher, there are still considerations that must be taken into account. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained that people can be careless, distracted, tired, or make mistakes. Furthermore, familiarity with a particular topic or environment can sometimes lead the researcher to overlook important information or make assumptions that may lead to vital understanding. To best compensate for these tendencies, certain measures of quality should be emphasized.

Assumptions

It was also important to acknowledge assumptions and expectations about findings I had as the human instrument so that I recognized that those might influence my data collection. The first assumption I had regarding the study was that, although I did not believe collaboration to be best or useful in all circumstances, I did believe it may have been more effective than working independently in many situations. I also believed that often collaboration proves advantageous to the partners, departments and colleges, students, and the institution. This assumption was grounded in my previous experiences in working with others. Certainly, I had been a member of
partnerships where collaboration was not needed to achieve a task. Moreover, I had been a member of partnerships where the relationships prohibited successful collaboration. However, the vast majority of my experiences with collaboration and collaborative partnerships had demonstrated that when a variety of strengths and weaknesses was brought together, despite personalities and various working styles, much could be accomplished. This was especially true if all partners involved truly believe that every person was dedicated to the same goal.

I assumed that most of my participants also believed that collaboration was beneficial in many cases. While I had been in partnerships where individuals believed that collaboration was not helpful in solving a problem or reaching a goal, more often than not, most people with whom I had interacted believed that collaboration could have a positive outcome, even if they did not particularly enjoy the experience of collaboration. While I did my best to respect the emergent process of a constructivist study, I expected that certain topics or issues might arise from the research. I believed I might find connections between partners’ prior relationships (if one existed) and the nature of the collaboration—positive prior relationships would likely lead to better collaboration. This assumption was a result of both some of the literature review I had conducted and my experience in collaborative partnerships. In those partnerships where I or others had established positive or negative relationships, those prior relationships affected the nature of the collaboration and sometimes its success. I also thought that those participants who took an interest in their partner, whether it was in terms of culture, personal or professional life, teaching style, or research interests, would better collaborate. Although I might have had additional assumptions or expectations, those were not as obvious at that point in my study. I have captured additional ones in my reflexive journal referenced later in my discussion section.
It is important to explain that as a graduate assistant in the Center for Teaching and Learning, one of my primary roles had been to assist with the development of the BGSU 1000 course. I assisted with the development of the course content, online components, instructor training, and regular communication; however, my supervisor, Bonnie Fink, had been the primary director of the program and that was quite clear to the instructors participating in the pilot. Therefore, although the instructors interviewed for this study were quite familiar with me, my authority in the project was quite limited. I anticipated that while this may have made for easy relationship-building with my participants, I also had to address the comfort level of the instructors sharing information with me. I was clear with both my supervisor as well as my participants that I did my best to ensure their confidentiality.

**Case Study Methodology**

I chose to use case studies for this study because they were particularly well-suited to capture the complexity of collaborative relationships (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 1996; Stake, 1995). This methodology was situated within the constructivist paradigm. A case study design was used “in order to gain an in-depth understanding of [a] situation and its meaning for those involved. The interest was in the process rather than the outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, and in discovery rather than confirmation” (Merriam, 1988, p. xii).

Case study methodology has been defined by four characteristics that are “essential properties” (Merriam, 1988, p. 11): particularistic, descriptive, heuristic, and inductive. Particularistic meant that the case itself was specifically important in what it highlighted (Merriam, 1988). Descriptive referred to the attempt to capture a “complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated” (Merriam, 1988, p. 11). Heuristic referred to the concept that a new understanding is developed as a result of the study. Guba and Lincoln (1986)
and Lincoln (1990) described this as a “heightened awareness of one’s own constructions and assumptions, manifest, and unspoken” (Lincoln, 1990, p. 72) and “increased awareness and appreciation (although not necessarily the acceptance) of the constructions of other stakeholders” (p. 72). Inductive, also described as emergent (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b), meant that the understanding drawn from case studies comes from the cases themselves as opposed to confirmed concepts, ideas, or understandings from others.

**Sampling**

**Case and Site Selection**

In case study methodology “sampling occurs on two levels: selection of the case and selection of the participants” (Jones et al., 2006, p. 56). Incorporated into the selection of the case is also the selection of the site. Because context is integral to a case study (Creswell, 2006; Jones et al., 2006; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1984), the site or sites wherein the cases are set is a piece of the complex puzzle that makes the whole. As such, selection of the case and site is purposeful. “Identification of a particular case is both theoretically derived and then practically executed through the determination of specific sampling criteria” (Jones et al., 2006, p. 56). In both the selection of the case and the selection of the participants, purposeful sampling involves finding “information-rich cases” (Patton, 1990, p. 52). These criteria bound the study, which is again the key factor in case study methodology. As I was conducting a collective case study, I focused on several instrumental cases to find themes (Jones et al., 2006; Stake, 2000). I identified common topic areas about which individual partners, a group of partners, and several groups of partners described often or with particular importance.
Criteria

Criteria in case study methodology are especially important because they bound the study. Criteria are an essential element of a case study because, “If the phenomenon you are interested in studying is not intrinsically bounded, it is not a case” (Merriam, 2009, p. 41). The criteria that bounded my study impacted both my site selection and case selection. First, both the site and the cases were intentionally focused on student learning. Second, both the site and the cases functioned, at least in part, through collaboration. Finally, in the cases themselves, the collaborative partnerships consisted of one person in the role of faculty member and one person in the role of student affairs professional. I had nine eligible pairs available as cases.

Theoretical framework also guided selection of the site and cases. As such, I chose a site and cases wherein relationships among faculty and student affairs professionals were espoused as important.

Site

The site I chose claimed student learning and use of collaboration as values. Bowling Green State University, according to the Office of Institutional Research described itself as aspiring to be a “premier learning community” (BGSU, 2009a, para. 1). Other wording used in the vision and core values on the institutional research website supported the idea that BGSU was ultimately committed to student learning through positive collaborative work, including: “academically challenging teaching,” “respect for one another,” “cooperation,” and “providing quality academic programs in a learning environment that promotes academic and personal excellence in students” (BGSU, 2009a, para. 2 & 3). Through its strategic planning process, BGSU identified strategies for accomplishing its goals. Strategy one stated, “create distinctive coherent undergraduate learning experiences that integrate curricular and co-curricular
programs” (BGSU, 2009b, para. 1). Integrated learning experiences were therefore a key experience supported by the university. BGSU was founded in 1910 as a “normal school,” a teacher-training, regional institution that grew to include other undergraduate and graduate programs (BGSU, n.d.a). As of 2011, BGSU enrolled more than 20,000 students, including those at a campus in a neighboring city, with a 20:1 student to faculty ratio, average ACT for entering first-year students of 22, and nearly 6,000 students living on campus (BGSU, n.d.b). BGSU was an appropriate context for the study.

Cases

The cases I selected focused on student learning, utilized collaboration to accomplish the goal of teaching a first-year seminar, and consisted of one person in the role of faculty member and one person in the role of student affairs professional. I studied four partnerships comprised of co-instructors teaching a first-year seminar course that was expected to become a common course for all students their first semester at the institution. The course was developed as a result of a review of undergraduate education (B. Fink, personal communication, 2008). Out of this review, a core committee was selected to propose a course that would address concerns mentioned in the review. The ensuing course was a first-year seminar. Core components of the seminar were suggested by the committee, and the Center for Teaching and Learning, specifically Director Bonnie Fink, took responsibility for developing the specifics of a pilot of the course. Additionally, each course was either tied to a college, and therefore had content related to that college, or had theme, in which case the content was not directly tied to a college but related to the theme. Themes such as “science in the modern world” might have focused on natural sciences or “feminism and pop culture” might have targeted the rise of feminism and its demonstration in popular media.
Originally offered in Fall 2008 as A&S [Arts & Sciences] 100, the seminar at BGSU was approved in 2009 by Undergraduate Council and the BG Perspectives Committee; the official course title is *BGSU 1000 – University Seminar*. Twelve sections of the class were offered to students in Fall 2009. These seminars, while teaching all the critical elements for academic success, also included some content that is college or department specific. All sections used the BGSU 1000 designation. The following list represents general characteristics of the university seminar:

- Introduces critical thinking and critical reading as academic foundations;
- Values intensive;
- Assessment based on University Learning Outcomes;
- Some common assignments to promote integrated academic experiences;
- Writing intensive;
- Demonstrates collaboration between faculty and administrative staff to support student transition to college. (BGSU1000 Explanatory Document, 2009, p. 1)

The course demonstrated this last bullet by utilizing instructional teams of a faculty member and student affairs staff member, as well as a peer facilitator, to teach each course.

By 2010, the context for BGSU1000 had grown more interesting. As part of the strategic planning process, and Strategy #1, an ad-hoc faculty senate committee had been created titled Connecting the Undergraduate Experience (CUE) (CUE Charge, 2009). The CUE committee completed a review of the curriculum and further supported the need for a common intellectual experience for all first year students in the form of a first-year seminar. Building on what had previously been established, the CUE committee decided to use BGSU1000 as a pilot course for the new curriculum model (CUE Conceptual Model, 2010). Foundational in the new curriculum
model was a focus on connecting the curriculum and co-curriculum, in part through collaboration among faculty and student affairs professionals. The previous push for BGSU1000 as well as the new potential for BGSU1000 to serve a special role in a new curriculum model gave the course and the instructors a stage for collaboration.

A total of 22 instructors participated in the pilot. Instructors were recruited and completed their course by December of 2009. Instructors for the 2010 university seminar, from whom I drew my participants, were recruited in the spring and summer of 2010. A total of 11 cases of instructors participated in the fall of 2010. One case was removed because it had only one instructor as opposed to the typical two instructors. Two cases were immediately removed from possible participation. One was a partnership of three that included a teaching assistant and a second case included the Assistant Director for the Center for Teaching and Learning for whom participation would compromise confidentiality. One pair was removed from possible participation due to the faculty member deferring to another pair as being a better case. One pair did not participate due to lack of response. Three pairs were removed when one of the two instructors declined to participate due to their already busy schedules. This left four remaining pairs. Additional pairs would have contributed to more diversity in participant and pair characteristics; however, participant pairs represented a range of sex, age, race and ethnicity, length of time at the institution, background, college or department, and other characteristics. Although much of the data did begin to repeat among participants and pairs, I cannot claim that redundancy was reached. Redundancy is reached at that point wherein “efforts to net additional members cannot be justified in terms of the additional outlay of energy and resources” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 233). The consequence of not reaching redundancy is that themes that emerged from the case study may not carry beyond these particular cases and that additional
themes that might have additionally emerged. Even so, the collected data and emerging themes were described as accurate for those participants that were interviewed.

In choosing sample size, Patton suggests that the sample be large enough to fully portray the characteristics of interest, but small enough that the researcher can adequately manage the data and provide depth and detail (Patton, 2002). I requested participation from the four remaining partnerships and all agreed.

**Data Gathering Strategies**

Yin (1984) suggested six sources for collecting data for case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Although not all of these need to be employed, using several of these forms of data collection not only adds trustworthiness in terms of triangulation, but also contributes to more thorough, complex, and authentic constructions of the cases. Erlandson et al. (1993) explained this well, noting:

Respondents are asked questions, but they are also encouraged to engage with the researcher in less structured conversations so that their hidden assumptions and constructions begin to surface. They are observed in their daily activity so that the researcher can begin to see the operational meaning of what they have said. Further insight into their constructed realities can be gained from documents that provide historical context for interpreting their words and activity. Cluttered office arrangements, athletic award plaques on the wall, and spotless restrooms reflect values that helped shape the respondents’ constructed realities. Data from these sources are brought together and systematically analyzed in a process that proceeds parallel to data collection. (p. 81)
Interviews

Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed the purposes of interviewing as obtaining in the moment constructions, reconstructions, projections, extension of information, and verification of constructions by the researcher. Patton (2002) described the reason for interviewing more simply, stating that the purpose of interviewing is to “allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (p. 341). Patton (2002) also suggested the use of several different question types, including experience and behavior questions, opinion and value questions, feeling questions, knowledge questions, sensory questions, and background/demographic questions.

In order to answer the research questions, a semi-structured (Merriam, 1998) interview protocol (Appendix B) was used in the first interviews with participants. Through the questions in the first interviews, I attempted to gain a better understanding of the individuals in the partnership, the relationship between the two partners, their collaboration, and their understanding of how relationship and collaboration might be connected. The questions in the interview protocol delved specifically into the faculty member and student affairs professional partnership to gain a better understanding of how their relationship and collaboration may be connected. First interviews were conducted with individual members of the partnership. In second interviews, both members of the partnership were interviewed at the same time. Those joint interviews were conducted to better grasp the interaction between the two teaching partners and also to give them an opportunity to learn from and respond to each other to better share their experience in the collaborative relationship. Although it was anticipated that interviews conducted with the members together could provide tempered information, the benefits of having another person to make the situation more comfortable, as well as providing topics for subsequent individual interviews outweighed the challenges. Second interviews included some
of the initial questions, follow-up questions from the first interviews, and questions that arose in response to the interaction between the participants. Final individual interviews were conducted with each of the participants to follow-up on the pair interview as well as to clarify information from the previous interviews. With participants’ approval, interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. At the second interview, themes were reviewed that arose from the data for the individuals and participants were asked to provide feedback on whether those felt true for them. Prior to the final interview, participants were provided with a copy of their transcripts and at the final interview themes were reviewed that arose from the pair interview so that participants could give feedback or suggest any changes needed before analyzing the data. Finally, a report of the findings was provided to each participant and each was asked to provide feedback and confirm that the results from the full study represented their experience in the partnership. Lincoln and Guba (1985) emphasized the importance of establishing good relationships with participants and being open and flexible to gather the best data. Interviews were conducted in locations selected by the participants, both to help establish a good working relationship with the participants and to observe the participants.

**Observation**

Observations are different from interviews in two primary ways. Observations happen in a setting as it naturally occurs, as opposed to an interview wherein there is at least a tentative imposed structure and observations allow a researcher to gather direct data her or himself (Merriam, 2009). Direct observations allow a researcher to gather information about the context in which the case occurs; be open to data presented because there is less need for interpreting data based on prior constructions; and collect information that is often overlooked by participants, including constructions that participants may not even realize they have or may be
more hesitant to discuss initially (Patton, 2002). Observations were conducted in two ways. First, participants were observed during the individual and pair interviews. In allowing participants to select the location of the interviews, some insight was gained into places where their collaboration often occurred. Some participants selected their offices or other locations where they would sometimes meet with their partners; however, other participants chose fairly neutral locations that did not provide as much insight. While location was not always helpful in observation, observing the pair interview allowed me to better understand the collaborative relationships through noticing interactions between the partners. While I had initially hoped to attend a formal meeting between the partners and/or a co-taught class, due to scheduling difficulties and participants’ time schedules, only one class was able to be observed, taught by Sean and Paige.

Certainly some information that was garnered during observation was more relevant than other information. To help guide observation and answer research questions, an observation protocol was created by which to guide the observation process (Appendix C). During these interviews, information was gathered about the participant(s), their experiences with collaboration and relationship with the other instructor through observing the physical setting, response to the interview and the questions, and interaction with the other participant. Because there was specific interested in the relationship between the two participants in each pair, I tried to observe how the context might give insight into a participant’s level of formality (which may or may not have related to willingness to develop a deeper relationship with the other participant), openness, reception to and interaction with the other participant, and subtle information such as non-verbal cues and tone of voice that may have revealed more information about the relationship than the participants initially described.
Document Analysis

Documents provide information about a study that may not be available by interview or observation. For instance, documents may provide history of a collaboration, may give insight into the broader context of a collaboration or may reveal underlying information that is not always at the surface (Patton, 2002). Documents may also serve as the impetus for further questioning or observation (Patton, 2002). Erlandson et al. (1993) explained that although limitations should not be imposed on the kinds or quality of data available by document early on in the study, eventually, “some discernment and intuition should come into play in document gathering or one will accrue mountains of analytical headaches” (p. 99-100).

Some documents were more easily accessed, including public web pages and documents available on web sites such as meeting notes, marketing and communication messages, mission and purposes, and timelines. All of these documents were available online at BGSU’s public website. Other documents that were public but not as easily accessible, including brochures, reports and curriculum sheets, committee charges, or informational handouts were gathered through asking participants to share their documentation. Access to many of these documents resulted from working directly with the program and permission was given to use these documents. Copies of the participants’ syllabi were also collected, and in one case lesson plans, via the participants themselves. Similar to the process for interviews and observations, a document protocol was developed that helped guide the documents collected (Appendix D). The documents gathered gave some, though not much, insight into the collaborative relationships of the participants. Documents at a broader level, such as historical planning documents or university mission statements provided some clues into the culture wherein the partnerships existed and therefore whether collaboration and relationship were supported or discouraged.
Because the focus was on the relationship between the two participants, specific attention was paid to areas of documents that highlighted the interaction or context for interaction between the two partners. By establishing trust, a good working relationship, and demonstrating ethical practices and honorable intentions, participants were willing to share various documents to provide a better understand of their collaborative relationships.

Data Analysis

Case studies, specifically collective case studies, can be especially overwhelming in terms of layers of data. Data analysis is an on-going and continuous process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Data are analyzed as they are collected (Erlandson et al., 1993). The research questions guide the data analysis at all levels.

To analyze the data, first information units were found by examining the transcripts, field notes, and documents going line by line highlighting words, phrases or concepts that were salient, interesting, or seemed relevant or important. Glaser and Strauss (1967) described unitizing as an inductive process, where units may be assigned based on intuition. A unit is information that is meaningful for the study but small enough to stand on its own (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These units were coded with descriptive words or phrases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 1984).

Examining the units to find specific commonalities between and among them leads to broader abstractions that become a category encompassing the individual units (Merriam, 1998). Units were assigned to categories, by comparing each unit to others, looking for common elements between various units (Erlandson et al., 1993; Merriam, 2009). Units should be placed in categories because they fit the properties of the categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Properties are determined by frequency and importance of units throughout the data. Merriam
(2009) suggested that categories should be responsive to the purpose of the research, exhaustive, mutually exclusive, sensitive to the units of information, and conceptually congruent. Merriam (1998) explained that the efficacy of categories is achieved when categories reflect the purpose of the research, are exhaustive, are mutually exclusive, are sensitizing, and are conceptually congruent.

Categories were then placed into even broader themes. These themes were determined by those areas that individual participants, partners together, or several or all partnerships mentioned often or deemed important. All units and categories of information fit into those themes. Those areas and other areas were continually probed to see if the identified themes continued to be present or if new themes emerged. Participants were asked whether they believed that those emergent themes identified were key to understanding their collaborative relationships. In nearly all cases, participants agreed that these themes represented their experiences, and in the cases where participants did not immediately agree, they clarified their position to help better explain.

In a multiple case study, analysis must be conducted within-case and across cases. Initially, each individual case was analyzed, unitized, categorized, and thematized it (Merriam, 2002; Yin, 1983). To do this, each case individually was analyzed, with all associated documents, observations, and notes as described above. After within-case analysis, cross-case analysis was conducted. The process of unitizing, categorizing, and thematizing repeated in the same way as within-case. After completing cross-case analysis, within-case analysis was conducted again to be certain all data had been mined.

Yin (1984) suggested a grid that allows a researcher to look at the analysis within- and across-cases. Therefore, a grid was created that placed individual cases against interviews,
observations, and documents or other pieces of data so that convergence of data within- and across-case could be seen. Additionally, word clouds were completed to identify frequency of words or concepts as visual data analysis. Other data analysis methods included concept maps and using track changes through Microsoft Word.

Another way to consider the process of data analysis was by “identifying segments in [the] data that are responsive to [the] research questions” (Merriam, 2009, p. 176). I mined the data seeking responses to my specific research questions and present themes by research question in Chapter 4.

**Measures of Quality**

**The Parallel Criteria**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) first described measures of quality, termed trustworthiness, for constructivist (naturalistic) research using ideas that were parallel to those of positivistic research. These measures fell into four categories: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility includes prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, peer debriefing, negative case analysis, referential adequacy, progressive subjectivity, and member checks (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility generally ensures that the constructions understood by the researcher accurately reflect the constructions of the participants. In other words, the realities of the researcher and the participants should be agreed upon (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b).

As such, four diverse collaborations were studied, two people in each. Three interviews per person, for a half hour to an hour each, were conducted through the fall and early spring semesters. Additionally, I attempted to attend meetings or programs conducted by the collaborators, and read documents from and about the collaborations. This length of time (nearly
the entire length of the collaboration) and number of interviews and meetings attended show prolonged and persistent engagement with the participants. By conducting interviews with participants individually and in partnerships, attending meetings, and analyzing documents, the data were triangulated.

Peer debriefing and member checking was conducted as well. Peer debriefing ensured that data collection and analysis procedures were honest and substantive, with all possible avenues explored (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Peer debriefers who had varying degrees of familiarity with the project as well as varying degrees of experience with qualitative data analysis were secured to provide different perspectives in conducting the study. With the peer debriefers, challenges in data collection, questions in data analysis, and considerations in the results were discussed. With some peer debriefers, versions of the completed documents were exchanged and reviewed, while with others information was discussed.

Member checking was a similar process, though with the participants. Analysis was reviewed with participants both in advance of the next interview as well as at the next meeting. Participants were sent written early analysis prior to the next meeting so that they could process the information and provide thorough feedback. A more complete analysis was provided verbally to participants at their next meeting where they were able to provide additional feedback. Feedback was requested as to whether their stories and information were portrayed in the truest way possible. A nearly final draft of the results section of the study was shared with participants and their feedback as to whether their experience had been accurately conveyed was requested. Participants were also asked if they would like to adjust any information. After discussion of the results with participants, some adjustments to biographical information were made. Additionally, some participants requested rephrasing of paraphrasing of their interviews.
to better explain what she or he meant. Ultimately, I attempted to accurately convey the emic perspective and according to my participants I succeeded. A reflexive journal was also kept (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) that allowed recording of information on a regular basis and provided “information about [a] schedule and logistics, insights, and reasons for methodological decisions” (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 143). This journal demonstrated progressive subjectivity.

Transferability refers to the idea that a study’s findings may be useful to understand other situations or settings in as much as participants are similar and in similar circumstances to the previous study. This transferability can be facilitated by using thick description. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained, the researcher has a responsibility to provide enough context and information about a case to “permit a person contemplating application in another receiving setting to make the needed comparisons of similarity” (p. 360). Thick description may be achieved through length of study, depth of study, and perceptiveness of interview and observation. Conducting two to three interviews with each participant over several months gave an opportunity to gain much information. Moreover, through peer debriefing and the reflexive journal, I improved my interview and observation skills throughout the course of the study. With thick, rich description, readers have more information by which to determine whether the case studies presented herein are transferable to the cases in which they have interest. Pilot interviews were conducted to gain practice in interviewing and observation, in addition to testing interview questions. This provided feedback as to whether the questions and observations accurately and effectively explored the research questions and gave ideas for additional areas to examine.

Finally, dependability is established by using an “inquiry audit” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 317) wherein the process and the product of keeping track of the study may be examined.
Confirmability is determined by the audit trail and the audit process. An audit trail was kept that would allow anyone who was interested to understand my entire process, specifically denoting decision making and authentic concern for the participants (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). All this information is in a case report that outlines the process.

**Authenticity**

Although the parallel criteria portray measures of quality more reflective of constructivism than positivism, they are ultimately still grounded in a positivistic paradigm. Therefore, Guba and Lincoln (1989b) developed what they called “authenticity criteria” (p. 245). They explained, “Outcome, product, and negotiation criteria are equally important in judging a given inquiry. Relying solely on criteria that speak to methods, as do the parallel criteria, leaves an inquiry vulnerable to questions regarding whether stakeholder rights were in fact honored” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b, p. 245). Therefore, the authentic criteria not only address methodological concerns but concerns about interaction and reflection of the participants.

Fairness is the first criterion in authenticity. Fairness is needed because:

> Inquiry (and evaluation) are value-bound and value-situated, and evaluators inevitably confront a situation of value pluralism, then multiple constructions resting on different value systems will emerge from stakeholders in and around the evaluation effort. The role of the evaluator is to seek out, and communicate, all such constructions and to explicate the ways in which such constructions—and their underlying value systems—are in conflict. (p. 246)

Fairness was ensured by providing participant confidentiality, using pseudonyms that participants chose, having participants complete informed consent forms, and engaging in negotiation regarding the analysis and results of the study.
The second criterion in authenticity is ontological authenticity. Ontological authenticity “refers to the extent to which individual respondents’ own emic constructions are improved, matured, expanded, and elaborated, in that they now possess more information and have become more sophisticated in its use” (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b, p. 248). Ontological authenticity was achieved by conducting member-checking wherein participants reviewed the construction of their experience and discussed how their understanding has changed as a result.

The third criterion is educative authenticity. Educative authenticity expands on ontological authenticity in that participants expand their own understanding, but better grasp and appreciate the constructions made by others (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b). Similar to achieving ontological authenticity, educative authenticity was ensured by providing participants with continued analysis and confirming that it both provided their emic perspective and expanded upon it. In final interviews, participants were asked about their experiences reflecting on their collaborative partnership and participating in the study to try to achieve educative authenticity. Additionally, in providing final feedback, participants indicated that it was interesting to understand their experience after reading all participants’ experiences.

Catalytic authenticity is the fourth criterion. This kind of authenticity is defined as an understanding of the case or issue that facilitates action or decision making (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b). To provide catalytic authenticity recommendations have been made for practice based upon the research findings. Finally, tactical authenticity takes catalytic authenticity one step further in that action or decision making is actually carried out. I was in a particularly good position to encourage use of recommendations through my work with the program in my role as graduate assistant. Although the program has since moved to another area, some of these recommendations have been incorporated into the program already.
Ethical Considerations

While ethical considerations are important in all research, they are especially important in constructivist research because, “they are the essence of what research is all about and can only enhance it” (Erlandson et al., 1993, p. 155). Constructivist researchers must avoid harming and deceiving participants. Constructivist researchers go beyond what they avoid to actively protect their participants through informed consent, and privacy and confidentiality in terms of both what is shared and personal space. Although there was no expectation that any part of the study may produce harm, by checking with participants, it was confirmed that they were not experiencing harm. Deception is not only ethically wrong in that it could harm participants, it would fundamentally alter and hurt the study by destroying the emic perspective and altering any constructions. At any time, participants could withdraw if they believe it was in their best interest. A copy of the informed consent form may be found in Appendix A. Finally, although anonymity could not necessarily be provided due to the thick and rich description and the potential of participant and reader familiarity with the people or collaboration, I did my best to ensure confidentiality and privacy by using pseudonyms and appropriate disguising identities.

Summary

Using a constructivist paradigm and case study methodology, participants’ emic perspective of the nature of collaborative relationships between academic affairs and student affairs was studied. Using various methods, ensuring measures of quality and ethical considerations, thick, rich description of participants’ understanding was provided. As the human instrument, I did my best to actively listen and adapt to the needs of my participants, all the while ensuring their confidentiality.
In this chapter, I present the results of the study examining the nature of collaborative relationships between faculty and student affairs professionals co-teaching. First, to provide a context for the results and to give a picture of the participants, profiles of participants and their partnerships are presented. Following these descriptions, the emergent themes are described. The research questions are answered within the context of these themes.

**Pair and Participant Profiles**

**Pair 1 Profile**

**Paige.** Paige was a White woman in her mid-thirties, and had worked at Bowling Green State University for four years. In her position as director of a campus office, she supervised professional staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students. She was responsible for an overwhelmingly long list of programs, big and small. The first time I met with Paige, I was surprised by how integrated her individual office was with the entire department office. There was no door, only average height, grey cubicle walls that led me through a short maze to an alcove. Students sat at computers near her office, joking and talking, some working and others catching up. In fact, it was one of these students who directed me around the short corner to Paige’s office. Although her space had no real privacy, she had outfitted it as I might expect for a student affairs professional. Various gadgets and toys decorated her desk, primary colored folders sat neatly off to the side, and programming materials sat on the floor, waiting for their next event. I did not have a well-established relationship with Paige as I did some of the other participants, so my expectations of a student affairs professional were initially confirmed by her office space and warm welcome. So it was with some surprise that my expectations were quickly corrected. Paige had certainly not had the typical student affairs entre into the field.
Paige described her first professional experience in higher education as teaching in graduate school. Since then she has both taught in higher education at another institution and worked for a hospital in an area related to her research. When she talked about her area of focus, she spoke quickly and her voice raised slightly. She clearly loved it. She seemed to have a fondness for the memory of working in that area alone. As she explained how she entered the world of student affairs, however, she seemed nearly as affectionate for her work.

Not only did she teach the BGSU 1000 course, she taught another course for student leaders. Her work ranged from supervising full-time staff to advising student groups, running several programs, and sitting on numerous committees. Much of her work was consumed by connecting—with students and with faculty and staff, both at BGSU and at other universities. But it seemed to be this connectedness that drove her. She considered herself uniquely valuable to her office because of her experience. She enjoyed her position which allowed her to see how learning happens inside and outside the classroom. She considered it one of the main benefits of her job, this ability to be able to see the big picture.

When she entered student affairs, she had a mentor who helped her understand how important connections were. She spent the first several months of her new job building relationships with people across the university. She explained that she could not do her job effectively without building relationships. During the course of our interviews, Paige hired a new employee and encouraged relationship-building as well. She was making time for the new employee to go meet others from around campus as a first step in learning the position.

Sean. Sean was passionate about breaking down silos in higher education. His background was testament to why. For decades he had crossed the line from faculty to administrator and back again. He had worked at BGSU in two “stints,” as he called them, for a
total of 18 years. With almost 40 years of experience in higher education, Sean was the oldest of
the participants. When I met with him for our interviews, I was able to see him in action. A
White man with glasses that edged slowly down his nose, Sean was immersed in stacks of
student papers in various folders that sat on his desk. He moved from typing on his computer to
a seating area, cleared but for two chairs and some brochures. At one point during our
conversation, he dug through one stack and pulled out a student notebook to show me how
students are writing a description of an event and then reflecting upon it. He was proud of
incorporating outside of class events into reflective opportunities for his students. Other stacks
were comprised of departmental folders and files. He was under tight deadlines for collecting
documents from his college to contribute to the strategic plan.

This balancing of two worlds was a skill he said he had learned over time. While
working as a scientific research officer for a government agency, he also served as a full-time
and adjunct faculty member. Sean had a way of focusing on the big picture and asking the
difficult questions. He believed the university needed to function as a whole, from allowing
those who have the qualifications to teach regardless of title of faculty or staff to implementing
policies that positively impact the whole community.

Although the course theme was not in Sean’s area of expertise, he was passionate about
the topic and had educated himself. He saw the connections between the course theme, his
research area, and his personal interests. He saw the long-term repercussions of missing
information from his theme area and felt it was important to share this with students. He had a
personal investment in the content and knew that sharing this information could “save their
lives.”
Sean believed that his BGSU 1000 course offered what students “don’t get anywhere else at the university.” Not only was the content vital, but he believed that students learn in ways that are incredibly valuable. When I asked him about the experience in our last interview, he held up white rectangular envelopes. He explained that they were letters from a community agency with whom the students worked. He was proud that the students learned practical skills to apply the foundational knowledge they had learned in class. He was happy that the students made an impact beyond their university experience. And he was happy that the students reflected on the experience, which made it more meaningful for them.

**The Pair.** Sean and Paige first met when she assisted with Sean’s BGSU 1000 class the previous year. After those initial connections, they began to work together more frequently. Sean asked Paige to be a part of their work on a grant and the Center of Excellence for his college. Paige asked Sean to be on an advisory committee for one of her programs. When Sean was asked to teach BGSU 1000 again, his original partner was not able to participate. Paige suggested one of her supervisees teach, but the substitute was unable to participate as well. Sean thought Paige would make a great partner; Paige thought she would like to teach the class. Unfortunately, Paige was already teaching a class that ran concurrently and for nearly the same length of time. They decided to try to make it work anyway, even when the only way it could work was for 15 minutes at the end of class along with time outside of class.

There was clearly a great respect between Sean and Paige. Sean spoke admiringly of Paige’s time management and management skills that complemented her content knowledge and teaching ability. Not only did her qualifications indicate her ability to be a good teacher, but their shared experience proved her talents in partnership. Paige was equally approving of Sean. She talked about his resources and depth of knowledge. During their pair interview, Sean often
answered first, while Paige rounded out the answer he gave. They deferred to each other and spoke on behalf of the other, always with confirming eye contact. They joked about a meeting Paige had accidentally missed that both normally attend.

Paige and Sean were big picture thinkers. They discussed the importance of students thinking about their lives in the long-term. They thought about connections between material learned inside the classroom and outside the classroom. They considered how to best impact learning at the undergraduate level, the graduate level, and the community level. Learning was important far beyond their once-a-week class. Paige tended to approach this big picture from a more relational stand point, she considered how one-on-one connections expanded impact throughout the university community. Sean was more structural in his thinking, contemplating how to break down artificial structures that separate learning that should be more naturally integrated. Both described collaboration as a way to achieve the kind of learning and experience that was possible for students, as well as for faculty and staff.

**Pair 2 Profile**

**Alex.** Alex described himself as European-American, in his mid-thirties. In his role on campus, Alex worked with a certain subpopulation of students, for whom he served a variety of roles. He had been working at BGSU for five years, but had been in higher education full-time for eight years. Alex had decided to participate in BGSU 1000 after learning about the critical thinking aspect of the course. Alex’s interest in critical thinking stemmed from a young age. His parents decided to foster juvenile delinquents with severe behavior problems from the time before he was born. Each night after dinner, if there was a problem, the family would sit down at the dinner table and discuss the problem. Alex described it as being very trial-like, with the different children having their opportunity to give their side of what happened, arguing the case,
and then defending any claims. His parents would discuss the issue from a critical thinking perspective. Alex described this as very influential on his abilities and interest in critical thinking. He believed he “further honed his critical thinking skills by completing a particularly demanding interdisciplinary program at the most prestigious public university in his home state.”

His interest in critical thinking was a key factor in his interest in BGSU 1000. After an email went out to the student affairs division, Alex’s supervisor encouraged him to teach the course. Alex was interested in working with a specific population of students connected to the course theme. Moreover, teaching the course served as an opportunity to scout out a potential course for his department and consider the course in the context of entering graduate school. With those factors in mind, Alex agreed to teach. Alex explained that he spent much of the course focusing on critical thinking and helping students work through the academic concepts.

Alex felt like he’s often been in an “academic limbo,” where he has moved between student affairs and academic affairs. He has worked in student-athlete services and academic advising. In both areas, Alex felt like he had to help students achieve all they could academically, but this required addressing items typically in student affairs or business affairs such as financial aid, residence life, or athletics.

Alex described being very concerned about students academically. He saw incongruence between those students who needed help and those actually getting it. He frequently addressed his class with the opportunity to get support from offices on campus and noted that they rarely sought help. Alex saw the contradiction in that honors students often seek help but students at risk are too self-conscious to seek it. He questioned students’ motivation for coming into higher education for “economic reasons” as opposed to a “love of learning,” and believed that many just were not ready for college-level work.
Alex knew that an integrative, academically-rigorous, critical thinking course is possible in the first semester, in part because he was in one during his first semester in higher education. His experience in having to learn critical thinking skills along with heavy content expectations was one he was hoping to translate to the class this year and was disappointed that due to the class motivation, challenges with the textbook, and other concerns, he was not able to help them reach the level that he had achieved during his first year. Though he admitted his expectations for the class were too high, Alex was proud to have worked with a student whose semester GPA was higher than the rest of the class. He said that this renewed his faith in his job “as part of a social movement rather than a crutch.”

Bob. Although Bob was the instructor of record for his BGSU 1000 course, Bob explained he hoped he was more of a facilitator. He explained this was a reflection of his primary role as an administrator. Bob held a Ph.D., but was a full-time administrator in academic affairs. Bob was a White man in his mid-forties. He had worked at BGSU for over five years, though he had been in higher education for ten years. Bob enjoyed his work with students—it covered a wide variety of areas. Despite the positioning of his office in academic affairs, he identified strongly with student affairs. Bob had taught another first-year seminar for several years. As such, much of his focus as an instructor was on skill-based knowledge. This carried over to his BGSU 1000 experience. He wanted students to learn about the theme and critical thinking, but only if the students were able to apply the knowledge in a meaningful way to be successful.

One of the parts of teaching BGSU 1000 Bob was most anticipating was working with a different group of students. Because of his position, Bob spent most of his time working with a particular subset of students. While he enjoyed his job, he saw the possibilities in providing an
integrated higher education experience for both those students he regularly saw as well as other subpopulations of students. He believed a themed BGSU 1000 course was an opportunity to provide this experience. Unfortunately, Bob explained, the nature of the students in his course deterred him from this focus. He was hoping to populate his class with half the students with whom he typically worked, and half other populations of students. Not only did the class populate with only one group of students, but the academic preparedness of the class was below what he expected.

Although Bob needed to adjust the course to make it meaningful for the students, he was not surprised that this was a challenge. He believed that a high percentage of students would not return after their first semester, but that did not stop him from trying to make an impact. In fact, he thought it all came back to students. He wished he could save everyone, but he knew that was not possible. So, reaching at least one student and helping that person understand critical thinking from a meaningful point of view—that would be beneficial, he believed.

**The Pair.** Alex and Bob did not know each other before they began teaching together. They knew *of* each other, but their paths had never crossed. Moreover, both were asked to teach BGSU 1000 a bit late into the summer. Alex was pressured by his supervisor to participate and Bob had to replace someone else. Both felt pressured to teach, and felt they had little control over how they would teach. Bob and Alex had high expectations for their class initially. They hoped that they would have a mixture of student populations. When their class populated with only one subset of students, they had to quickly rethink their plan. Then, further into the semester, they had to reformulate it again. Alex and Bob both described trying to reach out to their students in different ways and in many instances were unsuccessful.
When I met with Alex and Bob, we sat in a small conference room. Empty of everything but a few chairs, a desk, and a computer, the walls seemed even more starkly white. The men sat next to each other, facing me. As I asked questions, they took turns, directing their answers to me rather than each other. During our conversation, Alex and Bob recalled a discussion they had about their students. Bob had been cued in by a colleague and guest speaker that a third of the class was high during his presentation. Bob watched for this the next time and agreed it was a possibility and shared this information with Alex. Their responses to the situation seemed indicative of their personalities. Bob seemed concerned about the students’ individual decision making skills. Alex thought this was more reflective of problems with the population in general and structures created to support them.

Alex and Bob described themselves as an unusual partnership. Neither was technically a faculty member. One, Alex, was housed in student affairs, with a background in academic affairs, and the other, Bob, was housed in academic affairs, having worked closely with student affairs throughout his career. When describing their roles, Bob tended to focus more on the transitioning pieces and Alex focused on more of the academic critical thinking content. Although they perhaps spent more time together than any other pairing, they had their doubts about the future of their relationship as neither had professional reasons to interact. Both seemed to be fine with returning to their separate worlds.

**Pair 3 Profile**

**Daphne.** Perhaps more than any other participant in the study, Daphne’s role as the student affairs instructor was ambiguous. Daphne had taught the class previously but also had a history with both its design and implementation. Daphne had been with BGSU 1000 nearly from its inception. She has been integral to its development and continuation. Daphne was an African
American woman in her mid-fifties. She had been in higher education for 30 years, over 13 years at BGSU. For the majority of her career at Bowling Green, Daphne had worked in the division of student affairs, progressively moving up in offices focused on various programming and resources for specific populations of students. She has also worked in academic affairs for periods of time. She had previously taught BGSU 1000, and with a co-instructor she had previously known. She was a firm believer in the power of BGSU 1000 to integrate learning across the curriculum and co-curriculum, specifically by linking student affairs and faculty.

Daphne and I met in her office. Pictures of friends and students lined the tables, shelves and her desk along with other personal items. The room felt cozy, with warm colors and a few lamps to brighten the room with windows facing northward. Daphne and I had a good rapport, with some commonalities in our background. We talked casually about various topics until we reach a pause and I moved into the official interview. Daphne talked comfortably about the program and her experiences. She was immediately supportive of my research and said so. She had invested herself in the program.

Even so, Daphne acknowledged that it would be better for her professional development to teach a graduate level class. She had taught many first-year seminar courses, but she had not had the opportunity to really focus on the theme she wanted to prior to this year. Working with Buttercup was a draw, too. Daphne noted that building relationships and collaborating were part of both her personal and professional identity. She enjoyed being on equal footing with her partner in collaborative situations and appreciated the learning experience of teaching with a colleague.

Ultimately, though, the opportunity to work with undergraduate students was the real draw for Daphne. As she had moved up the professional ladder, she did not get as many
opportunities to work with students. This was a rare and valuable opportunity, even if she did not get to devote as much time to it as she would have liked.

**Buttercup.** The day that Buttercup and I had our first interview, she was one day short of her 11-year anniversary at BGSU. An African American woman in her late forties, Buttercup has been in higher education for over 20 years. She seemed reflective upon realizing this. Although her time at BGSU has not been in one position, nor even one office, she had been able to focus her interest in a primary area, the same as her course theme. Although she seemed proud of her time at BGSU, she did not seem particularly connected to Bowling Green. She referenced that it was smaller than she liked and had limited access to resources and cultural events she wished she had. At one point she even credited Daphne for keeping her at BGSU for as long as she had been there. Buttercup was happy, though, which seemed her general outlook on life.

While we did not meet in her office, she went out of her way to make sure I was comfortable. We found a conference room in her office building, amidst many other offices on the floor. While Buttercup was the instructor of record and held a Ph.D., she was primarily a student affairs administrator. She seemed exceedingly comfortable in this role, although to her own admission she had always considered what it would be like to be a full-time faculty member. She was passionate about students connecting learning in the classroom to life outside of the classroom. Although she believed the course structure and the content encouraged these connections, it was her personal mission to make sure those connections happened.

Buttercup thought that many of her students had an integrated learning experience. She saw the connections reflected in class discussion and presentations, and in their *This I Believe* papers. Buttercup said she wished she had had a similar experience. She explained that “the
light came on for me” much later. While she did not remember the specific class, Buttercup remembered that a non-traditional French student would share examples of how what they were learning in class applied outside of the classroom. He would share how networking and making connections was important in and out of the classroom. It was an important moment for her and she hoped her students were able to have similar moments in her classroom.

The Pair. Daphne and Buttercup had worked together for more than 11 years. In fact, Daphne was one of the people who brought Buttercup to BGSU. And while the two had never officially taught together before BGSU 1000, their history of collaboration and friendship was long-standing. It was easy to see why. They described themselves as having similar personalities and styles. They both spoke relatively softly, moving gently from joking to seriousness. Daphne remembered to tell Buttercup that she had recently listed her as an emergency contact. When we met together, they looked to each other to refresh their memories.

Eleven years is a long time to remember a history together.

One of the most important characteristics of their partnership, explained both Daphne and Buttercup, was the importance of equality and lack of problems with power dynamics. Daphne may have supervised Buttercup and may have brought her into the BGSU 1000 course, but Buttercup was the campus director for a national program and was the instructor of record. Before each class, Buttercup and Daphne would meet with their peer facilitator to discuss how the class would run. They would take turns, as determined by who had already completed the reading, who had an activity to share, or who was particularly interested. Their peer facilitator was an integral part of the team. They were proud of the fact that they lacked hierarchy in their partnership.
Teaching BGSU 1000 was an incredibly rewarding experience for both Daphne and Buttercup. Both described the importance of collaboration and building relationships as part of their identities, only emphasized by their content area. They described the rewarding experience of seeing students learn to apply knowledge. They appreciated their interactions with their peer facilitator. Both said that spending time with each other was one of the best parts of teaching BGSU 1000. Not only did they have a chance to catch up “as friends,” but they learned from each other. Both spoke admiringly of learning techniques and concepts from her partner. When explaining their hopes for the future, although they both wanted to increase the number of their themed sections, they wished they could work together again. Eleven years of relationship proved a strong foundation for their collaboration.

**Pair 4 Profile**

**Grace.** Grace and I met in Starbucks. It was loud and full, as it could sometimes get in the afternoons. Our table off to the side was not well protected, so we had to talk a bit louder than we usually would to communicate. This did not seem to bother Grace. An African American woman in her late thirties, Grace worked in an office at BGSU that kept her busy with students nearly every hour of the day. Although she was quite busy after having returned from an absence, she was relaxed and laughing. Given her admission that she did not warm up to people quickly or easily, I was grateful she was so open. She also had a quick connection with Clara, her BGSU 1000 teaching partner, although they had no prior relationship before teaching together.

Although Grace felt like she was pressured into co-teaching BGSU 1000, she took the experience as an opportunity. As it turned out, she gained as much from it as she gave. Specifically, it allowed her to reconnect to her undergraduate major, a topic she had left behind
along the way. She enjoyed connecting with students and she enjoyed developing a relationship with Clara, but she seemed genuinely moved by her reconnection to the theme of their course.

Grace considered herself an unusual representation of a student affairs staff member. She identified more with faculty, her reasoning for this was that she thought students should have academics at the forefront of their experience. She jokingly noted that she could do “human knots and all that” but that her focus was really on the academics. Another reason Grace felt she was unique was her academic background that does not include a standard student affairs degree. She considered herself exceedingly honest, to the point that it could sometimes backfire for her. But she believed this was an important quality and felt it was worth the challenges.

Clara. Clara knew the kind of BGSU 1000 class she wanted and took the lead to make it happen. She had no qualms about admitting this, though she also said that she liked for others to “chime in” and she did her best to let others share their gifts. This strong affiliation for the course balanced with bringing others in was true of both her years of teaching BGSU 1000. Clara was a White woman in her early fifties. She had been in higher education for 25 years, all but four of those years at BGSU. She really cared about the academic success of college students, especially those in her college. Clara, initially a cynic about the class, had come to advocate for the class as a strong recruitment tool. She read about the course when it was first considered and was nervous it would be a “baby” course, potentially detrimental to recruiting the high quality students she wanted for her college. To manage this concern, Clara decided to teach it, and had been glad she made the decision.

Clara was, admittedly, not eager to collaborate with others. She liked being in charge, but did her best to include others. In all fairness, her partners deferred to her, and for good reason. Clara’s first BGSU 1000 course was very successful. She could be territorial about the
class, but she collaborated because she knows it was beneficial for the students. Clara talked about the students often. She saw the theme of the course as a productive outlet for students, as it was for her. For her, one of the most rewarding aspects of the class was watching the students grow and develop. Clara was an active part of this process. She had encouraged the students to participate in research from their first semester in college. For the last two years, this had meant an evening gathering on campus, where Clara and her co-instructors bought pizza for the students and helped them work on their poster presentations. She knew it was additional work, but said it was worth it.

As much as Clara identified as a faculty member, she explained that a good teacher cared about students. She referenced her time as a resident advisor as important to her developing this perspective. She also explained it helped her get her first teaching job. She thought her perspective of the importance of student development had “totally informed” her teaching.

**The Pair.** Sitting in on lunch with Grace and Clara, I felt a bit like the new girl hanging out with two long time friends. They joked and laughed with each other easily, referencing common stories and experiences. You would not think that the two had met only a few months ago. Both explained that their connection was nearly instantaneous—after one planning day in a large group and after the first introduction day with the students. Clara shared that they referenced some common familiar background information and that was all it took. The common background in the theme helped as well.

Both Clara and Grace talked about the importance of their content area, describing it as a “family.” When I asked them about this at lunch, Clara teared up. She explained that Grace really was a part of the family and she was happy to welcome her back. Grace talked about how meaningful it was that she had returned. Both focused on how important their content was to
building relationships with students. It was a frame of reference that provided context for everything about their partnership.

While it would be easy to credit the content area with the whole of their relationship, it would be incorrect. Grace and Clara had moved beyond their working collaboration to form a friendship. They had some incredible life experiences in common. Both had challenging family issues growing up. Both had a similar spiritual background they had addressed in similar ways. They explained discovering these commonalities as powerful. I was lucky enough to get to witness some of those experiences. At one point during the pair interview, the women discovered that while they were both majors in their content area, both also considered (or double majored) in science. They both did this in response to people in their lives who told them they could not do something. Both were motivated by a challenge.

But for all their commonalities, perhaps the most important was their concern for students. They explained that one of the main reasons they believe they work so well together is because they are both student-centered. Their roles as faculty member and student affairs professional were less important than how they could best help students. They learned from each other and they supported each other in their efforts to make the biggest impact for students. And from the experience, they gained a friend as well.

**Participant Summary**

The eight participants in the study were a diverse group of faculty and staff. There were three men, five women, three who identified as African American, one who identified as European-American, and four who identified as White/Caucasian. Participants ranged in age from mid-thirties to mid-sixties and had worked in higher education for between eight and thirty-nine years. Three had previously taught BGSU 1000 and all had worked or taught at BGSU for
between five and twenty-nine years. Not a single participant fit into a strict category of faculty member or student affairs professional. Some were faculty members who were also administrators, some were instructors of record who were full-time student affairs or academic affairs administrators, some were student affairs instructors who held Ph.D.s, and even those few who may have held only one role identified with a different role than they were assigned in teaching BGSU 1000.

The teaching pairs were nearly as diverse. Two pairs had prior relationships, and one of those pairs had been friends for a number of years. Two pairs were made up of two women, one pair had a man and a woman, and one pair consisted of two men. Two of the pairs did not have a full-time faculty member as an instructor. Pairs described themselves as colleagues, mentor-mentee, family, and friends. They used analogies to describe their partnerships such as doctors, boxes, ensembles, and breaths of fresh air. Three of the pairs said they had a successful collaboration. One said they had a more challenging experience. Participants shared their experiences in collaborative partnerships over the course of one full semester into the beginning of the next semester. A full summary of the participant demographics is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

*Summary Participant Demographic Information*

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How Do Relationships and Collaboration Develop?

Five major questions were asked to better understand the nature of collaborative partnerships promoting student learning between faculty and student affairs professionals. Although initially collaboration and relationships were considered conceptually separate, participants talked about them in ways that indicated there was little division between the two. The two concepts seemed intricately intertwined, and instead of distinction between collaboration and relationship, there seemed to exist a more obvious difference between how relationships and collaboration developed and how

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relationships and collaboration functioned. In terms of how relationships and collaboration
developed, participants suggested there were certain factors related to how their partnerships
grew, changed, were fostered or hindered, and became more or less dynamic. Participants
explained that prior relationships and collaborative experiences promoted the development of
their collaboration and relationships. Participants also described the importance of
commonalities. Specifically, they mentioned common values, common goals, common
backgrounds and experiences, and common styles. Further, participants said that prior
relationships and collaboration and commonalities helped establish comfort and trust, another
important aspect of the development of their relationships and collaboration.

**Prior Relationships**

Many participants said that learning about and understanding their partner helped to
develop their relationship and collaboration. Those who had a prior relationship or had
collaborated previously had a foundation upon which to further develop their relationship and
collaboration. Two pairs did not have a relationship prior to BGSU 1000: Bob and Alex and
Clara and Grace. Those two pairs had different experiences, but both said that getting to know
their partners better was a good part of the experience. Bob said, “I’ve really enjoyed that aspect
of it as a chance to get to know him in a non-collaborative context to better understand who he
is.” Clara and Grace learned that not only did they have much in common in terms of personality
and upbringing, but they were able to understand each other better though sharing stories
throughout the semester. Although the two pairs appreciated getting to know each other,
participants in all pairs believed that whether they had a prior relationship or not affected how
their relationship and collaboration developed. Alex and Bob felt that it would have benefitted
their collaboration and relationship if they had known each other or worked together previously.
Alex said that working with Bob helped him to develop a relationship, but the transition would have been easier had there been a prior relationship:

I think the collaboration for the class was 100% impact, and the fact that I know a whole lot more about him and he knows a lot more about me as a result of working together in that class. And had we been in complementary departments where I was [working with the same students in my office that he was in his], we would be having a more smooth relationship as a result as far as getting that kind of stuff done.

In their case, although they were able to work together, they had less of a foundation upon which to build a relationship.

Grace and Clara did not have a prior relationship, either. However, both explained that they had ways of making up for their lack of prior relationship that eased their transition to collaboration and relationship. A mutual colleague had suggested they would work well together, and that gave them a foundation from which to get to know each other. Both thought that knowing the other had experience in their content area helped. However, both highlighted that they made up for lost time in their first interactions with each other where they “immediately” became friends and “recognized each others’ souls.” Simply, Clara said, “I just clicked with her and I think vice versa.”

For the pairs that knew each other previously, all the participants described their prior relationships as incredibly beneficial in supporting their work together and in furthering their relationship. Daphne and Buttercup discussed learning how the other was connected to students in a way different than they had seen in an administrative environment. This new view of the other helped build their relationship and collaboration. Buttercup explained the experience as more “intense” in that they worked together for a longer period of time than they had worked
together before on one project, and so built on their prior relationship. They both said this strengthened their friendship.

Daphne and Buttercup arguably had the strongest prior relationship. Not only had Daphne been instrumental in bringing Buttercup to the institution and keeping her there, they had worked together for several years and had become friends. Buttercup compared her collaboration with Daphne to those of others with whom she had collaborated previously:

[Our prior relationship] has [had] a positive effect on our teaching because we didn’t have to go through [that getting to know each other stage], and I’m thinking back to when I was co-linked in the BGeX course . . . . I would meet with my faculty that my course was linked with, and just try to figure out how they work, what they value, what are some of the things that we could collaboration on just to really establish that relationship. It was work. Daphne and I didn’t have to go through that work.

Daphne agreed that having a prior relationship allowed her to have an advanced understanding of her partner’s values. She added that because they had this relationship and were both from the same background, they did not have to justify what a “student affairs person can bring to the table.” This was especially important for the instructor of record, thought Daphne:

I think that typically if you go into a blind relationship [where] you don’t know the other party, then you don’t know what they can bring to the table. And particularly if you are going to be the instructor of record, then you are the one accountable in that situation. And so you have got to play it out to see how that person can contribute and if you don’t know the person, then it might take a while to develop that trust level or to give that person’s particularly areas of responsibility outside of your scope.
Buttercup saw this prior relationship as important beyond having a common foundation. She believed this prior relationship was important in the day-to-day collaboration:

> We could really bypass that getting to know you phase that maybe some of the other instructors would need to go through. Learning their teaching styles and work style and we just kinda got through all of that because of our history I guess it made it easier for us to start collaborating right from the very beginning.

At any point in discussing their collaboration and relationship, they both referred to having known each other and worked together previously. Buttercup acknowledged, “I just can’t ignore that long history of a working relationship.” For Daphne and Buttercup, it was not that they gained essential new knowledge about their relationship, but that their BGSU1000 collaboration deepened their relationship and strengthened their collaboration. Buttercup noted:

> I certainly gained a lot of respect in terms of specific areas and examples and instances of the depth of her knowledge and ability as a [professional in her topic area] and all of those kinds of things. Not that I didn’t have it before but I didn’t have it in the depth and detail and knowledge of her qualification skills areas of interests and that sort of thing.

Paige and Sean had worked together in several ways previous to teaching BGSU 1000 together. They had served on committees together, worked in classes together, and collaborated on a Center for Excellence¹. The pair also communicated the importance of having a prior relationship to developing their collaboration and relationship further. Paige said, “I think it helped a lot. I really do. I think knowing and working with him beforehand has been very helpful.” Sean went into more detail, explaining that a level of comfort developed through an understanding of the person and their work:

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¹ The BGSU Centers for Excellence are areas of strength that play an important role in Ohio’s continued growth that have been recognized by the Board of Trustees.
Well I think [a prior relationship is] crucial. I think it’s very important in the sense that you have to have a certain amount of information about the person to be comfortable that they’re (a) competent; and (b) willing; [and] (c) really care about the content of the course and the process. And so developing that takes some time. And having known Paige for maybe a year, a year and a quarter . . . . rather than just knowing who she was or who she is [really helped].

Their prior relationship helped Paige and Sean understand that the other was willing and able to teach the course and would make the experience a good one.

Paige said that she had “learned things from [Sean’s] presentations” and that she “understood more where he’s coming from, I mean I have a better understanding of his experiences.” In reflecting on the whole experience, she saw how understanding Sean better helped their relationship by each partner gaining awareness of the others’ strengths:

I think when you spend [time together] you tend to build a closer relationship. You tend to know a person better and I think that was very good for us. I think that is one of the things that happened throughout the course. I think I got to know more of his interests, what he is really passionate about. So I think that through all of that we kinda learned what our strengths were and were able to rely on each other for different things throughout the course of the semester.

Sean concurred with this experience. He explained:

In terms of the personal relationship, the more I’ve gotten to know Paige, the more respect that I have for her role and for the way in which she handles her workload . . . . she’s obviously a good manager of staff and people. She does a huge amount of work and as far as the class goes.
Prior relationships made a difference in the development of collaboration and relationships for all the pairs. As Daphne explained, “I think the collaboration developed simply because we knew each others’ background.” Those that had prior relationships had a foundation upon which they furthered their interactions.

Commonalities

One of the primary themes that arose from the data was the importance of commonalities between the participants in each pair. Having common values, common goals, and common background experiences and styles contributed heavily to how the relationships and collaboration between partners developed. Partners described common values in terms of valuing collaboration, valuing relationship, valuing their partner, and valuing the contribution of the student affairs role to the project. While participants communicated that having common goals helped them to build their relationship with their partner and better collaborate, they had varying goals in mind. Some pairs discussed how making intentional connections was an important goal. A few pairs described how their content or theme contributed to building their relationship and collaboration. Working with students was a common goal mentioned by many participants as was contributing to student learning. Finally, having an intentional common goal was frequently described. Commonalities in backgrounds, experiences, personality, and teaching styles aided in the development of collaboration and relationships as well.

Values. Participants articulated that common values enhanced the development of their collaboration and relationships with their partner, but not all participants described what those common values were. For those that were articulated, participants expressed valuing collaboration in and of itself, valuing relationships and relationship-building, valuing their partner, and valuing student affairs.
Valuing collaboration. Nearly all the participants discussed the benefits in collaborating with their partners. Many saw collaboration as inherently beneficial. Most had collaborated previously, some in the context of BGSU 1000. Several shared stories from their past that taught them the value of collaboration. Sean told a story of being a student in a class that was team-taught. His instructors in the class brought in different areas of expertise to connect knowledge and challenge assumptions. This powerful learning experience was what he strived to achieve when teaching BGSU 1000. Sean, Daphne, and Clara all had previous collaborative teaching experience within the context of BGSU 1000 and had had positive experiences. These experiences led them to want to collaborate again, given a quality co-instructor. Daphne valued collaboration beyond the scope of the classroom. She saw her collaboration with Buttercup as important work that could impact the university:

So [collaboration is] a good investment of my time and energy to be able to make the program grow and move in the direction in that I certainly have a vision for seeing this program. Being able to do [so], and it’s beneficial for our students, [the] university, and very worthwhile.

Daphne had an investment in the BGSU 1000 program itself because it supported collaboration, but others thought that collaboration was fundamental to being a member of the university community. Sean explained:

[It is important] that we cast ourselves into the committee work, the grant work, the class work. I mean, it’s all part of being a contributing member of the faculty and the staff at the university. Since Paige teaches as an adjunct at [another university], she is doing both of those roles. I am doing both of those roles as a nature of the associate dean position. Teaching and doing all doing all of these administrative committees and
academic administration stuff and all of that [is essential to being a member of the university community].

Collaborating in all different forms was how work was accomplished, according to Paige. She described collaborating with undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and community members to accomplish the goals of her office. She said, “A lot of what I do depends on building relationships.” It was an inherent value in her work. Sean believed that wanting collaboration was the initial step in working well together, stating, “Well the first thing I would mention is the commitment to want to do that.” Believing that collaboration was important was the groundwork upon which these participants built their relationships. Instead of spending time convincing a partner that collaboration was important, the pair could move forward confidently with this shared value.

Not every participant valued collaboration in the context of BGSU 1000, and even saw doing so as detrimental to the teaching experience. Bob believed that collaborating with a co-instructor added work to his experience as opposed to making the process more efficient or more effective. Bob said:

I would not teach with a co-teacher again. [If] someone presented that to me, I would say no. I really think you are better off just having one person teaching the class . . . . I would not be in a coaching position again . . . .It is far too much work [to teach with another person] and I have come accustomed to having [my way when I teach].

For Bob, who did not value collaboration in context teaching context, this lack of common value did not contribute to the success of their collaboration.

**Valuing relationships.** Participants also described valuing relationships as a common value, both generally and in the context of collaboration. Paige, who described her work as
based in collaboration, explained that relationships were at the base of all her work. In fact, when Paige first began her current job, she had a mentor who encouraged relationship building. For her first several months, she spent much of her time meeting with different people on campus to start to build relationships. Paige thought this was such an important task that when she hired a new employee, she had the employee do the same thing. Paige believed she was able to do her job better because she spent time building relationships:

[I could do my job] because I built that relationship. And, to me that’s what it’s about. I feel comfortable calling the majority of this campus up and just saying, “Hey can you help me?” There’s not many people I don’t feel comfortable calling up, I would say. Just because I’ve built the relationships with them.

Paige believed that establishing good relationships with others helped her to advance her work; similarly, Paige believed that establishing a good relationship with Sean helped them to collaborate better.

Daphne and Buttercup, and Grace and Clara also expressed the importance of relationships. For these pairs, valuing relationships was embedded in their content areas. Clara and Grace believed their content area promoted relationships because much of instruction was conducted on a personal and emotive level. Relationships would help students be better in their field. For Daphne and Buttercup, relationships were the key in exploring their content area. Moreover, both pairs implied that individuals went into their fields because they valued the inherent relationships. This intersection of identity, content, and relationships was key to their BSGU 1000 experience:
I think having the same connection to the same content area [really] helps because I see that play out a lot in how we develop the course and in how we teach the class and the activities that we pull out to do with the class.

For Daphne and Buttercup, an established relationship meant that their work together, “how [they] teach the class,” was better than it would be if they did not have an established relationship. Realizing this common value freed the participants to collaborate better.

**Valuing their partner.** Nearly all participants conveyed how much they appreciated what their co-instructor brought to the partnership. Many of the faculty instructors appreciated the resources and connections that their student affairs co-instructor brought to the class. Sean said:

> First of all, from my perspective, somebody is better than nobody. But, in addition, somebody with [laughs] . . . Paige’s credentials and experience is a *lot* better than nobody, even if her time in class is minimal because she has so much experience and so many activities going on, from the student affairs side of things that focus on students and to a less[er] extent faculty stuff.

Sean expressed that despite her limited time, he valued Paige’s experience so much that he was willing to work with what time she did have.

Clara explained it as a “relief” to have someone else to help with the student affairs side, but also shared, “I would say that the good thing is that we both value what the other is doing. And, you know neither one of us thought, oh, mine is more important.” Grace agreed, explaining, “knowing that what you were bringing to the table is valued, I can’t stress enough how important that is, because that’s a function of what we do on a daily basis.” She was appreciative of being allowed to contribute to the academic content:
You know, she was willing to say, “Hey, do you want to take part in this? Would you feel comfortable doing this?” and I think that that helped a lot, too, with me, as knowing that my background was valued and that, you know, she recognized that I did have something to bring to the table beyond the typical, stereotypical student affairs “okay let’s do human knots now.”

For Clara and Grace, not only did they both feel open in bringing their areas of expertise to the partnership, but they knew their partner valued what they brought and who they were.

One pair noted that their skills sets were not as complementary, in part because they both had the same background. Bob explained:

I think there needs to be some matching up of talents and having the opportunity to find someone who brings something different than what I have to offer—something that will be complimentary. And in our case, I don't think we have that so much . . . . So, we don't have varied backgrounds that complement each other.

For Bob and Alex, having similar backgrounds left them often overlapping, and less likely to complement each other’s styles. In this case, Bob and Alex did not appreciate the redundancy of skill set offered by his partner.

**Valuing student affairs.** Nearly all participants, faculty instructors and student affairs instructors, valued student affairs as an integral part of their collaborative partnerships. They had certain assumptions and expectations about the student affairs role associated with their collaboration. Student affairs instructors were generally seen as the people responsible for student development, who could help students apply their learning by bringing in resources. Participants believed that faculty support this role by “buying into” collaboration with student affairs and advocating for the student affairs’ instructors.
Participants believed that the student affairs instructor was an expert in student development. Paige, whose experience prior to working at BGSU had been primarily been in academia, noted this difference in expertise between faculty and student affairs staff. She explained:

Not that we don’t build relationships in academia, but I think one of the things that’s changing in academia is seeing more relationships being built. But, a lot of times people tend to be in their own, doing their own thing within their own department. I think student affairs, really, you do need to try to build those relationships and meet people in order to get things done appropriately . . . . [in] student affairs you learn about the whole student development aspect. Which I think is great, and I think that’s why I love having the CSP graduate students as a part of [our program]. Because it brings a totally different aspect that we need to have because that student development piece is so important.

While Paige acknowledged that both faculty and student affairs professionals build relationships, she believed student affairs professionals focused specifically on student development.

Both faculty and student affairs instructors believed that one of the key traits student affairs instructors offered was the ability to help students apply the content they were learning in the classroom. All participants thought this was important to student learning, and both faculty and student affairs instructors indicated this was a primary focus for student affairs instructors. Daphne clarified the difference between what faculty and student affairs brought to the classroom in this respect:

I think that coming from student affairs, where maybe there is an emphasis on application, I think makes a difference. You know, perhaps if you are on the academic affairs side, from a faculty [perspective] you might look at things as a more theoretical
aspect whereas the focus is on content. Our discipline focuses on application in terms of how you apply what you have learned and I think that makes a difference in the class. Daphne highlighted that the “discipline” of student affairs focused on application. Other participants echoed this point. Buttercup explained that collaboration “needs to focus on the student affairs person really looking at the curriculum and seeing those places where the co-curricular can be used to enhance what the students are learning in the classroom.”

Both Paige and Sean expressed that the student affairs’ instructor (Paige) brought valuable resources to the partnership and class that helped students apply their knowledge. More than bringing resources to the students, both believed that she would bring resources to which Sean did not have access to help the course structurally. Sean explained, “You have a task to get done and Paige in part has certain resources, certain access to people that I don’t know about that will be great input for the content of the course.” While Paige knew that Sean valued her as a colleague, they both described Paige’s offerings as student affairs professional as “instrumental.” Paige believed being able to offer campus resources was not only valuable to Sean and her students, but rewarding to her as well. She expressed “I think student affairs role is what’s going on on campus. [That’s] their role. That’s what they’re doing. That connection. Putting it all together, I think is a great thing. So. I got to see that too.” Understanding the student affairs instructor as the point person for application of knowledge and bringing in resources seemed important to helping pairs develop collaboration.

Integral to the student affairs instructor’s role was the necessity of faculty buy-in and advocacy. Many participants stated specifically that student affairs needed advocacy in this area. Paige simply noted that she needed faculty buy-in to collaborate effectively. Sean explained that he advocated for student affairs professionals based on his experience as an administrator, “But, I
think [that experience] has a lot to do with shaping my view that we should really work in
congress with student affairs staff when [those staff members in particular] who have the
qualifications to teach [can teach].”

Grace communicated that student affairs professionals collaborate more naturally, but
there has traditionally been some hesitation on the part of faculty:

I also know there has been some resistance on the faculty side to true collaboration, [in]
that [if] you are not from an educational background necessarily, what makes you
qualified to teach this? So, there has got to be an attitude shift too. From the student
affairs side, collaboration is almost inherent in everything we do. Whether or not we are
good at it, whether or not we necessarily enjoy it, but it is almost essential in everything
we do.

Grace further explained that student affairs educators should be comfortable with the academic
content in the course as well as areas more traditionally associated with student affair such as
student development, skill development, and content. She believed knowledge of both areas
gave credibility to her expertise that was valuable to both student affairs professionals and
faculty. Both Grace and Daphne expressed concern that although many student affairs
professionals are capable of teaching content-based courses, faculty sometimes assume they are
not qualified to teach. Grace explained:

I would hate for people to assume that because I am in student affairs that I can’t teach.
It’s at a different level, but I did teach high school. I have worked in education and non-
traditional settings since I have graduated from college. I taught [another first year
seminar course] for what that is worth. I know that is not very highly regarded on the
academic side of the house, but I do have that classroom experience. So I would hate for them to assume that I can’t teach, just because [student affairs is] my background.

Similarly, Daphne also mentioned the importance of qualifications in teaching, “oftentimes, I guess faculty or people in the more academic side don’t necessarily understand or know our credentials on the student affairs side.” Daphne was especially vocal on clarifying for faculty the capabilities of student affairs professionals as in-class instructors. Daphne further highlighted the importance of student affairs professionals being more than just a rotating group of speakers. While this might be one of the options, true collaboration required equal partnership between faculty and student affairs professionals in first year seminars because:

It doesn’t have the same impact for the student because that person really doesn’t get to know the students in the classroom just coming in and doing a presentation in the classroom. Faculty members don’t get the connection with that staff member either because it is just someone coming in and doing a presentation. There is no opportunity for relationship or any collaboration in terms of what the content would be for presentation that a student affairs staff member would have coming into the class.

Several participants expressed a common understanding of the student affairs’ role as the facilitator of collaboration, who supports the course though application of learning and sharing resources. Faculty could offer support through buy-in, advocacy, and considering the structure of BGSU 1000.

Having common values, either professional or personal values, seemed to be foundational to building relationships for many of the participants. Participants connected with their partner through these values, either implicitly or explicitly. In some cases, having values in common led to the assumption of competency, which provided the necessary foundation upon which to build
collaboration and relationship. Sean believed that his and Paige’s shared vision of integrating the university bonded them:

So, the effort to change [the university culture. It] cannot be a bunch of [silos]. So, what we’re trying to do is trying to erase those silos or work across those silos . . . . And so that’s sort of the professional glue that that holds us together.

Paige echoed Sean’s sentiment when she said, “we both have sort of the same philosophy and beliefs about things.” In their case, their value of community—their philosophy of what was important—was the common value that brought them together in the first place.

Clara and Grace, who did not have an established relationship prior to working together, connected quickly. They both expressed how learning about commonalities in their upbringing suggested they had similar values. Clara told the story of how their strong relationship was forged:

Especially on the opening day, we had some good talks. We both found out we had some similar situations that we had come from. I don’t want to say too much on the tape but we kind of understood where [the] other was coming from in some ways. I think that those things that we have gone through in our background have made us the kind of people helpers that we are. We have that similar, I think we both knew right away that we were the same kind of people and had the same morals and values and stuff like that. Those morals and values helped build their relationship and collaboration from its outset. Grace highlighted that ultimately having common values led to growth in their collaboration through establishing trust. She explained,

I think it’s the background and the passion and the passion for the students and the shared background in [the content area that helped form our partnership]. That kind of we have
an understanding of where each other are coming from. Whereas often times when you’re thrown in group settings or thrown into collaborations [it doesn’t work that way] . . . . So I think that that helped [me in] feeling very comfortable and [collaborating effectively].

Common values were a connection for participants that established early bonds upon which they built relationships.

**Goals.** Although participants described common goals as important to building their relationships and collaboration, the common goals they named seemed to be particularly significant in encouraging their interactions. Common goals that were mentioned included making intentional connections, encouraging their content or theme, working with students, and achieving the ultimate goal of student learning.

**Making intentional connections.** Several participants discussed how bridging the gaps between various departments and colleges and “tearing down silos” in higher education and in student learning, were common goals in their partnerships and that bearing these goals in mind fostered their relationships and collaboration with their partner. Participating in BGSU 1000 allowed them to work beyond artificial boundaries between and among units in higher education to create real learning. For Paige, this was especially true because her work with Sean complemented her involvement in other areas around the university, reinforcing the importance of connections. Paige also believed that seeing this big picture and being involved gave her the opportunity to share information across boundaries to facilitate connections. She explained:

I think [one of the benefits has] definitely been putting it all together. Because from all my experiences with everything I’ve been involved in this semester, I’ve seen the big picture. So, that’s been one of the outcomes . . . I can see how each BGSU 1000 can fit into the foundations. You know? How important that can be. I truly see that . . . . I can
[then] take that information to the learning community. [Laughs] And talk about that experience there. So it’s all connected. And then, and speaking of that, there’s people in that community that don’t know about these other things . . . so, it’s that information sharing. [That has] been an outcome. [Not only there, but in our department] I can talk about, “Hey, I’m teaching the BGSU 1000 class and here’s what we’re doing, and it’s co-curricular and that’s how it’s fitting into the grant’s theme of all the stuff you’re hearing about . . . .”

Paige saw an opportunity to make connections across the campus that she believed might not have otherwise happened. Working with Sean to make connections brought them closer together.

Sean believed that this was one of the purposes of both his work with Paige and BGSU 1000. He explained, “What we’re trying to do is, we’re trying to erase as many silos as we can. The silos being academic departments and student affairs [units].” Because he saw the goal of breaking down silos as one of the purposes of his work at the university, he intentionally brought this to the BGSU 1000 experience. Sean felt he and Paige were working on this goal of connecting not only the campus, but the community, together:

Right away it was apparent to me that Paige was part of that. I mean, student affairs needed to be part of that. So, we wanted to work with [the entire campus, not just individuals], but on the part of the institution. And to make it a model institution for [our theme]. And then we can say okay, look we did it as a university community of 20 some thousand people, now let’s try and expand that to you know, Bowling Green, or some other community kind of thing. How can we get [some] community action [as] part of it?
Which provides great experiences for the students. So that’s why I see this opportunity, this course, as so important.

Paige and Sean believed that this connecting the university and community was a goal in and of itself. They saw that students, faculty, staff, and the university benefited from this overall effort. Having this common goal forged an understanding among the pair that allowed them to move in the same direction with their work, therefore bringing them closer together. Daphne and Buttercup saw these bigger connections as specifically integral to undergraduate education. They believed that connections across the university, such as those between student affairs and faculty, and those between curricular and co-curricular learning, were the most important part of their experience.

Daphne expressed that part of the reason she was involved in BGSU 1000 and her partnership was to encourage integration of the learning experience for students. For Daphne, modeling an integrated learning experience was important because she had seen programs describe collaboration that were not truly integrated. This integration of the learning experience was a goal that Daphne believed Buttercup shared, which fostered their collaboration and relationship. She hoped to achieve something different with her work with Buttercup:

"Like when I worked with BGeX . . . you know, the values initiated from the student affairs side. You know, and I worked closely with people in academic affairs, but . . . . student affairs did their own thing related to the values initiative and then the academic side sort of did their own thing."

Daphne described the previous program as “parallel” as compared to the “integrated” program that she believed BGSU 1000 to be. This was, of course, due to intentionality on the part of the program designers. BGSU 1000 included collaborative partnerships whereby faculty worked
directly with student affairs staff. Daphne and Buttercup thought, as did other participants, that one of the best parts of their collaborative partnership was integrating curricular and co-curricular learning. Integrating curricular and co-curricular learning helped students see that their education happened in all environments, and helped them see connections across their experiences and beyond. Buttercup, although she was the instructor of record, wanted to use her experience in student affairs to bring co-curricular learning into the classroom. She explained:

I see a lot of strengths that we can use to enhance the experiences that students have in a classroom. So one of the things that really interested me as—to be a faculty member, to bring that out-of-classroom experience and make it normalized in the classroom setting. So a lot of the things that I do in the course that we have now is to just integrate into the curriculum those co-curricular things that sometimes get missed, and I think that if faculty knew a little bit more about some of the work that we do, they would involve our students a little bit more.

She noted that faculty do not always understand how student affairs can assist in bringing co-curricular learning to the classroom. Buttercup noted that it can be difficult to do so and that is why it is often not prioritized as important. However, these connections had to be made intentionally. Because Daphne and Buttercup shared this common goal of integrating curricular and co-curricular learning, they prioritized this in the classroom. Buttercup explained:

There’s content that we need to cover, and you have to be very intentional about looking for and connecting those co-curricular things, and sometimes—I mean, it’s a lot of work and you can get lost in that, or just leave that piece out, and I think with the BGSU 1000 collaboration, it is a way to guarantee that that part doesn’t get lost. That it gets integrated into the curriculum.
Buttercup found that the structure of the collaborative relationship ensured that the curricular and co-curricular connections were made. Sharing the same goal, working together for the same purpose, fostered their collaborative relationship because Buttercup understood Daphne to be invested in the same way she was.

Buttercup also believed that working in the partnership, where she learned how to better integrate curricular and co-curricular learning, would prove beneficial to her after the course was over and was beneficial for students with whom she worked in her administrative role as well. Bridging curricular and co-curricular learning, as well as connecting faculty and student affairs, and breaking down silos across campus and the community were goals for several of the participants. These common goals that fostered collaboration and relationships for the partners were important for them beyond the course. As Daphne suggested:

I can see how all of that fits in the larger scope and picture of just general education and the direction we are trying to move in and very much committed to moving that whole process along as opposed to just co-teaching a specific course that is much bigger than a course.

Ultimately, participants’ experience in the program proved to extended far beyond the course itself. Participants saw themselves working towards intentional connections that ultimately encouraged their collaboration and relationships. A shared goal of intentional connections fostered the growth of their relationships, allowing them to focus on the ways to achieve their goals as opposed to spending time on developing a working relationship.

Course content. All the participants mentioned that course content or theme played a part in how their collaboration and relationships developed. Operating from their content area and sharing that theme with students was a common goal, whether achieved or not, for nearly all
participants. Paige and Sean were both personally connected to the content and saw their content as a bridge that could cross silos in the university. They believed that because they were focused on helping students learn their content as a common goal, it facilitated their collaboration, which they concluded benefited their relationship. They also noted that their content related to many different parts of the university and that by working together within the university system, they could bring together various departments and offices to focus on their common goal as well.

Alex and Bob explained that their theme and content were important in a different way. They had initially had certain goals in mind dependent upon the makeup of their class. When the class makeup did not meet expectations, they had to refocus much of their content. Their focus shifted due to both the number of students who could help facilitate the theme as well as the preparedness of the students to study their content. Bob and Alex felt the fact that they had to change much of their content hurt the development of their collaboration and relationship.

Daphne and Buttercup explained that the nature of their content area emphasized the application of the material. While application of content was generally considered the role of the student affairs instructor, because it was so important for the course, both instructors focused on applied learning, bringing them closer together. Both also believed that having a similar background in their content area benefited their work together and their relationship. Buttercup noted, “I think it has helped too that we come from the same type of [content] background so I mean we just kind of work and play off of each other.” Buttercup also felt their content area helped them integrate critical thinking into the course, which some instructors in other sections found difficult, and which seemed to encourage their work together:

I mean we integrated the [content] and the critical thinking piece very well. I think for us in some of the meetings we have had, I know it seems a little harder for some of the
faculty to do that, but I think we have been really lucky where our content area makes it easier for us to do.

One pair in particular felt that their content was integral to everything about their collaboration and relationship, from helping to clarify their roles to how they expressed emotions. Ultimately, content made a significant difference in the development of their relationship and collaboration. Grace and Clara felt that their content allowed them to make assumptions about the other person that helped them to trust the other person was competent and therefore move forward in their work together. Grace, who because her student affairs professional work was not directly related to the content area, found returning to the content area that was her undergraduate major to be incredibly welcoming and validating. She explained:

[It was rewarding] getting to be back in an environment that I like. Getting to work with students again that I don’t normally [get to interact with] . . . Being able to tell jokes about [our theme area] and having people get it. Throwing things out there about [our content area] and having people laugh rather than looking at you like you have two heads. [It’s] just, there was a lot of warmth and openness there. Not just from the faculty but from the students as well. I think they [grew] to appreciate my presence there.

While Grace had positive interactions with students generally, she found working with students in their course content area to be a special experience. Working with students in their content area provided Grace a clearer vision of her role in working with Clara. Grace believed that although she was certainly expected to bring her student affairs experience to the course, her experience in the content area was relatable and valuable. Clara’s primary role was the content expert, but she also brought a student development focus to the partnership. And although some pairs thought that their roles were unimportant to the process of collaboration and relationship,
Grace and Clara found that their content area supported having clear roles that sometimes intersected. It was just another part of their work and relationship. Grace described:

I think [the content area] helped really define my role because it was an area that I was comfortable with, where I felt I had something to contribute whereas if I were in a classroom where the topic was [a subject I didn’t know], I probably would’ve been okay, let me do the team builders, the rah rah, the knot stuff, and then bye.

Clara agreed that Grace’s background in the content area made a difference in her contribution to the course: “But then, because Grace has special gifts in [our topic], she also could contribute way more on some of the [topical] things more than I could imagine [other] student services people could do.” Grace felt this acceptance from Clara. She repeatedly communicated that knowing she had something to offer to the course and to Clara was important. Grace clarified:

Having been through all the stuff that those students are about to go through, I think that really helped with my being able to bring something to the table and give a different perspective to them [that] maybe they hadn’t thought about before. I think that having Clara knowing that I knew, and if for any reason she couldn’t be there, knowing that I could handle the classroom, I think that just took a burden off of her and she could be a little more comfortable.

In that case, offering a perspective of the content that was a complement to Clara’s content expertise benefited both their relationship and Grace’s relationship with the students. Grace felt the content provided her with an opportunity to contribute that helped build her relationship and collaboration with Clara.

The pair believed that certain things were true about an instructor if they were invested in the content. Clara explained,
I think there were things about Grace I could just assume because she’d been a [content area] major. You know I assumed that she’s got a passion that few other people have. And I assumed that she knows how to work damn hard. And, and I was right in my assumptions . . . . [and] that builds trust too, so.

Having a common goal for sharing the content allowed the two to build their collaboration and relationship despite not having had a relationship prior to BGSU 1000. Passion for the content was important to both participants. While both thought that content was important in building passion that benefited their collaboration and relationship, Grace felt this was a necessary factor for the BGSU 1000 program to be successful. She explained:

I think that, if somehow BGSU 1000 can do that, and be more intentional in its pairings rather than we need X number of student affairs people to participate, we don’t really care what you did because you’re only going to do this aspect of it, but you know having that familiarity with the topic, having a topic that the student affairs person can be passionate about, I think that will help too, and in creating a better collaboration.

Ultimately, the pair believed that their content was perhaps the most important aspect of their BGSU 1000 course and elemental to their collaboration. Both participants told intimate stories of how they came to the content area, how they benefited from the content area, and why they believed the content area was beneficial for students. Clara spoke to how the content area helped both her and the students communicate in ways they were otherwise unable to do:

It teaches them how to deal with their emotions. When we share appropriately and sincerely, because a student can tell right away if you’re sincere for not . . . . if we’re sharing appropriately and sincerely it’s also a good model for them, I think . . . . I think everybody needs that stuff, but, [our content area specifically] because it is a place where
they find, like for me, they find a place where they can express their emotions where they 
might not have been able to . . . And I think that was the case for me, certainly. You 
know? And Grace and I have talked about a lot of certain similarities in our background 
[and she had a similar experience].

In sharing stories of their connection to the content area, Clara and Grace continued to build their 
collaboration and relationship. As participants communicated content as a common goal, and 
shared it with the students, they believed it fostered their collaboration and relationship.

Participants believed that those assumptions and interests inherent in having a common content 
area and sharing this content area with students were a part of her or his partner. As such, this 
helped participants to build stronger collaborative relationships with their partners because they 
related with them.

**Working with students.** In one way or another, all the participants talked about students 
as an important part of their experience in being a member of a BGSU 1000 collaborative 
partnership. Working with students was a common goal for many participants. Several 
participants had not taught undergraduate students or other specific populations of students. 
Some may have taught those groups, but not recently. As a result, reentering that environment 
was a common purpose. Sean explained that just teaching first-year students was a big 
adjustment after spending several years teaching graduate students. He found the experience 
somewhat challenging. He explained, “I’ve learned a lot about what I don’t know. About 
teaching freshmen. I’ve taught graduate students for years and years and years, and upper level 
undergraduates. But . . . half of my students in these classes, and more than half last year . . . 
[are academically underprepared], so, they’re not exactly coming in as the best students that were 
recruited to the university.”
Sean described that not only had he not taught first-year students in a long time, but that because of the characteristics of the students in his class, he had to shift his style, specifically to address the process of learning. Grace also expressed this challenge. Although she worked with students on a regular basis in her position in student affairs, she found that their preparedness for college was surprising:

I have learned that our students are not where they need to be coming in. Whether it is the students that I work with in [my office] or whether it is the students that I have worked with in [our theme area], their skill set, their maturity for the vast majority, it’s not there. We are expecting them to come into college and a lot of times they are just progressing to grade 13. That concerns me.

Working with students was an important goal for both Alex and Bob, but the pair described having a particularly difficult time with their class. Bob believed their class population was different than they had expected in two main ways: first, they had hoped to have a particular course makeup to best facilitate their them, and second the group was not as academically prepared as they had expected. Bob and Alex both described how they managed this situation through the course of the semester. While Bob tried to figure out how to conduct their course theme in a different way than he had hoped, learning that the students were academically underprepared was part of what kept Alex engaged in the course:

That’s the way I saw it. I should have clarified that I saw my position, especially once I saw that the average level of preparation [of the students] because of the data that I reviewed before the class began, that the students average level of preparation was below the BGSU average. The majority of the class was academically eligible to [get help], so I wanted to be there but it only panned out for one student that [got help]. . . . We had
only, I would say, only 4 or 5 students that were above the average preparation of BGSU and I am saying like [all the qualifiers were met]. I stuck around intentionally for that reason.

Alex believed that although students were less academically prepared, if those students learned the right skills and had access to the right resources, they might be successful. While Alex attempted to connect students to resources on campus to address the issue, Bob thought changing the focus of the course was the better action. He hoped that helping students develop some basic skills and making sure they remained at BGSU for more than one semester was a better goal. He described:

I have a far more pragmatic approach to this course, and part of it is because I know what the statistics suggest—that a quarter of these students won’t be back in the next year. I recognize some of the challenges that the students have, and I think I take more of an approach to, “Let’s put them in touch with the resources that will make them successful.”

He further explained,

It became really obvious, [that] okay this is a group that a lot of first generation college students [and] not a lot of tacit knowledge about higher education coming in. [Those students were not prepared to] be at BGSU, let alone that class.

In reflecting on the experience of their course, both Bob and Alex seemed to struggle with the students in the course and how the two managed the course flow. Alex and Bob both described having to readjust their thoughts about the students and the course. Alex said, “I had optimistic goals for the class but they were not prepared for the level of that class. I think we were both saying that.” Bob said he was not certain of the best ways to help them succeed:
I think in reality [what] we really need to do is adjust our expectations. You want to save everybody. [A] young man who didn’t finish [the course] was probably . . . the most academically prepared. [He probably had] low grades in high school, probably pretty high ACT scores. He was one that, he wasn’t receptive to that at this stage in his life, [but at least he learned some skills]. I guess you relish in the small victories you have in these situations. Again it was a unique group with a large percentage of [academically underprepared] students.

Ultimately, Bob and Alex believed that they had small successes, but hoped to do better in the future. Bob explained that he learned this from participating in the BGSU 1000 collaboration with Alex:

[When I talk about what I learned from participating in BGSU 1000, it always comes] back to the students. Maybe that is not where you want to go but that is where my mind initially goes. I feel very bad that it didn’t meet my expectations of what I think it should have been more beneficial to the students.

Working with students was a goal communicated by many of the participants, but not always an easy goal to achieve. Even so, the participants expressed positive aspects of students when describing their experience in the collaborative partnerships. Sharing a common goal of working directly with students communicated a common interest among pairs. Because Bob and Alex did not share what they viewed as a common goal, they believed they would be working for different purposes, and therefore were seemingly working against each other from the beginning.

Working with the students enrolled in the course was a goal for most participants, but many additionally described working with the peer facilitator for their course as another part of their work. Bob said, “I think when you look at collaboration, we have to factor that person in,
too, because that person’s an integral part of this relationship.” Grace expressed that getting to
know the peer facilitators benefited both her and them:

> At first I think [the peer facilitators] may have questioned [my presence in the
classroom]. I can’t say enough about the students we have peer facilitating. I am sure
they think I am kinda odd but they are I think open now to going outside of the [our
theme area] for help and knowing that there are others on campus like me who are willing
to help them out and be there for them if they let us. Just another resource on campus.
That has been really rewarding.

Although Sean and Paige sometimes found providing their peer facilitator the best experience
difficult, this common goal helped bring the two together.

Paige specifically talked about her experience in watching the students in the class as
well as the students from her office learn from working together:

> I have two interns that are supervising some of the students, and for me, the comments
that they have made to me about their experiences working with the BGSU 1000
students, and what they’ve learned, and putting that all together has been amazing to me.
They have learned so much. Which, I mean, to have that experience, which I wouldn’t
have been able to give them without this opportunity [is great]. And I think that it’s a
win-win situation because you’ve got students supervising other students, but then, you
know, the whole peer-to-peer thing. . . . I mean they’re receptive to the other students,
they look up to the other students. They’re engaged, they wanna do what they need to do.
And it’s not just pleasing me or doing it for me. They’re doing it for another student.
Which I think is another avenue that’s kind of interesting. . . . So that’s been a really
exciting thing for me. Something that I’ve, really, really enjoyed seeing it from both
aspects. I’ve really seen that relationship happen. So, that’s rewarding to me. They’re both gaining from it. And they’re both seeing learning taking place.

Sean and Paige, along with other participants, found that student leaders improved the learning experience for their students. Participants’ relationships and collaboration grew from trying to provide a good experience for the student leaders. Additionally, participants sought to make their courses student-centered.

Most participants described grappling with how to best teach the course as a major part of their experience. Bob believed that being student-centered was key:

I’ll use the word “facilitate” this course because I think in a lot of ways that that’s one of the roles I see as the primary . . . facilitating this discussion. Because I’m hoping that it’s really student-centered and giving the students the opportunity not only to explore what’s available to them on campus, but hopefully to explore some of the [other] opportunities that are available to them as they move forward.

Daphne and Buttercup also worked to make the course student-centered and believed that helping students apply course content and develop skills were important to doing this. Buttercup explained:

It was exciting [to see] how students were going to massage the content and they were going to be able to incorporate it into their daily lives. I thought it was a fabulous experience . . . . We were very focused on the course being successful, and students really being engaged, and students really coming out with some skill development from taking this course based on the [themed] competency skills that we were building in class.

Focusing on students helped participants be goal-directed in their planning, prioritizing the important parts of their work, including collaborating. In working with students, many
participants believed that showing students care was important as a goal. Alex said about Bob, “I’ve been able to see how he cares about students. He really wants to help students.” Bob said that for all of the challenges with his students, he still tries to do his best for them:

I’d like to think that I bring a style to the classroom that makes the students feel at ease and they kind of appreciate and understand. I do understand the situation that many of these students are in. I understand that they’re not gonna be back—a large percentage of them. But within that, I hope to be able to provide everyone with an opportunity, access to some of the support services available to them. Even then, I realize those services across campus are stretched so thin that it’s not gonna save everybody.

Similarly, Clara expressed that students have needs beyond the classroom to which she tries to attend. She explained:

The students can’t learn if they’re not comfortable and if they’re not valued. . . so, the two of us tried to provide a safe atmosphere for the students, and a safe transition. They needed a lot of different components and the two of us made up those components.

She summarized her feelings, stating simply, “it is really all about the students.” For participants, much of their experience in being in a collaborative partnership intertwined with their experience with the students. Having a common goal focused participants on the purposes of their collaboration, encouraging development of their relationship.

Many participants believed they had achieved their goals in working with students through participating in the collaborative partnership. Daphne found that because she often worked at a “policy level,” she did not get as much contact with first year students as she would have preferred. Working with Buttercup for BGSU 1000 allowed her to stay connected. She explained,
I like working with first year students because, you know, I do a lot of high level work at the policy level and looking at retention and initiatives, and it helps you to be able to look at what you do and how that impacts and affects the students that you’re trying to do it for. And, if you’re too far removed, then what we talk about doing may not be what students [are experiencing]. So it keeps you connected, keeps it real . . . . that’s why I try to advise a couple of student organizations as well, because you get into this profession because of the contacts. You have the students and seeing their growth and development, [but] as you move up, less contact. You have to be more intentional about it, so that works out real well.

This contact with first-year students helped Daphne put the rest of her work in context. This was true for other participants as well. Clara described the students as rewarding, “The students are so incredibly rewarding. I have so many individual stories about this student and that student. Just seeing them develop. Seeing them rise above their circumstances, it is so rewarding.” Buttercup explained further. Not only was working with the students rewarding, but seeing them grow was rewarding:

But I would say what has been really rewarding is some of the conversations that I’ve had with students. One conversation I had with a student, he told me that, you know, what you covered in class seemed really basic, but I never thought about it before. You know? And he talked about how it impacted him. That through this course, he was able to see [what he has learned]. And we just had this little conversation, and it was just, you know, in the union. [It was] just a chance conversation . . . you don’t often get that kind of feedback and I really felt excited about our students sharing that. I think there’s a lot of
real and genuine sharing and growth that happens in class, and I think that’s very, very
rewarding.

Ultimately, students were a significant part of participants’ experience during their time in
BGSU 1000, and this contributed to the development of their collaborative partnership as well.
Participants’ goal of working with students often contributed to building their relationships and
collaboration because in both making assumptions about their partners’ intentions and allowing
participants to focus on the common goal, pairs were able to focus more specifically on how to
improve their work together.

**Student learning.** While working with students was communicated as a common goal
for many participants, helping students learn was a goal described by all participants. This
common goal brought participants together. Paige explained:

> I think we both want students to have a positive learning experience . . . I think that’s
> both of our goals . . . . I think we’re gonna do whatever we need to to make that happen . .
> . . I mean we’re gonna go out of our way to [help them learn].

For Paige and Sean, working toward student learning was the reason for their involvement in
BGSU 1000. They saw their work together as the best way to achieve that goal. Sean clarified
this when he said, “I think it’s [student learning] absolutely the foundation . . . that makes it
meaningful for both her to be a part of it and me to be a part of it. Because we’re working
towards that common goal.” Daphne echoed Paige and Sean, but believed that in order to
accomplish this goal, it was important for students to be engaged in the material. She explained:

> Of course that’s our only goal, is that students will achieve the learning outcomes for us.
> But, you know, looking at ways that we can keep students engaged because sometimes . .
. some of the critical thinking parts of it, [is] not the most interesting stuff, but although important. So try to look at ways to keep students engaged and interested.

Paige and Sean, and Daphne and Buttercup, all believed that student learning was a common goal. Working towards achieving that goal is what fostered the development of their collaborative relationships. The first step in building their relationship based on this common goal was to determine what learning meant.

While student learning was a common goal, what learning looked like was different from participant to participant. Some participants explained that because of the nature of the students, it was important to focus on skill development and providing resources—a capability provided by having a teacher from student affairs as one of the two instructors. Bob highlighted this importance, saying “The reality is that these students are at high risk of attrition. If we can teach them some basic skills related to time management, personal responsibility, note taking, organizational skills, we’d be better off.” Bob and Alex believed that what students learned was in large part determined by the characteristics of the students themselves, but regardless, students benefited by having a student affairs instructor as part of the teaching team.

Other instructors focused more on the knowledge and skills of critical thinking as a key area students should learn. Many of the instructors explained that they struggled with teaching critical thinking. They described the ambiguity of identifying learning, struggling through the concept, and ultimately seeing some growth. Grace noted the importance of including that focus from the beginning of the course:

I think the goal of a critical thinking class is a lot different than the goals of other classes in that you can’t really measure the outcomes right away. You can’t really tell [whether or not] they have usable knowledge right away. Whereas if you are in a biology class, or
if you are in a math class, or a sociology class, or an American studies class, [students can say] here is what I got out of this. Whereas they might not be able to express it as clearly in a critical thinking class. So, we really wanted the students to get something out of the class more so than bubble maps. I think that kind of guided us all the way through the process. Why are we thinking about this? Why are we even talking about this? There was always that intentionality there from the beginning.

Clara agreed with Grace about the difficulty of teaching critical thinking skills, but believed, upon reflection, that the students really did improve:

> The students did a great job this year. I think they learned to write better, they learned—they still have trouble with critical thinking, I still have trouble with critical thinking. I am reading their end of the year papers and [they say in] this class I learned to think critically because I am now more open-minded. It is more than that. You still have to have that evidence. Baby steps. I think the students did really well on all of their work. I think they did really, really well. They really learned.

Where Clara saw “baby steps” in student understanding critical thinking, Buttercup saw somewhat bigger steps in students’ critical thinking skills, and related this to the content area of their course. She explained that she believed the students learned more about critical thinking than she did as a first-year student:

> I think it really kept the students engaged, and I think because we had them do really intentional things outside the classroom, and we connected it to [our theme] competency skills, we connected it to critical thinking . . . I think it really helped students get something that I really struggled to make a connection with as a first-year student.
Buttercup noted that also important in teaching critical thinking was applied learning, which many participants described as both a pedagogical tool and an outcome in and of itself. Although helping students learn critical thinking skills was a common goal for participants, the challenge of this goal was what brought participants closer together. Buttercup explained,

A lot of the things that we teach in the course is about developing relationships with others and seeking opinions of others and perspectives of others, and I think during our teaching we have—we set a good role model for that. And I think we bounce well off of each other, because if—you know, if I’m there teaching something and Daphne has an input . . . or something to say to support that she does it, I do that with her, so I think we play off of each other pretty well in that respect.

Thus, encouraging students to learn communication and perspective-taking forced Buttercup and Daphne to practice that skill in their own relationship. Additionally, participants found that encouraging application of student learning was a common goal that pushed participants to collaborate well. Sean expressed that application of class concepts to the rest of students’ lives informed the curriculum that he and Paige developed. Other participants found that this was an important enough objective that they built their collaboration around how to make this happen in the classroom. Daphne explained in detail:

That is the purpose of teaching a course. It is not just content, but wanting students to be able to apply what they have learned in their everyday life in terms of how they view [our content] and how they incorporate it not only in their course work, but living in their residence halls or interacting with their family and friends, [so] that it will become a way of life for the students, so it is not just the course it’s really a way of life.
Buttercup responded,

When we are developing what we are going to teach for the week, that is something that stays as a focus point for us. What can the student take from the readings and apply to their everyday life? How can we make that real for them? How can we build on that connection from what we are talking about in class to their interactions in the residence halls, or even just some of the activities we have them do in class to learn from each other to see how the content that we are teaching spans across so many different areas of their lives. And half of the students make that connection and take ownership of it . . . . It is just not a topic in the book, it is actually something they are going to use while they are living on campus, after they graduate from the university in their communities when they go home.

It was the bridging of information from inside the class—skills and resources and critical thinking—that was important to Daphne and Buttercup. Focusing on the common goal of student learning encouraged participants to work together towards their common purpose, thus fostering good work together.

**Establishing common goals.** Having common goals was important, but not happenstance. Intentionally establishing common goals was vital for building collaborative relationships. Bob explained this process must be both natural and intentional:

It’s the nature of collaboration. It needs to be intentional in that goals need to be defined. There needs to be a division of labor that respect responsibilities, but then it also needs to be very natural in an educational setting. In higher education, we have a tendency to say, “Oh, it was great collaboration” and the warm and fuzzies come out and the group hug and in some ways [that isn’t real].
Bob and Alex grew to realize the importance of intentionally establishing common goals as they progressed through the course, because they had not determined any. This concern was evident even in the first interview with the two. In his first interview, Bob mentioned, “I don't know if we necessarily shared the same goals and objectives.”

During their pair interview, the two expanded on this idea, clarifying that they did not have a clear idea of what was expected of them in terms of goals and roles. The pair believed that because they did not necessarily have the same goals, they did not clearly define their roles within the partnership, both of which impacted their collaboration. Bob later described this though an analogy:

[We didn’t have a] common goal. I think we both recognized the difficulties with that group but in some ways I guess we thought the medicine needed was very different. We couldn’t come up with a common way to treat the ailment, if I could use that analogy.

We knew the students had a fever, runny nose, and all of these symptoms and in many ways I identified them through interaction with the students and I think that Alex identified it by looking at their test scores and sharing some of that with me. You know? There was a common diagnosis and we diagnosed it in a different way, but we weren’t able to come up with a common way to treat this.

Alex noted, “clarifying some of the roles and to what degree should someone be there might help out to further determining collaboration.” Bob compared his experience to working in another collaboration, explaining that in his previous collaboration, “we were really able to divide things up and have clear ideas about what each person was gonna do. We don't have that here because it’s, ‘Oh, we’re both doing everything together,’ and that’s kind of a recipe for disaster when it comes to collaboration I think. I’m a perfectionist.” He and Alex believed that their lack of
common goals influenced their role confusion, which then affected their collaboration. He further explained, “Without clearly defined goals I think collaboration, is, I don’t want to say is more difficult to achieve, but it becomes more of a challenge.”

Bob especially seemed to be bothered by this challenge, and took ownership for it. He explained, “That was a failure on my part because I had the authority at that time to say, ‘Look, we at least have to define some goals.’ We never even got to the point of defining [them].” But another participant reflected that a lack of clarity in common goals, and therefore roles, was true for the overall program. Grace said:

Really, when it comes to the class itself, making certain that there is a commonality for the experience for the students by [really] defining what you really want the roles to be or what BGSU 1000 wants the roles to be. What [are] the outcomes that they are trying to achieve with this collaboration? Is it just bringing in an expert to do learning styles? Is it just to say, ”Well, we did collaboration with student affairs and academic affairs? Look!” Because if that was the only goal, yes it was successful. But if the goal is to really create a rich experience for the students, then more has to be done on the front end of it to make sure that everybody is on the same page and everyone has the same buy in. [It should be] that everybody is excited about the experience, and if not excited then at least engaged in the experience. [It] is more than just I have to teach this class or I have to do this workshop today.

Although nearly all the participants described common goals as vital to their collaboration, Bob and Alex seemed to struggle with the process more than others.

For all pairs, even Alex and Bob, whether or not they had common goals was more important than most other factors in their partnership, specifically more important than the roles
to which they were ascribed coming into the partnership. Despite the struggles of the partnership, Alex communicated that common goals went beyond what he or Bob brought to their experience:

One of my perspectives on that is that usually the common goals override the group or the individuals within the group. So when I am part of a group that is collaborating I see the outcome as the priority, not necessarily that it is so important that this person does this thing and it has to be very procedural and only that person can do that thing and if they don’t do it everything falls apart. It’s like you have to be flexible because you have to think about if something happens, you have to work together to make sure that we get to the common goal. The goal is what matters.

Sean and Paige also described the importance of common goals beyond their roles. Sean explained:

I would just reiterate or put into my words the vehicle of the class would allow us to stay focused on those [topical] issues or goals that we both thought are important regardless of the university structure or professional roles or that kind of thing.

Participants described their common goals as making intentional connections, conveying course content, working with students, and student learning. What the common goal was seemed less important than having the common goal. Some participants even defined, with different levels of complexity, collaboration as having common goals. Alex defined collaboration simply as, “It’s just working with other people to achieve a common goal.” In Daphne’s case, having common goals brought together by different perspectives from different individuals was what made for good collaboration. She went on to say:
So I think that certainly enhanced the type of collaboration in that we both had the same goals and outcomes for the course and were invested in it being able to expand to the other sections in the future. I think we were both very much invested in the process. Having these common goals was definitely seen as having an impact on the quality of the collaboration.

**Common experiences and styles.** All participants described how having or not having commonalities in terms of background experiences or personality or teaching styles made an impact on the development of their collaboration and relationships. Paige and Sean had a personal commitment to the importance of the content for the students that they explained students “couldn’t get anywhere else on campus.” They believed they could “save students’ lives” with their course and hoped to do so. Their commonalities were in personal investment in the content. This common personal interest brought them together in terms of relationship and collaboration.

Bob and Alex described themselves as having less in common. While both had a focus in the theme, their personal experiences with the topic area were incredibly divergent. Their communication styles and personalities were quite different as well. Moreover, they were at quite dissimilar places in their personal lives, which both described impacted their relationship. Bob summed up their relationship saying “I think a lot of that is that we are very different two types of people.” Alex explained, “we have different perspectives on different topics.” Bob and Alex did not describe a strong personal relationship nor many commonalities. The partners believed having more in common would have likely have helped them develop a better collaboration and closer relationship.
Buttercup and Daphne had years to develop common experiences, but found they naturally had many characteristics in common. This proved important to them during BGSU 1000. Moreover, they both repeatedly highlighted their similarities in terms of style. They both recognized their differences and how to best utilize these with their similarities:

We came in knowing what each of us could do and being able to teach the content and in terms of our styles as well because I think that makes a big difference in how you approach teaching and learning. I think our styles are very similar so I guess we already knew that we would be able to work together in that our strengths would be comparable and would be effective in working. I think that made a big difference as well.

Buttercup and Daphne explained that because of their similar styles and common background, they knew how to “play off each other and kind of build upon what the other has brought to the table.” Their commonalities helped Daphne and Buttercup come to trust and rely on each other in terms of their relationship which then benefited their collaboration.

Grace and Clara were on an adventure of discovery in terms of commonalities in background experiences. Although they highlighted they had similar styles, it was in learning of their common background that they solidified their relationship. Grace explained:

I think that [our relationship] is a direct result of having two people that have had very varied life experiences. I didn’t come from an academic background. I graduated from college and I went out into the quote real world and did a bunch of weird things that I really felt passionate about and then got into higher ed. And Clara also had kinda a convoluted path and I think that is one of the reasons that we clicked so well is because both of us had these experiences that most people in our fields don’t have. And so we are like, “Oh, yeah! This was a weird thing that I did,” and I was like, “Me too!”
Clara described learning about common struggles in childhood and young adulthood and said:

Those are two huge things in a person’s life, and we found that out within three hours of knowing each other, and then just also you can tell a way a person works with students what kind of person they are. I think that we saw that in each other that we were for the students. It just kind of went from there. It was like a big splash.

During our pair interview, Grace and Clara learned that they both had similar educational quandaries, fought against what others told them to do, and were raised in environments that taught them the value of authenticity. During that conversation, Clara said:

So, I’m grateful to Grace for articulating that, but there’s another thing we have in common—why we trust each other and why we are souls that, we recognized each other on some level.

For both Clara and Grace especially, but for all participants, commonalities in experiences and personality helped them establish and build their collaboration and relationship. Commonalities in values, in goals, and in background experiences and styles fostered the collaborative relationships of the pairs. Daphne summarized, “knowing each others’ personalities and styles and background and . . . . everything related to that particular topic [improved our collaboration].

**Comfort and trust**

Participants described that prior relationships and collaboration and finding commonalities helped them establish a level of comfort and trust with their partners. This, in turn, fostered the development of their relationships and collaboration. Paige suggested that having a good relationship with her partner allowed her to “kind of anticipate how he reacts to things. How . . . he operates, how he handles things. Which is nice. It’s more comfortable.”
Because they were more comfortable with each other, they were able to trust their partner, and therefore move forward in their collaboration.

Clara and Grace seemed particularly invested in the idea of trust. Clara broached the subject with “I think we trust each other. I certainly trust her. That is a big deal for me.” Grace agreed with this sentiment. She explained:

I think that I am much more open [with her] . . . . I’m a very reserved person, it takes a while to get to know me. And with Clara, that boundary is gone. So that I can joke and say things that I usually hold back because I am afraid that it will be misinterpreted. I can count on her.

Both Grace and Clara explained that although trust is something built over time, and that indeed it was built over time for them, they had an immediate comfort with each other. Clara said,

You know when you don’t know somebody you start out like two dogs sniffing each other out, figuring out who they are. Not that Grace and I were wary of each other or anything like that. In fact we had a very immediate sort of reaction of, “Oh, I like this person” kind of thing. You know you work that kind of stuff out, but as you figure out you can trust this person and what gifts you have, and those boundaries very quickly disappear.

Clara shared one particular story that highlighted the importance of trust for the pair:

There was one day when I was really upset about something. It was the day we were to have a discussion on critical thinking, and I don’t feel very confident on teaching critical thinking, so I was a little nervous about it although I prepared. But that was the day they found the body of the Rutgers student and [that] hit me hard, and it hit me hard because he was the exact age of these students and you know, there they were in college for the
first time going through many similar things. It really hit me hard and I talked to the
students about it, and I kinda choked up and it was very hard for me to do the discussion.
And I just said, “Grace will you do this?” She usually sat over by the side, but she pulled
her chair up and we just together talked to the kids. Eventually we got into our critical
thinking thing and it was really nice. It was nice for the students to see to that we
supported one another in that way. She has had some stuff going on this semester, too,
about family members and so forth, so I hope that I have supported her because there
have been some times when she says, “I just can’t come to class” or “I will be late” and I
just say, “Don’t worry about it. It will be okay.”

For Clara and Grace, not only did sharing stories lead to a level of comfort within their
relationship, but the importance of their shared stories established trust on which their friendship
and collaboration continued to build.

Clara gave an analogy to describe the importance of trust to her working relationship with
Grace:

I think we probably work together like we [would] work in an ensemble, we trusted that
we would know each other’s parts, when it was your turn, when you had the melody, go
for it, I’m playing, I’m playing harmonies in the background, and I mean I, I never
thought of it while it was happening, but now that I look at it, really we were doing an
ensemble performance. Because I could, we knew how that works, and we could trust
each other.

A building of trust and being able to rely on their partner was a key element in Grace and Clara’s
collaboration. Both women explained that they did not share work easily and that being
respected for what they could offer was important. Because those aspects existed in their
collaboration, they were able to transition to an easy back and forth in how their collaboration functioned. Grace recognized this was a process for Clara:

With this collaboration there was far less territoriality though. I cannot state that enough. She was always open and always receptive to my input. She valued it she welcomed it. There have been times where in situations where you collaborate where you know that it’s the other person’s project or they see it as their baby or you see it as yours and you are very protective of how much you let other people do and how much you let them in or how much they let you in. There was none of that here. It was a very open environment.

Summary

There were four main themes that related to the development of collaboration and relationships for participants. Partners discussed how prior relationships promoted the development of their relationships and collaboration. Commonalities in terms of common values, common goals, and common background experiences and personality styles contributed considerably to the development of their collaborative relationships. Moreover, having a prior relationships or collaboration and commonalities helped develop comfort and trust between partners and added notably to building their relationships and collaboration.

How Do Relationships and Collaboration Function?

When participants explained how their relationships and collaboration functioned, they spoke of categories of relationships, how they interacted, and how their partnerships operated. Participants’ relationships and collaboration functioned in various ways, from collegiality, to mentoring, to familial, to friendship. Roles were discussed in unusual ways. Participants’ roles were complex and situational. Participants also described the part that communication played in how their relationships and collaboration functioned, including assumptions they had and
whether they discussed their work together. Communication about their relationships and collaboration involved overlap and compartmentalization.

**Kinds of Relationships**

Participants’ relationships functioned in varying ways. In fact, as participants described how their relationships functioned, they labeled them in ways that were familiar and made sense to them. Participants explained that they functioned as colleagues, mentor-mentee, family, and friends. Although there were several commonalities across relationships, there was no one kind of relationship. This also meant that pairs sometimes described their relationships in more than one way. The kinds of relationships were important because they contributed to the ways in which their relationships and collaboration functioned.

- **Colleagues.** Paige and Sean had a more collegial relationship. They considered themselves equals, bringing qualities to the relationship that the other did not have. Their relationship was seemingly similar to their collaboration: productive, supportive, and goal-directed. As such, both talked about their contributions to the partnership instrumentally. Paige described that Sean brought expertise and community connections while Sean highlighted Paige’s resources and knowledge base. They primarily referred to their collaboration in professional as opposed to personal terms, but communicated great respect for each other. Both felt valued by the other and hoped to work together professionally in the future. Therefore, in working together, Paige and Sean took turns, respectfully deferred to the others’ areas of expertise, and were considerate of each other’s time and interests.

- **Mentor-mentee.** Others described their relationships as more of a “mentoring” relationship, though to varying degrees. Although Buttercup was the instructor of record, she saw Daphne as a mentor:
She decided that . . . I would be the faculty person teaching it, and [she asked] if I was interested in doing it. And I’m like, “Of course! Yes!” And then the first thing that crossed my mind is, “Oh my goodness. She’s, like, an expert . . . she’s, like, my mentor.” She should be teaching the course and I should be assisting her. And I’m like, wow, what an honor.

Buttercup respected Daphne’s experience and expertise. Although there were no issues of power in their relationship, there did seem to be deference to the length of time that Daphne had been in the field. While Daphne and Buttercup had an established relationship and friendship, Bob and Alex did not, but their relationship functioned as a mentorship as well. Bob noted, “Boy, this is maybe the stoic Asian in me—I don't really have a relationship with him other than that hour and fifteen minutes and the couple times we’ve had to go out” and “when I say, ‘I have no relationship,’ that’s—I say that in a sense that we absolutely have no [personal] relationship. It’s a professional relationship.” Alex agreed with that assessment, stating that their relationship, was in the context of the class. I don’t know it’s at the stage, too, that I don’t know how much people maintain friendships after a certain point. There is an age where you can handle that and time-wise because you have family responsibilities and work responsibilities and that packs up a lot of time. [It’s not like] every week where we could go and hang out after work. We talked a little bit after class but it was a context role relationship and I think that is a factor of life and availability issues really. Bob discussed career options with Alex and even referred Alex to a job in his office. Both Alex and Bob suggested that while they did spend time together out of class, specifically at a local pizza place, most of their conversations seemed to be about the class or Alex. While Alex felt
that he came to know Bob better, Bob felt that Alex did not, in large part due to Bob’s way of interacting. Bob described himself as more reserved in terms of building relationships and Alex attributed this to Bob’s primary concern with his family. Bob noted, “it felt very friendly but it was mentoring. It was friendly mentoring.” Bob felt that their relationship was primarily one way, and both felt that Bob took the lead on planning the syllabus and facilitating the class, despite the fact that Alex was in class daily.

**Family.** Clara specifically described her relationship with Grace as an extension of the “family” that was her content area. This seemed to hold much emotion for Clara. In her first interview, she said, “I just hope that we were all one big happy family” in terms of her partnership (including her peer facilitators). She was even more drawn to this concept when I asked her about it in the second interview:

> Actually my eyes are sort of tearing up right now because I think that is the thing about [people in our field] and especially kids in college, is that it is a family. You know you just, you just become a family with the students that you have and, um, and to have Grace as part of that family was great.

This comparison was held throughout both Clara and Grace’s interviews as they often described themselves as “moms” to their students. This kind of relationship was further demonstrated in that Clara and Grace talked about being authentic with the students, sharing themselves and their stories, appropriately. The two supported each other and expected to fall into relationship with each other no matter how long it had been since they had seen each other.

**Friends.** Daphne and Buttercup had established a friendship even prior to collaborating previously. Buttercup told the story of how they built a friendship while working together:
Our offices were always right next to each other, so even if structurally when I first started working I didn’t report to Daphne, but as far as the workings in the office, Daphne always had an open door. So we got to know one and other and she was always interested in what I was doing and she had an open door policy so I would stop in and chat and I think that is how we began to get to know each other. I didn’t really have any family or know anyone in the area when I first started here. I think I made that connection early with Daphne put her on the list as another contact for daycare and all of those things. Yeah. I think our personalities kinda clicked from the beginning.

Daphne said, “I’ve known her for many years and, you know, I consider her not only a colleague but a friend as well.” She went on to explain that:

We’ve done a couple of social things. Like my sorority does a fundraiser in the spring and, you know, I invite her to that, and a few weeks ago her husband is a part of this—he’s from Africa, so they have their New Year’s—it’s not a New Year’s celebration—their independence day celebration. And so they invite me to go to that activity. I mean—and you talk about, you know, what the kids are doing or just . . . friendly. You know, small town Bowling Green. So, we don’t do a lot of activities together, but I certainly consider her a friend.

Daphne and Buttercup had a well-established relationship prior to their collaboration for BGSU 1000, but the course gave them an “opportunity to maintain a relationship versus if we weren’t teaching.” Their relationship, then, functioned in ways that allowed them to invest time in their friendship and build on their friendship in addition to their professional collaboration. Roles might intertwine and personal stories were more likely to be shared.
Clara and Grace, though, did not have a prior relationship before working together on BGSU 1000. However, they saw their relationship as a friendship as well. Even at their first interviews, both participants expressed this. Clara described:

I can see that she would fit into my social group really well and I can see us going to lunch and keeping in touch and things like that. We have talked. We have talked about personal things together. Not a lot but we have.

By their final individual interviews, their friendship seemed solidified. Both said that one of the best parts of the experience had been discovering the other. Grace explained, “So it just worked out really, really well. It was fate, God or whatever you want to call it. Everything just aligned the right way and we just clicked.” For Grace and Clara, their relationship absolutely functioned as a friendship.

**Roles**

Participants’ relationships and collaboration functioned through roles they held. These roles were not always those that were ascribed—that of either student affairs instructor or faculty instructor. In fact, nearly all participants functioned outside the lines of traditional faculty and student affairs roles. Few participants were strictly a faculty member or a student affairs professional and their boundary-crossing roles demonstrated this. Additionally, participants took on roles and contributed as needed, situationally, and with give and take between partners. For some participants, this was part of their focus on equality in role.

**Complex roles.** For the four teaching pairs of faculty members and student affairs instructors, titles of “instructor of record” and “student affairs instructor” proved to be less clear than expected. Moreover, these prescribed roles were both insufficient and inaccurate in terms of the function of collaboration for the participants. Paige and Sean both identified with the
others’ role to some degree. Paige, who was a faculty member at another university and whose
doctorate was in a content area related to the BGSU 1000 course theme, acted as primary content
expert in some cases. She could speak as thoroughly about academia as she could about student
affairs, a culture to which she was relatively new. She explained this transition, “I was always in
the academic side . . . . I didn’t really even know what student affairs . . . . you always kinda
know what, but you never [know] what student affairs is per se.”

Similarly, Sean had been an administrator before he had ever taught in the classroom. He
described having to work to feel comfortable teaching in the classroom. Moreover, he was
serving in an administrative position within his college. Sean and Paige saw this intermingling
of roles as an extension of the work they were doing to break down silos. Sean specifically saw
the role distinction as useless. He suggested, “I wish we could do away with those distinctions . .
certainly for the administrative staff. Especially [those in] the higher level positions . . have
advanced degrees, do have relevant experience that allows them to be effective in the classroom
as well as in their administrative jobs.” Appropriate qualifications and the ability to teach were
more important to him. Paige and Sean also believed this related to their efforts to instill life-
long content knowledge with the students by encouraging application of their learning. Roles
were arbitrary to student learning in terms of how the pair functioned in their collaborative
relationship.

Alex and Bob believed the complexity in roles made their experience more challenging.
Although Bob was technically the instructor of record and therefore purveyor of content, he
focused on the class as a transition course to encourage student success. He often referred to
campus resources and student needs as ways to guide course content. Conversely, Alex, the
student affairs instructor, identified with faculty and academic affairs. Alex’s focus in the class
primarily centered on the content of critical thinking. He was concerned for students’ academic preparedness and their ability to master the content from the BGSU 1000 textbook. Alex described his professional experience as being in “limbo” between student affairs and academic affairs. He explained:

I didn’t think about all the implications of being moved to student affairs from academic affairs and it was, I have always been in that limbo because when I started off I was in student athlete support services. That is academic limbo as well because you have got the athletics and academic worlds intersecting on a constant basis and the people on the board for that department are faculty.

Additionally, both Bob and Alex noted that they believed their course experience to be different than other pairs because of some of the decisions they made regarding how they would collaborate. Alex stated that:

I could just as easily see myself as the guy that comes in by the way there are these services [around campus] and show up for like two classes the whole entire semester. Sounds like there are some classes where someone didn’t show up a whole lot more than that. Maybe there are some where it was more maybe less, I don’t know. It could vary dramatically based on how well my role is written into course design and it really has been my choice to be that involved because it’s not transparent like that as to what level of attendance and commitment that someone has to it. . . . You know what, I realize that really I am over-committed compared to what is being put there.

Alex and Bob both played the others’ role to some degree, but believed that their collaboration would have been more effective had their roles been clarified and distinguishable. In this respect, their complex roles contributed to a difficult collaboration and relationship.
Daphne and Buttercup, by nature of their friendship, prior working relationship, philosophy of collaboration, and shared interest in the content, played their own role and each others’ seamlessly. Buttercup, the instructor of record, had a Ph.D. in the content area for the course, but was housed in student affairs as an upper level administrator. Most of her experience had been as a student affairs administrator, and being the instructor of record was an honor for her. Daphne, on the other hand, although she had a Ph.D. in a related content area, had been housed in both academic affairs and student affairs and had previously taught BSGU 1000, although she was the student affairs instructor. Both agreed that they could have had either role in their partnership. Daphne expressed, “I think just by virtue of my experience, you know, in terms of degrees, experience in student affairs and previous teaching responsibilities, I think that’s where, for me, it’s been—because I’m—easily I could be an instructor.” Both described working in both faculty and student affairs roles throughout their course together. In their case, Daphne and Buttercups’ collaborative relationship functioned well through participating in multiple roles.

Although initially Clara and Grace seem to be a more typical pairing, the two instructors found crossover in their roles as well. Clara and Grace definitely considered Clara the primary instructor, due to role assignment, experience, and content expertise. She stated:

I do see myself as the alpha dog. I think because my name is on the list as the instructor, so I know I have the end responsibility. I also know that I have more experience teaching the [topic] in particular more than my peer facilitators. So as far as content is concerned I feel that I have, I feel that is what I know the best. I feel like my role is to develop the syllabus.
However, Clara’s background influenced her positioning in the classroom. Although she deferred to Grace as the student affairs expert, she referenced her own background in residence life as a resident advisor. She explained that her experience in that role led her to her first teaching position. Moreover, she had worked as an administrator in her college. Her experience in student affairs, as a faculty member, and as an administrator in her college, supported her statement that she was very interested in the development of the whole student—a philosophy typically communicated by those in student affairs. Grace, although employed through student affairs, had a background in the content area of the course. She had also taught courses previously and described herself as “some sort of weird hybrid between students affairs and faculty.” She further explicated:

I’m not a typical student affairs professional, so I think that definitely came into play [in my partnership with Clara]. I tend to think like an academic so I think that may have had influenced what I am about to tell you. Because even though I work in student affairs I tend to align closely with faculty on certain issues and certain topics . . . . The thing I always tell my students that I work with is your first priority is your education. You are here to graduate. That should be your primary goal. Everything else is secondary. To those who are student affairs professionals, that have spent their lives in student affairs, I may sound like I am downplaying their particular needs [and the] importance in getting involved outside of the classroom and I don’t mean to seem like that because those are important aspects but their primary reason is to graduate and whatever that takes, whether its tutoring time or meeting in small groups to have study groups whether how you review material all of those are important. So that is where I focus when I am working with students. I tend to approach it where your academics are your first priority.
While Clara and Grace functioned within their ascribed roles initially, as the course continued there was less emphasis on these roles leading to crossover. Although all the participants described crossover in their roles, two pairs found their role distinctions particularly influential.

For Daphne and Buttercup, and for Alex and Bob, neither pair had an instructor who was employed primarily as a faculty member. The roles in these partnerships were particularly nuanced. Although Buttercup and Bob were both instructors of record, the former is in student affairs and the later is academic affairs. Three of the four have a Ph.D., although only one in the specific content area taught for BGSU 1000. Buttercup and Daphne characterized this as a benefit. They said that they were able to use their content expertise along with their professional expertise to benefit students from both perspectives. Bob and Alex found their similar backgrounds more challenging. Bob explained, “[what] further complicates our particular situation is that neither one of us is faculty. Neither one of us have faculty writing, neither one of us have background in a discipline tied to what we are teaching. I guess that is the other thing this isn’t a discipline based course unlike some of the other sections of BGeX or even some of the BSGU 1000 that are tied to specific disciplines.” Alex agreed this complicated their position:

My concern with comparing me to, our section to any of the other sections or the me and Bob, [the] relationship to the student affairs employee and academic affairs faculty is that we’re really in very similar positions. He is technically in student affairs and he is doing more administrative things on a regular basis then academic affairs things on a regular basis and in fact even though he has finished a Ph.D. now in terms of actually working with professors and doing academic things because I came from academic advising. I was in academic affairs before I came here.
Bob and Alex believed that this intermingling of non-faculty roles strangely led them to focus more on academic content as opposed to the more typical student affairs content:

I think in our case it is interesting. Neither of us are faculty in terms of rank, which is a similar issue when [looking] at my peers as well. So there is this bleeding of lines that is occurring that will probably continue but in my case neither one of us were faculty. Yes, we are coming from different administrative backgrounds, [I am] academic affairs and he is in student affairs but yet at the same time we seem to have a greater emphases on the academic within the class versus the nuts and bolts of what the student needs to be successful during his first year.

For the two pairs in which neither partner was technically a faculty member, one found the lack of distinction helpful while the other found it distracting. For three of the four pairs, complex or blended roles contributed positively to their relationship and collaboration, while for the other this indistinction detracted from them.

**Situational roles.** Participants often described their collaborative relationships as functioning less through formal roles and more through practical needs. The role of each person varied from situation to situation. From day to day or subject to subject, participants would take the lead, exchange roles, or contribute to the class as needed. This give and take was helpful for most participants. Many of the participants described collaboration as a process of exchanging talents that led to give and take within the course. Both Clara and Buttercup defined collaboration in this way. Clara said, “My definition of collaboration is just working together. Working together to make the best class and also using each other’s gifts to their fullest extent.” Buttercup explained, “Collaboration to me in general means to just get outside of your box, your area and connect and build relationships with people who may have skills, perspective, and
insights that you would not necessarily have in your area of expertise.” Both participants 
highlighted the importance of bringing together two different sets of abilities and talents that 
could benefit the course. Both participants highlighted that complementary sets of skills and 
abilities between two people were better than one set. Participants’ skills and abilities could then 
be used as needed in class.

Several participants explained their collaboration as a process of give and take, taking 
turns with leading, with being the expert, or in working with students. Paige described that 
collaboration functions as “give and take” in most of her interactions, from those with students 
and faculty to those with Sean. She expressed:

So, I think there [are] different levels. I mean with my students, we build respect. So, 
it’s about a give and take, so they ask me to do something, I make sure I do it for them. 
You know? And then I ask them to do something. You know, we have that so we 
collaborate on those things, so there’s a kind of mutual [exchange].

Sean reflected that this was true for their class as well. He frequently mentioned that he often 
deferred to Paige on content-specific questions:

Over the course of the semester, my ability to call on her to give a spontaneous piece of 
information or flow along with the direction that I was trying to lead the class in terms of 
questioning increased and improved . . . . So she picked up on the cues better that I was 
giving her in terms of wanting her to reply because she had more knowledge about it than 
I did.

Paige and Sean’s boundary-crossing roles as they switched back and forth between focusing on 
content and application of knowledge, influenced the functionality of their collaboration. This 
held true for another pair as well.
Buttercup and Daphne would prepare for each class, along with their peer facilitator, by sitting down to the lesson and assigning parts to each person. Daphne explained parts were often determined by who had first read or who had felt most comfortable with the assignment. Other times, one instructor would already have an idea for an activity that corresponded to the content lesson for that day. Daphne clarified their collaboration was “a lot of give and . . . where we are in terms of how prepared we are. What we have done and things that might work for that particular topic or subject. So it really does vary.” Buttercup highlighted what that might look like:

We all had a role, even our peer facilitator. We each had a role with that. So one of the things that I liked to do is to give everyone a role with the course, and then I say that we co-teach a lot because I can use just Tuesday for an example. I taught the first 40 minutes and then our peer facilitator, she came in and she taught, showed some video clips [and] led the discussion for about 15 minutes, and then Daphne, the last 20 minutes of the class, she [led]. So we work like that quite a bit, but there are some classes where it was just me giving the lecture and the information and our peer facilitator might model. But we switch in and out of roles quite a bit.

Both these pairs described that this give and take was situation-dependent and not role-dependent. Both pairs also indicated that give and take was about more than just their collaboration. Sean stressed that making the course the best it could be was the most important aspect when he commented, “we are all contributing to the class being a success and that doesn’t mean you have to be a faculty member or an administrator or a student it’s just what the role, in some sense what the job, demands.”
Several pairs described how their roles moved from more formal to more practical, a structured give and take, to a more fluid, informal exchange where they relied on their partners to collaboratively teach. Buttercup further stated that this was intentional, though the process of how they collaborated solidified over time. She explained:

I would say that in the beginning we knew that it was going to be more of a partnership and that we were going to be co-instructors, but as we moved through the semester I think we kinda solidified what that would look like. And as we progressed it developed and we knew what it would look like. Because initially I think we started out with so many minutes on this and just kinda like really . . . . structured how we would do it. But then towards the end of the semester we would just look at things and it was more loose and free and there were times when we looked at what there was to cover and one of us would say, “You know, I got this. You can just kind of hang out and feel free to pop in whenever you want.” We would kinda do it like that. Definitely more structured and more intentional with time and looking at it very closely, and then that is how it kinda ended up towards the end.

For Buttercup and Daphne, give and take was a natural value, but it continued to grow overtime as part of their collaboration.

**Equality in roles.** Several participants defined collaboration in terms of working together for the benefit of this class. These participants demonstrated equality in how their collaboration and relationships functioned. In their definitions, the opportunity for equal contribution and effort was key. Grace defined collaboration as:

Working together and eventually sharing a load equally. In some areas, one person might have to take a lead at one point and then they can fall back and let the other person take
Bob echoed Grace’s thoughts on the challenge of striking a balance in the effort to achieve equality in collaboration:

Multiple words come to mind when I think about collaboration. One is sharing—sharing ideas, sharing thoughts. Equal opportunity for input—recognizing that we live in an unequal world and equality is really difficult to achieve. But in this sense, in the teaching sense, allowing both partners to have an opportunity to equally shape the course and the content.

Sean believed that equality in instructional roles was also the key element in collaboration, explaining that he had listed himself, Paige, and their peer facilitator as co-instructors.

While Daphne mirrored the idea that attempting equality was difficult, she saw the definition of collaboration as including more than instructional roles:

Collaboration is planning and working together to organize something where there’s fairly equal input or equivalent input. It might not necessarily be equal because you’re doing different components, adding it together. But in terms of status . . . in terms of how you work together, like one person [doesn’t have more] authority or more decision-making [ability, and] then the other person is . . . bringing ideas and coming up with something, whether it’s a project or teaching a course. But it’s a team approach in terms of organizing something.

For both Daphne and Buttercup, the concept of equality was a key element of collaboration in general, and their collaboration specifically. Daphne explained, “We didn’t go into it with the
hierarchy either in terms of one being from academic affairs as a faculty person. The fact that
we do come from the same division definitely helps.” Both explained that although they had
several factors encouraging equality in their collaboration, it was fundamental to them each
personally and professionally.

Buttercup shared a story of being a young professional. In one of her first experiences in
collaboration, she sat on a committee where each member shared ideas and discussed the issue.
Buttercup specifically remembered learning, after the committee had concluded, that one of the
committee members with whom she had worked was an upper administrator. The fact that the
upper administrator had never shared her position, nor made her influence or actions more
important than any other person’s, had a significant impact on the way Buttercup valued
equality. Buttercup expressed that she hoped to do the same as the upper administrator with
whom she once worked. Specifically, she said, “You know, I try to flatten any type of hierarchy.
I think it makes for a better collaboration.” Buttercup and Daphne ignored roles in their efforts to
function with equality.

**Communication**

Participants described that their collaboration and relationships functioned through
various forms of communication. Often, this communication took the form of assumptions that
were made or not made and discussions that were had or not had. Additionally, overlap and
compartmentalization in communication demonstrated how the collaboration and relationships
functioned.

**Assumptions and discussions.** All the pairs discussed the role that assumptions and
discussion played in their relationships and collaboration. Paige and Sean explained that though
they discussed the structure of their work together initially, beyond that agreement they worked
largely on assumptions. Their assumptions were based on those agreements and expectations they had initially discussed. Both described that this kind of interaction impacted how their collaboration and relationship functioned. They were both cognizant of each other and their mutual expectations. Sean especially tried to be careful of Paige’s other obligations, specifically the other class she taught at the same time. He said, “we reached kind of a mutual understanding about [it] given the nature of work load that she didn’t have to [grade or other administrative tasks] if she didn’t want to.” Sean noted:

> With respect to the grading and that type of a thing, [we talked about it initially]. Cause, I did mention it to her, and she was comfortable about it, so it’s not like we have a contract, where Paige, because of her workload will do, you know, grading. It’s just that I know that she’s doing all this other, all these other things. I basically said to her, “You’re welcome to be involved in as much or as little as you want” and she said, “That’s fine, I don’t need to take some papers. That’s okay with me.”

The two had a level of trust and comfort that allowed them both to interject to alter their collaboration should Paige have more time to give to their work together. Therefore both had certain assumptions about the other and how the other worked based on their prior relationship. Though they discussed their collaboration at the beginning of their work together in BGSU 1000, they largely functioned through initial assumptions they had about their partner rather than those experiences they had during their partnership.

Alex and Bob had no initial assumptions for working together. However, they did have some initial discussions. Based on those early discussions, they made assumptions by which they worked together. As they discovered later, their assumptions were incorrect. Alex and Bob disagreed about the level of clarity in their roles. Alex explained that he thought the roles were
made clear through the BGSU 1000 program, although he suggested he probably went above and beyond those expectations by attending class regularly. Bob did not feel the roles were especially clear. Bob believed that Alex would focus on the skill development and resources typically provided by a student affairs professional. Alex assumed that the focus would be on critical thinking, the topic highlighted as the purpose of BGSU 1000 through the program. Bob believed that he and Alex worked primarily on assumptions, especially in terms of goals and roles. Both found that in discussing their collaboration, they were not in agreement about these issues. These assumptions, and lack of continued discussion, impacted how their collaboration functioned. The two often focused in differing aspects of class, and were sometimes frustrated when they could not deliver the content they were hoping to express. This challenge in communication hurt their collaboration and relationship.

When Buttercup and Daphne reflected upon their work together, they initially agreed that they had not talked about their roles or their specific work together. However, upon further reflection, Buttercup corrected her earlier thoughts:

In just going over the relationship in teaching and we talked about how there was no formal process kinda set up for the relationship from the beginning. I did kinda reflect back on the fact that we initially the approach was kinda formal in the way that Daphne said that I would be the lead instructor and she would be the co-instructor, so I guess we talked about that, but in our actions in teaching the course it was never that. That was something that was talked about in the very beginning, but then it was like this is how we are going to do it. So I saw it as being a true partnership and co-teaching rather than I guess the traditional way that the courses were set up.
In this case, Buttercup and Daphne, much like Paige and Sean, did not have continued discussions. They worked together based on certain assumptions that they had initially supported by only one early discussion. After they began working together, however, and seemingly supported by their relationships, the pairs seemed to work from what they assumed about their partner.

Similar to Alex and Bob, Grace and Clara did not have an established relationship prior to working together. Nevertheless, like Paige and Sean, and Buttercup and Daphne, they had initial conversations that were more structured followed by a relationship of trust that worked on assumptions. Grace remembered:

We had a meeting . . . . So, it was more of the two experienced people talking about what they had done last year and brainstorming about what would work this year. How we would work together and if we would work separately things like that . . . . I took my lead from Clara than from the other experienced faculty member . . . [We discussed] who would teach what, what areas we would focus on what strengths were coming in. We actually did talk about that. Another reason I enjoyed my experience as much as I did.

Clara reflected on that time together as well. She described their initial structured combination, but also highlighted that the two developed a relationship very quickly after their discussion:

I think that maybe Grace asked me more questions about how I wanted her to do things maybe she did ask me stuff and I am really bad at being specific. I probably just said to be there and help there and so on . . . but we sort of hit it off right from the very beginning. We had sort of a figured each other out from the very beginning.

All participants described the impact of assumptions and discussions on interaction of collaboration and relationship. For three of the pairs, having initial conversations that were more
structured that helped them determine how their collaboration would work led to assumptions that supported relationship building. However, for Alex and Bob, they found that there was disagreement about whether they had truly discussed the collaboration, and therefore their assumptions did not strengthen their relationship.

**Overlap and compartmentalization.** In terms of communicating about their relationship and collaboration, participants expressed that there was crossover and compartmentalization. Daphne and Buttercup explained that although they definitely had a friendship outside of their working relationship, the two generally remained separate. They took time after each class to catch up on personal items, but their personal lives did not enter the classroom. Daphne suggested that in their outside of class meetings, she and Buttercup would focus first on their class and then may drift into discussion of personal items. Their personal discussion was usually held to social time off campus:

> I think when we are meeting to discuss what we are going to do for class we are pretty task oriented. Then there might be a moment where she will ask about my mom or I will ask about her family, but initially you are focusing on the task at hand. [Then] there will be questions about personal things such as can I list you as a personal emergency contact person.

Alex and Bob did not have the established relationship that Daphne and Buttercup had, nor the same kind of relationship outside of the classroom, but their partnership functioned similarly. In fact, Alex explained that their relationship was based entirely in their working relationship and that their personal lives were separate:

> I don’t see myself hanging out with Bob because my impression is that I was hanging out with Bob because of the class. Not that I wouldn’t hang out with Bob but he [has other
obligations] and I think because of the class the relationship would have existed at all otherwise I might not know him.

For both pairs, compartmentalization happened organically as opposed to structurally. For Daphne and Buttercup, who naturally relegated their personal discussions to time away from campus, this benefited their relationship. For Alex and Bob, their clear separation between personal and professional did not benefit their relationship.

Clara and Grace explained that in part due to their personalities and their content area, overlap between personal relationship and professional relationship was not only inevitable, but helpful. Both told of two specific instances where their personal lives or thoughts entered the classroom and, while they were clear that there were boundaries to what they shared, thought these moments were powerful for their students as well. In our pair interview, Grace explained:

Being a [content area] major is different. You understand that your professors are human. You have [to], because you work so closely with them . . . . So, I think that that allowed a little more flexibility and allowed us to be a little bit more open about who we were and what we come from and our experiences as well.

Clara believed this was important for the students because it, “teaches them how to deal with their emotions. When we share appropriately and sincerely, because a student can tell right away if you’re sincere for not. And, so, if we’re sharing appropriately and sincerely it’s also a good model for them.” For Clara and Grace, overlap in communication strengthened the relationship and the relationship promoted overlap, both of which they believed helped their students.

**Summary**

Participants described that their collaboration and relationships functioned in various ways. While there were various kinds of relationships, including collegial, mentoring, familial,
and friendship, there were several themes that similarly impacted the way that the collaboration and relationships functioned. All pairs functioned through complex roles that were often situational and focused on equality of collaboration and relationship. In terms of communication, the collaborative relationships functioned through assumptions and discussions as well as crossover and compartmentalization. While the results were sometimes different, these factors were mentioned by all pairs as contributing to the function of their collaboration and relationships.

**What Is the Interplay between Collaboration and Relationship?**

There was certainly interplay between participants’ relationships and their collaboration. Their relationships impacted their collaboration and vice versa. Participants noted that time seemed to be a significant part of this interplay. Moreover, this interplay highlighted that participants believed they were able to achieve more in partnership than they would have been able to accomplish individually. One partnership stood out particularly because it did not have many of the elements that they other partnerships did. This collaboration and relationship seemed more challenging and less successful than the others. Thus, this pair serves as a negative case in that it supports the importance of the themes in lacking them.

**Time**

Many of the participants mentioned a theme of time as being important to the interplay between their collaboration and their relationships. Participants described this theme as important in terms of how much time they were able to devote to the course and their collaboration, how they devoted time to their relationship with their partner, and how much time they spent with students. The amount of time was related to the interaction between relationships and collaboration. Many of the participants described that time they devoted to their
collaboration or were unable to devote to their collaboration impacted how their collaboration and relationships worked. Bob explained that had he been given more time to prepare for the course, he might have been able to collaborate more effectively:

I became involved in this because the instructor that was teaching a similar course last year is on maternity leave and I was asked to take this course. I did so without knowing a lot about it and have really been learning on the fly. I think the fact that it’s a BGSU 1000 and a BGeX class—this dual-pronged mission, if I can say—has taken me a little more time to kind of wrap my arms around it and get a better sense as to how I need to prioritize. If we tried to do everything it would be impossible.

Bob felt that a lack of time to devote to planning contributed to his lack of cohesion in understanding the collaboration overall. Paige had a similar experience in that, although she was able to work with Sean and create a good experience for the students, had she had more time, the experience would have been better. She noted, “And if we ever do this again, then, you know, hopefully the time won’t be a factor. And then, we can make it more, make it *more*. You know?” Several participants found the time commitment of the course the most challenging aspect of the experience. They felt that if they had been able to devote more time to their collaboration, they could have made it “more.” Buttercup expressed wanting to do the extras:

And I want to put it in [more time], but now we don’t have [the] time. Like, I keep thinking of these other things like, “Oh, it would have been great!” That I would like to put in the course. And we tried to do extra stuff, but, you know, it’s just time. Time constraint, so I think that has been the most challenging.
This time commitment seemed especially challenging for the student affairs instructors who were not necessarily given extra time from their regular job responsibilities to teach the course. Grace explained this:

The time commitment [has definitely been challenging]. Adding this into my schedule and not giving away something else out of my schedule. I was late to class almost every day just because it was the way my schedule would function and there were days that I didn’t go, just because I couldn’t make it work. The time commitment was challenging.

For Grace, time was important not only in terms of how she felt she was able to contribute to the course, but in how she would like to continue to be a part of the content area in which she was involved. As such, she noted that working with Clara provided a compensatory function that her own time allowance did not provide:

I would love to be able to spend more time researching and just digging into stuff and knowing why. Because I’m a why person. But, the reality of my job is that, how do I take what I’ve got to make it so that the students can function and survive currently, rather than thinking, you know, spending more time researching . . . . It’s unfortunate because I would love to get into it more deeply, and I try my best, but with the type of support that I do, [I’m not] able to have that. So, I think that being able to spend some time with somebody who does do research side and who a lot of what they do is research and digging, and asking why and trying to find new connections, and then applying it to whatever we’re doing right now, that is so cool for me.

Grace expressed that although she did not have the luxury of time, she thought her relationship with Clara offered her a way to gain what she needed all the same. Clara expressed that although she knew that time would continue to be an issue for the two of them, she hoped to sustain her
relationship with Grace despite not meeting regularly after their BGSU 1000 partnership had ended:

My concern is that we will make time for each other. I have lots of friends that I don’t see for months, and months and months or even years and because we understand each other once we see each other, most of those friends live far away, but once we see each other we are back to blah, blah, blah. I have a feeling that Grace and I will probably be like that. Grace and I run into each other and we will be . . . oh, my gosh, blah, blah, blah. I hope that we make time for one another because I really enjoy her company.

Several participants expressed that the importance of time to the relationship could not be overstated. Sean thought devoting time to building the relationship was essential to the collaboration:

Like any relationship you have to devote time to it and it’s not that you are just sitting there staring at each other you have to devote constructive time to the ideas of the process going on sharing information reviewing what went on in the class critically you know, that kind of thing. How can we make it better? What should we do? You know, those kinds of things, and if you don’t have those discussions you aren’t really a team. So fighting for that time because of the way in which the schedules don’t match I think is an important thing.

Paige echoed this importance of active time together when she said, “One of the things I think that has probably helped us is the fact that we are involved in other things together.” She also highlighted how their time together outside of the course benefited their work together in BGSU 1000, and then how their time spent together with BGSU 1000 benefited their relationship with other projects:
I would say being able to be having the experience of teaching the class, we spend a lot more time together you know? I think when you spend [time together] you tend to build a closer relationship. You tend to know a person better and I think that was very good for us. I think that is one of the things that happened throughout the course.

Paige and Sean expressed that their collaboration would have been even better if they had been able to devote more time to their relationship.

For Daphne and Buttercup, although they did not have much recent time together professionally prior to BGSU 1000, concluded that their time spent together over the many years they had known each other made a significant difference in their work together. They explained that they had been able to devote time to both their personal and their professional relationship. As such, they were appreciative of the opportunity to reconnect, Daphne said, “It has been a good way to stay connected.” Buttercup agreed, “It is and many times after our class ends we just don’t walk away, we spend time chatting. Sometimes we are out there in the rain holding up umbrellas.” Buttercup expanded on this:

We do use that after class time to just kinda connect and catch up with each other because very rarely are we talking about class stuff. We are talking about everything under the sun but class stuff so it is like our face to face and staying connected and being able to talk about things twice a week.

Buttercup described that not only did their time together benefit their relationship, but also it allowed them to collaborate better professionally. She described this as an opportunity in “intensity:”

Even when we worked together we were never at a point where we met for 16 weeks. Actually starting before that [to] get the class ready, but at least for 16 weeks we were
meeting once a week to just get together the lessons that we were going to go over and the content, to really look at things. And then we would see each other twice a week in the class. So we had a lot of contact based on one specific focus, because when we worked together all of those different years, it was my projects, her projects, the department, just a lot of things thrown in there. So I guess it was really a chance for both of us to work in unison and collaborate on one specific thing. I think that kinda changed the dynamics of our relationship because in some ways it was a little bit more intense because we were focused on this one thing rather than just one thing. Relationship-wise that is the one thing that kind of stands out for me.

Participants explained that time not only impacted how they collaborated and their relationships with each other, but also affected their interactions with students.

Paige and Sean noted that the time they spent working with students on their projects outside of class helped students understand the benefits of productive collaboration. Clara and Grace agreed, explaining that students notice the time you spend with them. She said that time spent with students impacted the relationship she and Grace had with the students:

The other thing is, you know we, had the students do the extra stuff, when they had their projects due, I wanted to avoid that evening with the students getting their projects done, but on the other hand, it was fun. And they remember that, you know. We ordered pizza for them, and I would take students in my office and help them with something or work on something and Grace was out there in the hallway and you know that was a fun kind of thing . . . . Now I see the students all the time because they’re all in the same building, I mean I’ve already written letters of recommendation for a couple of them for scholarships and I sign their programs and it there’s some things that I’ve done. And
Grace, you’ll see them with [with other things] . . . And, you know, I think if you’re a good teacher and you enjoy working with students you give of your time, and that’s just, that’s the way it is. And, you make it work.

Time, then was not only a benefit to how participants worked together and how they came to know one another better, but how they interacted with students. More or less time spent towards relationships affected collaboration and more or less time spent towards collaboration affected relationships.

**Relationships Impact Collaboration and Collaboration Impacts Relationships**

Relationships between the participants and their collaboration were interconnected in several ways, as emergent data revealed. Participants found that relationships led to collaboration and collaboration led to relationships. This process built on itself and, ultimately, resulted in better relationship and better collaboration according to participants. Participants were often able to achieve more than they would have been able to individually. Grace explained this programmatically, stating:

> I think it’s going to create a more open environment for all of us in terms of what the potentials are. Whether it is for help or for collaboration or experiences that we wouldn’t have normally had. I think that is a huge outcome. So I think that will open us all up to try new things a little bit more.

Several participants found that their prior relationships, prior collaboration, or current relationship led to better collaboration or would lead to future collaboration. Paige described the more she came to know Sean, the more occasions she would have to work with him. This was true because of the work they had done together previously, but only increased with their work together in BGSU 1000:
I think it’s only enhanced [our relationship]. That’s the way I feel . . . . I just think the
more that we can potentially do in the future . . . . I think we continue to build our
relationship. That’s the way I’m looking at it. So, the more I get to know Sean, the more
opportunities I think that there are for other things like with the Center for Excellence,
continuation with the grant, you know those types of things. There’s just more
opportunities. So I think the more you work with someone and have positive experiences
with them . . . the more opportunities exist.

Sean found this true as well. In fact, Paige and Sean worked so well together that he was trying
to bring Paige into his college to teach. He said that, “In terms of another dimension of that is
I’d love to have her as a personal colleague on the faculty here, if she were ever to decide that
she wanted to go the full-time faculty route.”

Other participants were already planning how their current work together would translate
into future work together. Daphne suggested that not only had her relationship with Buttercup
improved, but that they “could do some kind of article or something in the future.” Grace
suggested that one of the best aspects of working with Clara was finding a faculty member who
truly cared about students. She knew she would call on Clara in the future while working in
student affairs:

I can count on her, I know that she is to be one of those that when I am looking for
faculty participation in things because I know she really cares about students first and
foremost. I think that it’s going to evolve into more collaborations in the future and
friendship.

Grace also noted how a relationship led to better collaboration in that the work together was
different from when two people collaborated without a relationship:
Well, when you are doing team-teaching or co-presenting, or any type of dynamic where you have got two people from two seemingly different areas trying to work together, I think the relationship piece has to be in place. There needs to be something there before you start the material, otherwise it is just two people. It’s like the kids doing their group projects: I will do chapter one, you will do chapter two, we will sit together and see where we can make it mesh. Whereas, if we know each other before hand, when we are doing our group project they are talking about it, so it is really truly a group effort. And I think that if classes like this are going to continue to be successful, there needs to be some kind of a touchy, feely, bondy thing, for lack of a better terminology. And I don’t do touchy, feely, bondy well, but you know, but coffee was involved with ours, so I was good. But as long as there is that getting to know each other a little bit better. More so than, this is a professional collaboration and when it is done we will not speak to each other ever again.

Participants found that their relationships led to collaboration; and, they found that their collaboration led to better, different, and future collaboration. Alex explained that he and Bob would never have known each other if it were not for BGSU 1000. Even Clara and Grace, who did not have a relationship prior to BGSU 1000, found that their collaboration led to a friendship. Clara thought that even though it might be difficult to see each other regularly, they could sustain their relationship based on their collaboration together,

We are definitely friends. We never run into each other and that is a problem and we both are extremely busy so I don’t know. I hope that we get together for lunch a couple times this semester but I don’t know. She is the type of person I feel like if I didn’t see
her for six months or a year when I saw her we would pick up and we would have commonalities and I have that with all of my people that I feel close to.

For Bob and Alex, they developed a kind of relationship as a result of their collaboration, but there was little positive interaction between their relationship and collaboration:

[Our relationship and collaboration], they were separated. We are building this relationship, but in reality they were siloed. The relationship was independent of the collaboration. The few times that the two kinda crept together that is when it kinda became, it became time consuming, it became ownerless. It is nice to have a relationship that reinforces the collaboration. I think a good relationship enhances collaboration. It is not necessary to have it because ultimately when you are collaborating there is a certain point where you have to let the relationship down. No matter whatever it is, you are best friends, worst of enemies, doesn’t matter you have to let it be for the sake of collaborating to getting things done . . . . They are independent. But with that said I will go back to the original comment that if you have a good relationship it should enhance your ability to collaborate.

While Bob and Alex were able to co-teach, they found collaborating more difficult, in part due to the nature of their relationship.

Other participants, though, believed there was positive interaction between relationship and collaboration. It was difficult for them to describe where their relationship ended and their collaboration began and vice versa. They found this generally beneficial to their work together. Similarly, Clara believed that her friendship with Grace was likely obvious to the class. She thought their collaboration and relationship comingled:
In the case of Grace and me I think it is completely intertwined. I can see with someone else it might not be. To maintain a professional collaboration everything is happier and you know but with Grace and me, I think it is clear to the class that we are friends and that we have things in common and similar views and we support each other. So in this case, it is interesting because I have this experience with [my last co-instructor] too, and actually [he] and I were friends longer than Grace and I were, and we have a lot of things in common too. In fact, we even were part of [another group], but [he] and I were more of a collaboration in front of the classroom than a relationship. It might be the male-female thing… I don’t know? I mean we are friends but that was more purposeful collaboration than teaching this class.

Buttercup found that for her and Daphne, the relationship upon which their collaboration was built was replenished serendipitously. Their collaboration for BGSU 1000 created a crossover: After the class it was the end of the day, and I can’t think of one single class where we didn’t stand either outside the class or outside the building talking about things that weren’t even class related. I thought it…in a way it kinda was a little breath of fresh air into the relationship because we were always focused on our personal lives and just things outside of BG. It would never be about what was happening in class, and sometimes it was advice about, “I have this certain situation, what would you do?” but not class related. It was just different. And so I thought that was kinda neat because we would just do that and it was something that wasn’t planned, we would just pack up our things and walk out of the building and BOOM, it would just happen. I can’t think of that happening at that level of frequency when we worked together. I mean we would exchange and talk, but that was a little different dynamic.
Sean felt that not only did relationship and collaboration comingle, but these factors were dependent upon each other. In essence, one improved the other:

Well, I mean in the lingo they are mutually dependent upon each other. What does that mean? Well, it means if you screw up in one area, chances are it is going to affect the other area. So if you don’t collaborate well, if you do some screwy things in class or you don’t allow for her talents to show through, or you don’t use her to the best of your ability, then that is going to create a distance in the relationship that you would hope not to create. So that would be a bad thing. So clearly, in the same way, you start from the other direction the more you have this sense of trust and things like that the more you feel you can jump in to a discussion.

This crossover between relationship and collaboration was powerful for several of the participants. Even Bob, who believed that collaboration can happen without relationship, explained that having a relationship benefited collaborative work together.

**Do More Together**

Several participants noted that they were able to accomplish more together than they would have been able to separately. Ultimately, the interplay between collaboration and relationship allowed them to do and be more. As a collaborative partnership, they were more than the sum of their parts. Paige explained:

I see that so much more. What we are doing? Obviously that relationship is going to continue but if we hadn’t met and we hadn’t built that relationship and things like that I just wonder if we would have been in that box like he had said. We would have just been doing our own thing in our own box and we wouldn’t have ever come together. We were
able to do so much more with what we have. That is the great thing about this whole relationship is that we can do so much more given what we have going on.

Grace described this as a “synergy”: “Trying to strike that balance and creating a synergy between the two people . . . to make it better than it would have been if only one person had been involved with that.” It was also Grace who explained how her work with Clara evolved into more than their work individually:

Again, if you and I come to the table each with our own areas of expertise and we only present in that fashion, they have got a one plus one scenario where one plus one equals two. But if we have built some sort of trust, some sort of bond some sort of commonality, and they can see that where I can expand upon what you are saying and you can expand upon what I am saying, it is going to be so much richer and so much fuller a conversation. And it is going to engage people more and want to interact with us more, because again they can see the humanity and it is not just material that can be done via teleprompter. There would be that interplay that would be missed and the richness would be missed. The experience would be lesser without the play between each other.

Does that make sense?

Clara also shared a story about learning how to address a student using offensive phrases in a way that felt more comfortable. She expressed that her initial reaction would have been to yell at a student, but she learned from Grace how to respond calmly and with nonchalance. She explained that this learning experience benefited her teaching in other areas. Similarly, both Buttercup and Daphne expressed that they had learned various teaching methods from each other. Most pairs described improving their teaching as a result of their partnership. Participants
noted that in terms of the quality of the relationship and collaboration, there was an interplay between the two.

**Summary**

There was definitely an interplay between relationship and collaboration for participants. Participants identified several factors that contributed to how this interplay happened. The amount of time participants spent together was related to the interplay of collaboration and relationship for most participants. Participants also found that their relationships affected their collaboration and their collaboration affected their relationships. For all participants, regardless of whether the experience was more positive or more challenging, this interplay impacted the development and function of their relationships and collaboration. Finally, participants often described that they were able to achieve more in partnership than they would have individually, give the right circumstances. This demonstrates the concept of zone of proximal development at play.

**Conclusion**

This chapter gives the results of two individual interviews and one pair interview for each of the eight participants in the study, conducted to explicate the nature of collaborative relationships between faculty and student affairs professionals co-teaching BGSU 1000. Each participant had a unique experience as did each pair; even so, several themes held true across participants and pairs. Prior relationships between partners provided foundations upon which relationships and collaboration developed. Relationships and collaboration developed through commonalities: common values, common goals, and background experiences and personality in common. Commonalities established foundations upon which participants’ collaborative relationships were built. Prior relationships and finding connections helped participants trust
each other and be comfortable with each other. Not only did learning about and understanding their partner help develop their relationships initially, getting to know their partner supported further development of their collaboration and relationships.

Participants suggested their collaboration and relationships functioned in various ways. They described their partnerships as colleagues, mentors, families, and friends. Through the relationships functioned in different ways, some factors were important to all the partnerships. All partners’ roles were complex. Participants often functioned outside their assigned role as student affairs instructor or faculty instructor. Sometimes, participants roles were situationally-bound, and participants had to give and take, making the best use of each other’s talents in any given class. Equality in roles was also important for the functionality of some pairs. Participants described communication as an important factor in how their collaborative partnerships functioned. Communication included the assumptions that participants made about each other and how they would work together and what they did and did not discuss. Moreover, some partners mixed their professional and personal relationships and others kept them distinct.

There was certainly interplay between relationship and collaboration for the participants. Participants described the importance of time to the interplay between relationships and collaboration. For most participants, time contributed to how much interaction existed between relationship and collaboration. Ultimately, participants’ relationships affected their collaboration and their collaboration affected their relationships. Moreover, participants also described that they were often able to accomplish more with their partner than they would have been able to individually. This concept, the zone of proximal development, was demonstrated in what pairs were able to achieve together.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Discussion

The nature of collaborative relationships between faculty and student affairs professionals is presented in this study. The results of the study indicated although collaboration and relationships were initially considered separately, participants viewed them similarly. Instead, participants discussed how collaboration and relationships developed, functioned, and interacted. In this chapter I discuss the themes and subthemes that emerged from the data. Additionally, I explain the limitations of the study and lessons learned, implications for practice and policy, implications for research, and provide a conclusion to the study.

The Development of Collaboration and Relationships

Commonalities matter. Participants in three of the four pairs specifically mentioned having commonalities as important to building their relationships and collaboration. Paige and Sean described having a personal interest in their topic as well as a professional interest in breaking down silos across the university community. Buttercup and Daphne had personal similarities that led them to build a strong friendship even before they worked together formally in BGSU 1000. Their friendship only grew stronger as they discovered commonalities in teaching styles. Although Clara and Grace had never met before working together on BGSU 1000, from their first meeting on they continued to find similarities in their background and commonalities in their teaching styles. Although writing about organizations, Saxton (1997) explained that “similarities between partners help establish trust and also enhance appropriability of knowledge, in turn increasing the likelihood of a successful alliance (pp. 447-448).” This held true for participants in the three pairs who all described being able to trust or rely on their
partners in the classroom and in other collaborative or personal interactions outside the classroom.

Beyond commonalities leading to “successful” collaboration, those pairs who described having the most in common, Grace and Clara and Buttercup and Daphne, further described their relationships as friendships. Both pairs said that they had or they would spend time together outside of collaborative efforts, BGSU 1000 or otherwise. It is not surprising that commonalities should lead to successful collaboration and friendships. Arcelus (2008) noted that collaboration that arose organically from relationships between student affairs and faculty members tended to be strong. Magolda (2001, 2005) cautioned against collaborating exclusively with similar people working toward similar goals. This study adds depth to that statement. While participants often worked toward similar goals, they were not necessarily similar, and certainly were in dissimilar positions at the university. In this case, collaborators extended beyond traditional student affairs-academic affairs or student affairs-faculty cultures, but found success in working with others who had similar culture in other ways, such as in content area. This concept of similarity should not be considered simply as collaborative relationships are built. Instead, considering which similarities are beneficial and which are not should be further explored in building collaborative relationships. I believe the participants in at least two of the four, and perhaps three of the four pairs, would agree that they did indeed learn more about each other and the culture from which she or he came.

In contrast, Alex and Bob described having little in common. Although they had somewhat similar backgrounds, that was the only point of reference in terms of similarities between the two participants. The two never commented on relying on each other, establishing trust, or developing a long-standing friendship. While neither of the pair was faculty, and both
worked with students on a regular basis, they did not see their roles or interests similarly. Of all the pairs, Alex and Bob seemed to feel they had the least in common.

**Common goals.** One of the most important factors in the success or lack of success communicated by nearly all participants was having common goals. While it is unsurprising that having common goals is important in collaboration, it is notable that in this study, participants described having common goals as more important than having a prior relationship, whether or not there were established roles, or whether or not discussions were had or assumptions were made. Across the three more successful collaborations, even those with self-described friendships, having a common goal was at the root of their relationship and their collaboration. Prior relationships certainly seemed to benefit the two pairs that had them—Paige and Sean and Buttercup and Daphne. Both pairs said that their prior relationships helped establish trust and allowed them to move past the “getting to know you” stage of working together. But both pairs, along with Clara and Grace who had no prior relationship, said that having a common goal was foundational to their collaboration. Moreover, the three pairs said that strong role distinctions collapsed as they worked toward their common goal.

Current literature supports the importance participants ascribed to a common goal. Kuh (1996) noted a common goal was a necessary principle for a seamless learning environment while Kezar (2001, 2003a) suggested its importance in terms of successful conditions for collaboration. This could be one of the factors in why Alex and Bob had a more difficult collaboration. Both described differing reasons for being involved with BGSU 1000. Moreover, Bob specifically said that they did not have a common purpose. Bob described that as a significant factors, suggesting that he and Alex were like doctors working to treat an ailment in
different ways. Their challenging collaboration and lack of common goal lend support to the
importance of that factor in successful collaborations.

**Making intentional connections.** All participants described the importance of making
intentional connections, but this description was different by pair. Sean and Paige
communicated the concept of intentional connections most directly, both talking about the
significance of collaborating across departments, divisions, the university, and the community.
Sean talked about “breaking down silos” and how this was his responsibility as a member of the
university community. Both Sean and Paige saw working together to teach BGSU 1000 as a
microcosm of uniting the university. Daphne and Buttercup thought that their collaborative
relationship was the structure that truly allowed them to not only demonstrate the true potential
of student affairs and faculty working together, but believed that students benefitted from the
applied and integrated learning experiences. They were intentionally connecting students’
curricular and co-curricular experiences, and for Buttercup and Daphne, faculty and staff
working together to facilitate applied learning was the best way to achieve those ends.

Clara and Grace talked about applied learning as well, but their discussion of integration
was related to their collaborative partnership and their content more than any other pair. Clara
and Grace considered intentional connections to determine how to best help their students learn,
grow, and develop. Clara and Grace discussed their students as whole people who existed
beyond their BGSU 1000 course. For Clara and Grace, helping students to integrate their
learning and apply their knowledge was as important the content. In fact, Clara explained that
while content was important, student growth and development were more essential. Both Grace
and Clara highlighted that students learned about themselves and their emotions. Even Alex and
Bob talked about applied learning. Although both instructors believed critical thinking could be
learned and applied in different ways outside of the classroom, they both saw the importance of linking curricular and co-curricular learning.

All the instructors were concerned with creating what Kuh (1996) called a seamless learning environment. The instructors attempted to provide integrated learning experiences through providing resources inside and outside the classroom (ACPA, 1994; Kuh, 1996). Instructors’ concern with the big picture and connected learning can contribute to a healthy community as suggested in ACPA’s (1994) *Student Learning Imperative*. Those partnerships extended beyond traditional structural boundaries to focus on a seamless learning environment for students. The collaborative relationships of the pairs allowed them to transcend organizational fragmentation and division of labor (Bohen & Stiles, 1998; Ferren & Stanton, 2004; Kezar, 2003a, 2005, 2006, 2009; Schroeder, 1999a, 1999b; Streit, 1993).

**Course content.** All instructors, faculty and student affairs, identified the course theme or content of the course as an important part of why they decided to participate in the experience. Additionally, several participants described the content or topic as instrumental in collaboration and relationship building. Clara and Grace expressed that their common goal was to help students learn their content. Clara reiterated that a large part of why she was able to trust Grace was due to her background in their content area. Their content area was incredibly influential in helping them establish their relationship. Sean and Paige and Buttercup and Daphne also expressed the importance of their content. Paige and Sean not only had a personal investment in their content area, but believed it was important to convey the content to students and the university community. They believed their content area related to everyone and therefore saw teaching that topic as an opportunity to bridge gaps among students, faculty, and staff, as well as the university and city communities.
Daphne and Buttercup believed that their theme inherently fostered collaboration and relationship. As such, they believed that their content area was as important as any other part of their experience in working together. Alex and Bob talked very little about course content, in part because they changed its focus in response to their student population. In terms of content, Alex spoke about the skill of critical thinking as the primary learning objective and Bob spoke more generally about transitional and academic skills. They spoke inconsistently about a “content” which seemed yet another factor in their struggles of their collaboration and relationship. While most pairs described teaching the content as one of their common goals, topic or theme went beyond this for two of the pairs who believed it was instrumental in building their collaboration and relationship.

Students. While there was sometimes disagreement between instructors about what it was students should be learning, there was no doubt that student learning was at the heart of the collaborative relationships in BGSU 1000. Instructors believed that students learned about content areas, critical thinking, applying knowledge, academic and personal resources, and how to be successful. These outcomes are similar to those reported in other studies about partnership programs (Nesheim et al., 2007). Participants hoped to engage students in learning experiences that would benefit their persistence and grades as supported in the literature as well (Kuh, et al., 2005; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2007). In some cases participants cited examples of student learning they believed were a result of their collaborative partnerships, from letters of support from community organizations, to stories of students sharing what they had learned in class with their families. Three of the four pairs would agree that their students were more likely to “thrive and learn” (Kezar & Lester, 2009, p. 15) from their collaborative relationships than when in a traditional classroom experience.
While student learning was an intended outcome for participants, participants’ own learning was never mentioned as an intentional objective. Even so, participants also expressed learning from their partner or the partnership as a result of participating in the relationship. Paige expressed learning from Sean’s class lectures. Buttercup noted how much she learned from Daphne bringing in current events to apply to course concepts. Clara noted that Grace was able to talk about their content area in different contexts than traditionally taught. Certainly most participants believed that they were able to consider new views and different ways of approaching the class material. The findings of this study bolster other literature that suggests collaborative partnerships may increase innovation, learning, cognitive complexity, promote more and varied solutions, enhance communication and campus relationships, and combine various areas of expertise (Dotolo & Noftsinger, 2002, Kezar, 2001, 2003a, 2006; Kezar & Lester, 2009; Schroeder, 1999a, 1999b).

**The Function of Collaboration and Relationships**

**Gender.** Gender was not a topic that initially seemed especially important. However, upon reviewing the characteristics of the partnerships in the study, some interesting findings arose. Two of the pairs consisted of only women instructors, one pair was made up of a woman and a man, and one pair had two men as instructors. The two pairs of women not only had a successful collaboration, but were significantly closer than either of the other two pairs. This was especially notable given that one pair of women had a prior relationship with each other and the other pair of women had not had a prior relationship with each other. They described their partnerships as friendships and spoke of spending time together outside of the more formal working relationship. The pair that consisted of a man and a woman had a respectful, collegial relationship. They had a strong partnership, but it was not the friendship the two pairs of women
had. Furthermore, the pair that had a more challenging collaboration had two men as instructors. While these findings do not suggest that women collaborate better than men, they do support the traditional notion of women as more pro-socially relational than men (Cross & Madson, 1997; Maroda, 2004; Van Lang, et al., 1997).

**Complex roles.** One of the most surprising findings was the concept of complex roles. While I had initially attempted to identify four pairs of participants comprised of a faculty member and a student affairs professional, I did not have a single pair that identified in strictly those roles. Every single participant was either some combination of faculty member, student affairs professional, administrator, or academic affairs professional, or identified as such. In some cases, although each participant knew her or his prescribed “role,” she or he could have been in the other role just as easily. Daphne and Buttercup had equal credentials, experience, and interest in the content area. Paige was the expert in the content area, although she was the student affairs instructor, while Sean had established the class as an applied learning experience as the faculty instructor. Even Clara and Grace, who both fulfilled their prescribed role, thought that Clara’s background in residence life and Grace’s background in the content area led them to work interchangeably. Even in the case of Alex and Bob, Alex often focused on the more faculty-friendly concept of critical thinking taught through the textbook while Bob wanted to focus more on the student affairs-typical transitional issues and skill building.

Moreover, participants described roles as less important than common goals or prior relationships. This was true despite the fact that in most cases instructors valued what their co-instructors brought to the partnership. Faculty instructors often communicated that they appreciated what the students affairs instructor had to share, and vice versa, but in practice instructor duties often overlapped. This is a particularly interesting outcome given that much of
the research suggests difficulties in academic affairs-student affairs collaboration. Arcelus (2008) found that faculty focused on the intellectual climate, quality of student, level of academic engagement, and academics generally. Student affairs staff professionals felt undervalued and struggled with role balance. Moreover, varying cultures and different priorities and expectations are often cited as barriers to collaboration (Bloland, Stamatakos, & Rogers, 1996; Ferren & Stanton, 2004; Kezar, 2003a, 2006, 2009; Streit, 1993). However, in this study, these concerns and foci were distributed fairly evenly among both faculty instructors and student affairs instructors. This could be due to the complexity in role identity for most participants.

So, in terms of how their collaboration functioned, participants acted at least beyond and often outside their traditionally prescribed roles. Most participants found this overlap and blurring beneficial. They described feeling as if they were helping students more, feeling more valued for what they could contribute, and learning from their partner. While this was true for most pairs, Alex and Bob felt the ambiguity contributed to their challenges in collaboration. While Alex said that he believed the roles were clear, Bob disagreed. Alex did note that he felt he was enacting his role differently than other instructors. Regardless of agreement, their role complexity did not seem to improve their collaboration as it did the other participant pairs.

**Interplay between Relationships and Collaboration**

Relationships impacted collaboration and collaboration impacted relationships. Simply put, there was interplay between collaboration and relationship. Sean and Paige, who had worked together previously, found their prior collaboration benefited their work together in BGSU 1000. Moreover, it led them to build a stronger professional relationship. Buttercup and Daphne, who had both worked together previously and had a prior personal relationship, found that their partnership for BGSU 1000 strengthened both their collaboration and relationship.
Both expressed that the intensity and time provided them with opportunities to learn from each other professionally as well as “catch up” personally. The two pairs who did not have a prior relationship found that fact affected them differently. Alex and Bob communicated that a prior relationship might have helped them establish a better collaboration. Clara and Grace did not believe a lack of prior relationship hurt their partnership. The literature supports that previous relationships can be important to collaboration (Dulop & Holosko, 2004).

All participants said that they came to know their partner better through working with her or him. Although these relationships looked different for each pair, a relationship was built as a result of collaboration nonetheless. Some even believed that their work together would lead them to better friendships after BGSU 1000 had ended. Furthermore, most of the participants suggested they would be likely to collaborate with their partner in the future due to their current collaboration and the relationship they had established. Individual relationships and cross-institutional dialogue have been shown to contribute to the success of collaboration (Arcelus, 2008; Kezar, 2001). Sean and Paige would continue to work together on projects related to their topic area outside BGSU 1000. Buttercup and Daphne discussed writing an article together and expanding their courses. Clara and Grace anticipated meeting for lunch and working on some projects together related to their topic area. For those three pairs, positive relationships contributed to positive collaboration and vice versa.

I would argue that for Bob and Alex, there was still interplay between relationship and collaboration. They were not able to establish a strong relationship or collaboration and a lack of one contributed to a lack of the other. Bob said that he was more reserved and did not seek out a relationship. He did not believe that a positive relationship was necessary for collaboration, though he did believe it could benefit it. Alex described talking primarily about the class when
spending casual time with Bob outside the classroom. He did not expect to build a relationship with Bob due to their differences in places in life. Although there were many reasons why the two did not build a relationship or collaboration, the lack of a positive experience in one likely contributed to the lack of a positive experience in the other.

**Vygotsky and the zone of proximal development.** Vygotskian theory and the zone of proximal development may be well documented in K-12 educational literature, but is all but non-existent connected to collaboration in higher education. Based on the findings in this study, not only should Vygotskian theory be further examined, but support for the zone of proximal development might be the biggest argument for collaboration when appropriately devised. Participants described improving as collaborators, instructors, and as administrators through their collaborative partnerships. As demonstrated in this study, individual characteristics, partner interactions, and cultural factors should all be considered in collaborative relationships. A Vygotskian framework considers this and the intersection of these factors. Moreover, the process of relationships is important in the Vygotskian framework, not just the effects of collaboration.

Specific to Vygotskian theory, the zone of proximal development held true for most participants in this study. The concept of zone of proximal development generally concludes that individuals have a certain range of capabilities, but, social interaction with others (or socio-cultural tools) may extend the upper range of individual capabilities. In simple terms, this theory states that an individual is able to achieve more in conjunction with others than she or he could by her or himself. This sentiment was communicated by most participants in the study. Sean said that he would not have been able to teach content in the same detail that he was able to with Paige in the classroom. Buttercup and Daphne both described teaching techniques they learned
from each other and then attempted to employ themselves. Clara gave the example of wanting to address students’ inappropriate language and learning how to do so from Grace. All three pairs discussed the importance of what each person brought to the pair that would benefit student learning as well as the individual partnership. As Vygotskian theory suggests, individuals in collaboration behave differently than individuals working alone. Their interaction in and of itself—the relationship—is of vital importance for both participant learning and student learning, which then also leads to better collaboration. Most of the participants in this study enact the idea of “the potential of stretching one’s identity through partnership, through sustained and varied action through the interweaving of social and individual processes” (John-Stein, 2000, p. 189).

The Exception

Three of the four groups would describe their collaborative relationships as “successful.” Additionally, most of the major themes that arose from those collective case studies were well-represented in three of the four groups. The exceptional pair was Alex and Bob. Their case was interesting for a variety of reasons, foremost being that they struggled much more than the other pairs and that those themes dominant in other cases—commonalities, common goals, unclear roles, interplay between relationship and collaboration, zone of proximal development, and a sense of the big picture and connected learning—were either less present or non-existent in their partnership. Alex and Bob had little in common other than a similar background in higher education, which Bob believed caused them to overlap in inefficient ways, as opposed to complement each other. Certainly the two had different purposes in teaching BGSU 1000, and often focused on different topics, with an unclear vision of the outcome. Alex and Bob disagreed that their roles were unclear; however, and this ambiguity worked to the detriment of their collaboration and relationship, whereas in the other partnerships participants both believed this
was true and the blurring of lines was beneficial. The interplay between relationship and collaboration in Alex and Bob’s case hurt, rather than helped, their collaborative work and their relationship. Because one was not strong, this seemed to influence the other was well. While both agreed that they learned more about each other as a result of participating, it is fair to say that neither reached his individual potential as a result of working with the other, let alone moved beyond it. And finally, while both Alex and Bob saw connected learning as important, what should be connected and how it should connect was never agreed upon, according to Bob, perhaps to the detriment of student learning.

While no one factor can be explained as the sole cause or reason behind their challenging collaborative relationship, it is likely that all of these aspects together certainly made the experience less positive than it might have otherwise been. Alex and Bob’s experience shows that collaborative relationships are not always beneficial; moreover, attending to those factors shown in this study as important might have influenced the nature of their relationship. Alex and Bob’s experience also highlights what can happen if a collaboration is not successful. In their case, Bob believed that students did not get everything out of the course that they would have had their collaboration been better. It is important to consider the negative, as well as the positive, implications of collaboration if not conducted in good ways. Alex and Bob’s collaboration supports the thematic findings through negative case analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1989b; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While the factors present in three of the four relationships suggest ways to make collaborative relationships more successful, their absence in the exception supports the importance of those themes.
Models of Collaboration

In considering the models of collaboration that were reviewed as part of the literature review, this study supports the influence of relational aspects on collaboration. It is important to note that most of the models of collaboration reviewed were related to organizational collaboration as opposed to individual collaboration. As might be expected, then, some results of this study reflect the relational factors present in organizational collaboration, but go more in depth about the individuals in collaborative relationships.

The findings in the study related most closely to two models in particular. Ring and Van De Ven (1994) presented a model of cooperative interorganizational relationships. They presented propositions related to how those relationships developed and functioned. Below I have restated the propositions along with their connections to the findings in this study:

Proposition 1: Congruent sense making among parties increases the likelihood of concluding formal negotiations to a cooperative interorganizational relationship (IOR). Participants described valuing collaboration, relationships, and their partners. Having common values and having initial discussions about roles and common goals seemed to benefit the collaborative relationships. These initial discussions led to collaboration that was initially more structured in nature.

Proposition 2: Congruent psychological contracts among parties increases the likelihood of establishing formal commitments to a cooperative IOR. Participants established trust and relationships that confirmed their commitments to their collaborative relationships as they learned more about their partners, found commonalities, or made assumptions based on content area or prior relationships or collaboration.
Proposition 3: If the individuals assigned to a cooperative IOR do not change, personal relationships increasingly supplement role relationships as a cooperative IOR develops over time.

As participants continued to build trust and collaboration strengthened, roles became less important. Instead, what partners brought to the collaboration relationship was more important and partners learned to rely on each other to focus to achieve the common goal of student learning.

Proposition 4: Informal psychological contracts increasingly compensate or substitute for formal contractual safeguards as reliance on trust among parties increases over time. Participants described stories of one partner or the other having to miss classes or meetings due to personal engagements or crises and partners understood that the other would understand this need. Moreover, partners described becoming more open with each other and with students as time went on, to the extent that roles were unimportant.

Proposition 5: When the temporal duration of interorganizational relationships is expected to exceed the tenure of agents, informal understandings and commitments will be formalized.

As the semester came to a close, participants became more communicative about the influence their collaborative relationships had on their experience. They communicated that they hoped lessons they had learned would be valuable in structuring the program in the future. Moreover, as their time together came to an end, participants discussed coming together formally after their BGSU 1000 experience had concluded.
Proposition 6: As the temporal duration of a cooperative IOR increases, the likelihood decreases that parties will terminate the relationship when a breach of commitment occurs.

Although the duration of the BGSU 1000 collaborative relationships came to an end, participants were increasingly flexible with each other in terms of formal commitments as part of the partnership.

Proposition 7: When significant imbalances between formal and informal processes arise in repetitive sequences of negotiation, commitment, and execution stages over time, the likelihood of dissolving the cooperative IOR increases. (pp. 101-108)

This was most evidently seen in the partnership between Alex and Bob who truly did have differences between formal and informal processes. As the semester came to a close, neither expected to continue their collaborative relationship in other ways.

Although the model does not fit exactly, in part because it addresses organizations as opposed to individuals, there are close similarities in the ways cooperative interorganizational relationships function and collaborative relationships between faculty and student affairs co-teaching function. This model then provides an appropriate initial framework for considering how collaborators might consider their partnerships.

Kezar’s (2005) stage model of collaboration in higher education also holds some similarities for individual collaborative relationships. Kezar’s model breaks collaboration down into three stages, building commitment (external pressure, values, learning, and networks), commitment (sense of priority, mission, networks), and sustaining (integrating structures, rewards, and networks). In developing collaborative relationships, participants described the importance of values, prior relationships, and having common values. In terms of functioning,
participants talked about the interplay of relationship and collaboration, and how their roles were less important and instead supplanted them with a give and take dynamic. These relate closely to Kezar’s study, but did not have the same strict stage positioning. Additionally, Kezar’s model seems more abstract and structurally related. This seems likely related to the fact that Kezar’s participants were senior student affairs officers discussing collaboration as opposed to my participant population who were the faculty and staff actually enacting the collaborative relationships and therefore more likely to provide personal reflection on their experiences. An alternative reason might be because the formal collaboration lasted only one semester and was therefore relatively short.

Kanter’s (1994) model of collaboration as analogous to a romantic relationship, though loosely connected, did not offer much to contextualize the findings in this study. Kezar’s (2005) model comes closer, but Ring and Ven De Ven’s (1994) model seems a good preliminary fit.

Co-Teaching

Although I did not examine co-teaching research prior to conducting the study, emergent themes suggested this might be an area to explore. The relationships may have been collaboration in higher education, but they were certainly co-teaching relationships. In fact, the co-teaching literature closely reflected the themes that arose from the study. Nearly every major element that might be considered a factor in co-teaching was also found in the pairs in this study. The importance of common goals, a shared belief system, parity, shared work in varying roles, interpersonal skills, relationships, commonalities, and professional growth were referenced in the literature of co-teaching (Bess, 2000; Buckley, 2000; Eisen, 2000; Eisen & Tisdell, 2000; Golde & Pribbenow, 2000; Nash, 2009; Roberts & Pruitt, 2009; Tisdell & Eisen, 2000; Villa, et al., 2008).
This was an important discovery, although it may seem obvious. Golde and Pribbenow (2000) suggested that certain characteristics might make faculty more apt to participate in and be successful in collaborating in residence halls. The same supposition likely applies in these cases. Perhaps faculty members and student affairs professionals who do not neatly fit into traditional roles are more likely to participate in co-teaching opportunities with instructors from various divisions and departments. Perhaps faculty members and student affairs professionals who regularly cross traditional role boundaries are those who more frequently participate in and are more successful in these collaborative opportunities. While this should not exclude any interested educator from participating, some faculty or administrators might be more successful in co-teaching than others.

If this is true, then the “exceptional case” deserves even more examination. Although both were hopeful going in to the collaboration, those factors mentioned in both the collaboration literature and the co-teaching literature that were missing may need further study. If nothing else, in higher education where instructors teach regularly without a formal education in pedagogy or andragogy, co-teaching is more than just a collaboration. This study reinforces the notion that educational theory has application beyond K-12 and beyond the traditional classroom.

**Limitations and Lessons Learned**

As a qualitative, constructivist collective case-study, generalizability is not the goal of this study. The results are transferable in as much as these cases are similar to comparable cases. It is important to note, however, that there were several limitations in the study to note as context for the findings.
**Participant Selection**

In initially determining the population for the study, participants were limited. Although I attempted to gain a breadth of personal characteristics, roles, and backgrounds, the ability to do so was limited by the number of participants and their willingness to participate. As such, the participant pool is not as diverse as might be beneficial. One additional pair was sought out, but one of the instructors declined and therefore the pair was unable to be included.

In seeming contrast, I had expected to interview pairs of faculty instructors and student affairs instructors, as the program was advertised. Even though I was a graduate assistant for the program itself, I was unaware of the complex nature of the roles of the participants. Although the study indicates faculty members and student affairs professionals in collaboration were attempting to be found, no single pair fit that exact definition. Even in those pairs where the titles were clear, participants identified differently. It is possible that had more “traditional” faculty and student affairs staff participated, the results might have reflected more “traditional” challenges between those cultures. It is possible, then, that the findings reflect that the participants fall outside of roles that have “traditional” concerns. Additionally, two pairs consisted of only administrators with no full-time faculty instructor. Certainly the make-up of those pairs does not reflect the initial intention of the study, although the resulting data are no less interesting. It is also possible that the culture of the institution, where there is a relatively high level of involvement between student affairs and academic affairs and faculty, is reflected in the participants involved in the study as well.

**Observations**

I had initially intended to observe at least one class and one meeting for each pair of participants. Unfortunately, due to time constraints on data collection and participants’ course
schedules, only one class was able to be observed. The logistics of the class were revealing, though perhaps not as informative as initially hoped. Other participants shared certain aspects of their classroom dynamics that would have been insightful to observe, however scheduling prohibited those observations.

**Partners**

Probably one of the most challenging aspects of the study was negotiating dynamics between partners. In three of the four cases, participants generally had similar or complementary commentary. In those cases, it was somewhat easier to share findings about the pair that clearly one participant or the other had communicated. The fourth pair proved more challenging. While the two participants were able to work together, there was often disagreement about how they viewed the class. Their perspectives were often so dichotomous that it was difficult to not only cipher out information, but to share appropriate information between participants. Their pair interview helped in some ways because the participants were able to hear each other, but in the final interview it was clear that one or the other disagreed with the other’s perspective. The challenge, then, became to provide the emic perspective for both participants as well as the pair. Although this was difficult, I believe I provided authentic representation of Alex and Bob’s experiences.

**Data Collection**

While good data were collected, participants had appropriate time to reflect on data analysis, and the results represent a true picture of the participants’ experiences, the logistical elements of data collection proved incredibly difficult. Scheduling individual and pair interviews, transcribing, coding, data analysis, improved interview protocols, and providing plenty of time for reflection were very difficult to balance. The goal was to collect all the data
during the experience of teaching BGSU 1000, and the turnaround time for each part of the process was very limited. Despite these challenges, participants agreed that the findings were true to their experiences.

Implications

**Implications for Practice and Policy**

While most of the findings in this study were not especially surprising, they are generally undocumented in the literature. The results are likely similar to many others’ anecdotal stories, but this research provides documented support of what we often think is true. This is important because our policy and practice should be based in informed knowledge. Now, college and university administrators and collaborators can use evidence, as the findings in this study are transferable to their situation, to provide reasonable support for practice and policy with regards to collaborative relationships.

**Support and foster relationships.** Participants described that both prior relationships and the relationships they built in their partnerships helped them get to know their partners better and led or would lead to collaboration. Additionally, stronger relationships strengthened their collaboration and participants felt bettered the experience for students in their classes. As such, those responsible for collaboration in higher education should support and foster relationships between colleagues across campus. Providing opportunities and experiences wherein faculty members, academic affairs administrators, and student affairs professionals can get to know each other personally may help to encourage natural connections that could lead to productive collaboration. Moreover, colleges and universities should support natural relationships that are already on campuses by providing faculty and staff with occasions to self-select partners. Inviting innovative, cross-disciplinary, and cross-campus collaborative suggestions could support
those individuals who already have personal relationships but no outlet by which to professionally collaborate.

**Support and foster collaboration.** Collaboration by participants, either prior to their BGSU 1000 collaboration or during their BGSU 1000 benefited their relationships. Also, participants indicated that as a result of their work together, they would likely work together again. As such, colleges and universities should provide opportunities for colleagues to collaborate from different departments, divisions, and across the campus and community. Colleges and universities should be cautious of putting together teaching teams without forethought and planning, especially with little time for the partners to develop relationships. Offering financial support of suggested collaboration that does not neatly fit into previously established structures would allow collaborative innovation.

**Foster discussion in collaboration.** Although collaboration occurs on nearly all campuses, it is not always successfully performed. The results of this study indicate that communication about values, expectations, roles, and goals can be key elements in fostering good collaborative relationships. Clarity in these areas was important. Programs that use or foster collaboration should be clear about the reasons for collaboration and what they expect from participants and for participants. Meetings, training sessions, and documentation can be provided. However, if more flexibility is warranted programmatically, these discussions can be had by the participants in the collaboration themselves. Participants in this study did not indicate that formal conversations were needed, although those happened in some cases, but having some sort of initial discussion allowed them to build on their collaborative relationships as well as make effective assumptions later.
Make common goals clear. One of the most clear themes from this study was the importance of common goals. More specifically, common goals need to be clear and often specified. Participants who worked together toward a common goal in this study had what they considered a “successful” collaboration while the pair that did not seem to have the same goals had a more challenging experience. Whether these goals are made explicit through programs, through documentation, or through discussion, those in collaboration need to be clear about what they are trying to achieve. Although not all participants had their common goals formalized, it might be beneficial for collaborators or those managing collaboration to encourage documentation of common goals so that there is no question about the hoped for outcomes.

Consider importance and complexity of roles. Participants in the study did not adhere to traditional faculty member and student affairs professional roles. In some cases they were in academic affairs, in some cases they were faculty members and administrators, in some cases they had been in more than one of those roles, and in some cases they identified with one or more of those roles. Furthermore, most participants said that role distinctions were unimportant compared to what each person brought to the class. These findings hold several implications for colleges and universities. First, faculty and staff who cross traditional boundaries might be good individuals to collaborate for various projects, specifically those directed toward student learning. Second, perhaps role distinction is unimportant in other cases in higher education. Under those circumstances, trying to find the “perfect” representative for collaboration may not be necessary. Third, roles may not need to be distinguished for quality collaboration to occur. Finally, although roles were not important, being valued for what each participant brought was important; therefore, encouraging collaborators to get to know each other and the specific gifts each person brings could foster better and more comprehensive collaboration.
Consider matching commonalities and content. Participants in this study indicated that having backgrounds, experiences, personalities, and interests in common was important to their collaboration and their relationships. Common background in content or theme seemed especially important. In fact, those with the most in common described their relationships as friendships. While certainly friendships are not needed for all collaboration, and Magolda suggested working with those with whom we have less in common is a beneficial challenge, this study indicates that collaboration is successful if participants are able to identify commonalities. For colleges and universities this might mean that giving collaborators a choice in one-on-one collaboration could be beneficial. Other ways colleges and universities might utilize this information could be to encourage collaborators to find similarities, to match pairs or small groups of collaborators with others with whom they might have certain things in common, or to begin discussions about commonalities. To be clear, I am not suggesting that collaborators should only work with similar people. In fact, Clara and Grace described themselves as being different in several ways as did Paige and Sean. What those and Daphne and Buttercup had in common, though, were commonalities that allowed them to work to achieve similar goals and appreciate their differences. It is also important to recognize that most of the participants were willing to look for commonalities. Alex and Bob may not have had much in common, but they certainly were less open to exploring possible commonalities that might have bridged some of their differences.

Foster student learning. Participants believed that their collaborative work positively impacted student learning. They specifically highlighted the knowledge, skills, and abilities they believed were a result of their collaborative relationships. Although collaboration may not be needed in all circumstances, certainly this study adds to the literature that collaboration, and
collaborative relationships more specifically, can benefit student learning. As such, college and university faculty and administrators should consider where they might include effective collaborative relationships to best influence student learning.

**Implications for Research**

While collaboration has been well-researched, research into the relational aspects of collaboration is significantly less so. This study adds to that limited research. There are several areas for future research that would be valuable as evidenced by this study:

1. Examination of other kinds of collaborative relationships between faculty and student affairs professionals, such as committee work, programming, or other university work, to see if co-teaching attracts and supports certain kinds of collaborators.

   The research on co-teaching suggests that certain faculty might be drawn to or more successful in co-teaching relationships with student affairs professionals (Golde & Pribbenow, 2000). Beyond this, certain faculty and academic affairs and student affairs administrators may be drawn to co-teaching. Better understanding these factors could lead to better recruitment and retention of instructors as well as better learning experiences for students.

2. Examination of collaborative relationships between faculty members and student affairs professionals with more clearly defined roles to learn more about the influence of roles within the relationships.

   Participants in this study described complex roles that influenced the nature of their relationships. Further investigation into collaborative relationships where roles are more clearly defined could provide insight into the specific nature of boundary-crossing in co-teaching in higher education.
3. Examination of faculty and student affairs professionals’ willingness and motivation to participate in co-teaching experiences. Research focused on faculty and student affairs professionals motivations and reasons for participation and their willingness to participate when asked could be valuable in understanding how such factors as culture, reward structures, and roles contribute to co-teaching relationships.

4. A follow-up examination to see if and how the collaboration and relationships sustained over time and whether they lead to more and better collaboration and relationships in the future. Most participants suggested they expected their collaboration and relationships to continue and expand beyond the BGSU 1000 experience. A follow-up study would be valuable to determine if this was true, and if so what those experiences would be. This research could provide strong support for advocating for effective collaborative partnerships.

5. Further examination of how Vygotskian theory, co-teaching literature, and other relevant educational research might be useful in higher education among faculty, staff, and students. This study supported theoretical constructs in Vygotskian theory and in the co-teaching literature. Insightful, useful, and valuable research has been conducted in many areas outside of the higher education literature that needs to be explored for application in college and university environments. This is absolutely necessary in a field that advocates for bridging gaps and integration.
6. Further exploration of the Ring and Van De Ven (1994) model to determine further parallels between cooperative interorganizational relationships and collaborative relationships in higher education.

Ring and Van De Ven’s (1994) model of collaboration was especially useful in understanding collaboration in co-teaching relationships between faculty and student affairs professionals. As suggested above, this is yet another example of theory applied outside of higher education that is useful in the college and university environment. Further study of this model could provide specific contextual components unique to higher education and faculty-student affairs collaboration that could be useful for administrators.

Conclusion

In this study, participants described how their collaborative relationships developed, functioned, interacted, and impacted student learning. Their experiences in their collaborative relationships reflected the influence of their partnerships. Participants had different kinds of relationships, some of which matured into friendships. Most partners found that having commonalities in backgrounds and styles, developing trust, and learning about and understanding their partner helped their relationships function well. Participants noted the importance of common goals to the success of developing collaboration and often spoke similarly about the significance of the student affairs instructor as part of the partnership. Participants did not fit neatly into their prescribed roles and generally identified beyond or outside of those roles. Most collaboration functioned with equality between partners and with give and take in the roles they played. Three of the four partnerships suggested their success was due to previously mentioned themes. The pair that had a more difficult collaboration described
missing several of the elements other pairs communicated. This suggests those factors are important in successful collaborative relationships.

There certainly seemed to be interplay between relationship and collaboration, facilitated by assumptions and discussions, prior relationship, content, and time. Ultimately, good relationships led to good collaboration and good collaboration led to good relationships. The opposite was seemingly true as well, as evidenced by one pair’s experience distinctly in contrast to the other three. Using a Vygotskian framework was appropriate, and participants described what Vygotsky called the zone of proximal development, whereby individuals were able to achieve more in working with others than they would have been able to alone.

Participants described that students were a significant part of their experience, and student learning was a goal in participating in their partnership. Moreover, several participants described that connections across departments, divisions, campus, and the community, and helping to integrate curricular and co-curricular learning were factors important to their experience as well. Participating in their collaborative relationships helped them to achieve this big picture outcome.

This study does not imply that collaboration is appropriate or necessary in all circumstances. This study, instead, adds to a body of literature that supports that quality collaboration can enhance student learning, and the experience of those in collaborative relationships. This study also suggests that colleges and universities should be intentional about creating and supporting opportunities for collaborators to build or continue their relationships and collaboration already in existence.

Most importantly, this study gives support and credibility to the importance of considering relationships in collaborative partnerships in higher education, an area of research
that is fairly limited. Given that higher education functions through relationship as much if not more than other organizations, it is vital that administrators, faculty, and staff learn how to best understand and foster positive relationships that can improve higher education and student learning.
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APPENDIX A

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study on collaboration between academic affairs and student affairs. For the completion of my doctorate in the Higher Education Administration program at Bowling Green State University (BGSU), I am conducting a research study on the nature of collaborative relationships between academic affairs representatives and student affairs representatives in their efforts to improve student learning.

Purpose
The study will explore the following questions:
For partnerships promoting student learning between faculty and student affairs professionals:
• How do their relationships develop and function?
• How does their collaboration develop and function?
• What is the interplay between collaboration and relationship?
• What do they experience by being in this partnership?
• How does their collaboration affect student learning?

Nature and Procedure
This is a qualitative study and therefore interviewing and observing participants is an important aspect of the research. I hope to identify four collaborative relationships and interview two to three people in each of these collaborations. I estimate that your participation will take approximately three to four hours, in three 60 to 90 minute interviews. One of these interviews will be completed with the partner participant. I will ask to audio record these sessions. I would also like to attend a meetings in which you are interacting in collaboration and observe a co-taught class session. Additionally, any documents you could provide that would give insight into your relationship with your teaching partners would be helpful. As follow-up, I will provide you with my written records of our conversation to see if what I have described is an accurate representation of our conversation. You will have an opportunity to read and revise your responses. Moreover, as I analyze the interview for themes, I will ask for your feedback.

Risks and Benefits of Participation
The anticipated risks to you are no greater than those normally encountered in daily life. Inquiry into collaborative relationships between faculty and student affairs professionals could help to inform the development and process of collaborative ventures in the future so that they may be successful. Participants may also gain greater insight into their collaborative relationships as well.
Researcher Benefits
This study will benefit me in completing my doctoral dissertation.

Confidentiality
All recordings, transcriptions, forms, and other documents will be coded and altered (i.e., through the use of pseudonyms) to safeguard the participants’ names, identities, and institutions to the greatest extent possible. Full confidentiality will be limited to the extent that others familiar with the institution, program, or participants may be able to identify participants from their quotes. Also, participant confidentiality may be limited between teaching partners due to the nature of the study and their relationship. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you can refrain from answering any questions without penalty or explanation. You are free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time. If you decide to participate and change your mind later, you may withdraw your consent and stop your participation without penalty or explanation. Please note that e-mail is not 100% secure, so it is possible that someone intercepting your e-mail will gain knowledge of your interest in the study. I will provide you with a copy of both the audio and written copy of our interviews. You will also be provided with a copy of this consent document for your records.

Contact Information
If you have any questions or comments about this study, you can contact me, Michelle Rodems, at 419-575-9839 or mrodems@bgsu.edu or Dr. Maureen E. Wilson, my dissertation advisor, at mewilso@bgsu.edu or 419-372-7321. If you have questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University's Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu).

I have received a complete explanation of the study and I agree to participate.

Name_______________________________________   Date____________________
(Signature of participant)

Name_______________________________________    Date____________________
(Signature of researcher)
APPENDIX B

Initial Interview Guide

I. Greeting
   a. Thank you for being willing to participate in my study about the nature of collaborative relationships between academic affairs and student affairs.
   b. Purpose: I am interested in learning about how collaborative relationships between faculty members and student affairs representatives develop and evolve.
   c. Procedures: I’ll be asking a number of open-ended questions. As I indicated in the initial invitation letter, I would like to record these interviews so that I am able to recreate accurately what you say. If you would like to say something and prefer for it not to be recorded, please indicate this desire to me, and I will turn off the digital recorder. All recordings, transcriptions, forms, and other documents will be coded and altered to safeguard the participants and institutions’ identities to the greatest extent possible.
   d. Do you have any questions before we begin?
   e. Review and sign two consent forms; give one form to the participant.
   f. Make sure that digital recorder is ready. Start interviewing!

II. Interview Themes and Questions
   a. Opening and Informational Questions
      i. Please tell me about yourself.
      ii. Please tell me about your role on campus.
      iii. How do you define collaboration?
iv. Please tell me about the BGSU 1000 course on which you are collaborating (if they see it as such).

v. Would you describe teaching BGSU 1000 as a collaboration? Why or Why not?

vi. Tell me a story about what it has been like to be a part of this partnership

vii. How did teaching BGSU 1000 come about for you?

viii. What is your role in the project and in the partnership?

ix. How does your relationship function in the context of BGSU 1000?

x. What relationship did you have with your partner on the project prior to working on this project?

xi. How does that prior relationship influence the nature of your work together now?

xii. How does your current relationship with your partner impact your collaboration?

xiii. How would you describe your experience in this collaboration?

xiv. How would you describe your interactions with your partner?

xv. How does your collaborative relationship impact student learning?

xvi. How does the idea of student learning impact your collaborative relationship?

xvii. How does the makeup of your partnership affect your work together?

xviii. What has been particularly rewarding?

xix. What has been particularly challenging?

xx. What do you think are some of the outcomes of this collaboration?
xxi. What have you learned from being a part of this collaboration?

III. Summary Question

a. Is there anything that I have not asked you that I should have?

b. Are there any documents you have used to guide your relationship with your teaching partner? Would you be willing to share those with me?

c. Are there any documents that you and/or your partner have created, such as emails, meeting notes, syllabi, or others that describe or inform your partnership? Would you be willing to share those with me?

IV. Recommendations of Others…

a. Is there another collaborative relationship involving interaction between someone in student affairs and academic affairs in which I might be interested?

b. What brought that relationship to mind?

c. Is there a person in that collaborative relationship with whom I should speak?

d. Would you be willing to contact that person to see if the person would be willing to talk with me?

V. Closing Statement

Thank you for spending time with me and sharing your insights. I will be sending you a transcript of the interview and my initial impressions of this interview as soon as possible. You will have an opportunity to read and revise your responses.
Group Interview Guide

I. Greeting
   a. Thank you for being willing to participate in my study about the nature of collaborative relationships between academic affairs and student affairs.
   b. Purpose: I am interested in learning about how collaborative relationships between faculty members and student affairs representatives develop and evolve.
   c. Procedures: I’ll be asking a number of open-ended questions. As I indicated in the initial invitation letter, I would like to record these interviews so that I am able to recreate accurately what you say. If you would like to say something and prefer for it not to be recorded, please indicate this desire to me, and I will turn off the digital recorder. All recordings, transcriptions, forms, and other documents will be coded and altered to safeguard the participants and institutions’ identities to the greatest extent possible.
   d. Do you have any questions before we begin?
   e. Review and sign two consent forms; give one form to the participant.
   f. Make sure that digital recorder is ready. Start interviewing!

II. Questions
   a. Tell me a story about what it has been like to be a part of this partnership
   b. What is your role in the project and in the partnership?
   c. How does your relationship function in the context of BGSU 1000?
   d. How does your current relationship with your partner impact your collaboration?
   e. How would you describe your interactions with your partner?
   f. How does your collaborative relationship impact student learning?
g. What has been particularly rewarding?

h. What has been particularly challenging?

i. What norms or rules structure your relationships with partners?

j. What do you think are some of the outcomes of this collaboration?

k. What have you learned from being a part of this collaboration?

l. What do you think you have brought to the relationship?

m. What do you think the other person has brought to the relationship?

n. What do you think you have learned from this relationship that you might not have learned by teaching the class alone?

III. Summary Question

a. Is there anything that I have not asked you that I should have?

b. Are there any documents you have used to guide your relationship with your teaching partner? Would you be willing to share those with me?

c. Are there any documents that you and/or your partner have created, such as emails, meeting notes, syllabi, or others that describe or inform your partnership? Would you be willing to share those with me?

IV. Closing Statement

Thank you for spending time with me and sharing your insights. I will be sending you a transcript of the interview and my initial impressions of this interview as soon as possible. You will have an opportunity to read and revise your responses.
APPENDIX C

Observation Protocol

Observation will be initially quite broad, with these questions only serving as a guide as to what to consider. Both the topic and the conceptual framework are relationships; therefore, many of the items below are intended to aid in observing the interaction of the two participants, or the response of one participant to the other either in the joint interview or in the classroom setting. If additional observation opportunities are needed, I will work with participants to complete others.

I. Individual Interview Observation
   a. The Participant, Activity, and Interaction
      i. How formal or informal does the participant’s interaction seem?
      ii. How comfortable does the participant seem to be?
      iii. How does the participant respond to personal versus professional questions?
   b. Conversation – Seek verbal and non-verbal cues regarding:
      i. How formal is the conversation?
      ii. How much of the conversation is about the participant personally and professionally?
      iii. How informed does the participant seem about her or his teaching partner?
      iv. How comfortable does the participant seem with the partnership?
   c. Subtle factors
      i. Nonverbal communication such as dress and physical space
      ii. Unobtrusive measures such as physical clues
iii. What does NOT happen? (Merriam, 1998)

iv. Does any area of discussion seemingly make the participant particularly excited, anxious, uncomfortable, etc.?

II. Pair or Group Observation

a. The physical setting
   
i. What kinds of behavior is the setting designed for?
   
ii. How might the setting relate to the relationship?

b. The Participants
   
i. What are the relevant characteristics of the participants? (Merriam, 1998)
   
   c. Activities and Interactions
      
i. What is going on?
      
   
ii. How do the participants interact with the activity and with one another?
   
   iii. How formal or informal are the participants’ interactions?
   
   iv. How comfortable do the participants seem with each other?
   
   v. How do partners act out their roles?
   
   vi. What various kinds of relationships can be seen?
   
   d. Conversation – seek verbal and non-verbal cues regarding:
      
i. What is the content of the conversations in the setting?
      
   
ii. Who speaks to whom?
   
   iii. Who listens? (Merriam, 1998)
   
   iv. How informed do the participants seem with the other’s interests, experience, etc.?
   
   v. What role does relationship play in the conversation?
vi. What role does collaboration play in the conversation?

e. Subtle factors

i. Symbolic and connotative meanings of words

ii. Nonverbal communication such as dress and physical space

iii. Unobtrusive measures such as physical clues

iv. What does NOT happen? (Merriam, 1998)

III. Other Questions to Consider:

a. What are the seminal and salient features of participants and the observations?

   (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993)

b. What are the verbal and non-verbal cues such as:

   i. Body movement,

   ii. Spatial relationships,

   iii. Rhythmic relationships,

   iv. Use of time,

   v. Volume, voice quality, accent, and inflectional patterns,

   vi. Touching (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)
APPENDIX D
Document Analysis Protocol

I. Public Records

a. Planning documents may provide insight into the intentionality of collaborative partnerships for the BGSU 1000 program, which may speak to the support or inhibition of collaborative partnerships and inter-divisional relationships. These will be used if participants expressly used them in defining their roles or relationship in the partnership.

   i. Planning documents for University Seminar/BGSU 1000

   ii. Connecting the Undergraduate Experience report

II. Personal and Program Documents

a. Assessment documents may provide insight into past collaborative relationships that were part of BGSU 1000 and therefore potential foundations, models, or examples for current collaborative partnerships

   i. 2008 pilot assessment, including instructor interviews

   ii. 2009 pilot assessment, including instructor interviews

   iii. Previous syllabi and other classroom documents

b. BGSU 1000 Instructor Training/Learning Community Documents may provide insight into the messages given by the program director regarding how partnerships were designed, work, develop, etc. to understand what outside influences might impact the relationship between the teaching partners. These will be used if participants expressly used them in defining their roles in the partnership.
i. Summer instructor meeting documents including documents about common assignments and team teaching

ii. Email communication to the instructors regarding roles, working with co-instructor, and other applicable emails

c. Individual partnership documents may provide insight into planning between teaching partners, relationship (and development of relationship) between partners, role discovery and decision making, collaboration development, understanding of program, partnership, collaboration, and relationship, functionality of relationship and collaboration, and the experience of being in a collaborative partnership

i. Emails between partners that outline roles, relationship, or collaboration

ii. Emails that reveal roles, relationship, or collaboration between partners

iii. Meeting notes that highlight, describe, or reveal roles, relationship, or collaboration between partners

iv. Course documents such as syllabi, Blackboard course shell, course assignments, or class emails that highlight, describe, or reveal roles, relationship, or collaboration between teaching partners

v. Other personal or partner documents partners are willing to share that give insight into their relationship or collaboration

III. Questions to Consider

a. What is the history of this document?

b. Is the document complete, as originally constructed?

c. Has it been edited?
d. Under what circumstances and for what purposes was it produced?

e. Who was/is the author?

f. What was she/he trying to accomplish? For whom was the document intended?

g. What was or is the maker’s bias?

h. Does triangulation support the document?

i. Is this a primary or secondary document? (Merriam, 1998)
APPENDIX E

Human Subject Review Board Approval

August 11, 2010

TO: Michelle Rodems
HESA

FROM: Hillary Harms, Ph.D.
HSRB Administrator

RE: HSRB Project No.: H11D008GX2

TITLE: A Constructivist Case Study of Relationships Between Faculty and Student Affairs Professionals in Collaborative Partnerships Intended to Promote Student Learning

You have met the conditions for approval for your project involving human subjects. As of August 10, 2010, your project has been granted final approval by the Human Subjects Review Board (HSRB). This approval expires on July 25, 2011. You may proceed with subject recruitment and data collection.

The final approved version of the consent document(s) is attached. Consistent with federal OHRP guidance to IRBs, the consent document(s) bearing the HSRB approval/expiration date stamp is the only valid version and you must use copies of the date-stamped document(s) in obtaining consent from research subjects.

You are responsible to conduct the study as approved by the HSRB and to use only approved forms. If you seek to make any changes in your project activities or procedures (including increases in the number of participants), please send a request for modifications immediately to the HSRB via this office. Please notify me, in writing (fax: 372-6916 or email: hsrb@bgsu.edu) upon completion of your project.

Good luck with your work. Let me know if this office or the HSRB can be of assistance as your project proceeds.

Comments/Modifications:
Stamped consent form is coming to you via campus mail.

c: Dr. Maureen E. Wilson

Research Category: EXEMPT #2