



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

**PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIP IN AN ONLINE LEARNING  
ENVIRONMENT DURING COVID-19**

**Azzira Binti Abas**

**Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science)  
2021**

**UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK**

Grade: A

**Please tick one**

Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

**DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK**

This declaration is made on the 11 day of JULY year 2021.

**Student's Declaration:**

I, AZZIRA BINTI ABAS, 65529, FACULTY OF COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, hereby declare that the work entitled, PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIP IN AN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT DURING COVID-19 is my original work. I have not copied from any other students' work or from any other sources with the exception where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part of the work been written for me by another person.

11 JULY 2021

**Azzira**

\_\_\_\_\_  
AZZIRA BINTI ABAS (65529)

**Supervisor's Declaration:**

I, TYPE THE NAME OF YOUR SUPERVISOR HERE, hereby certify that the work entitled, TITLE OF YOUR WORK was prepared by the aforementioned or above mentioned student, and was submitted to the "FACULTY" as a \*partial/full fulfillment for the conferment of BACHELOR OF SCIENCE WITH HONOURS (COGNITIVE SCIENCE), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student's work



Received for examination by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 15 July 2021

Prof Dr Chen Chwen Jen

I declare this Project/Thesis is classified as (Please tick (√)):

- CONFIDENTIAL** (Contains confidential information under the Official Secret Act 1972)\*
- RESTRICTED** (Contains restricted information as specified by the organisation where research was done)\*
- OPEN ACCESS**

I declare this Project/Thesis is to be submitted to the Centre for Academic Information Services (CAIS) and uploaded into UNIMAS Institutional Repository (UNIMAS IR) (Please tick (√)):

- YES**
- NO**

### Validation of Project/Thesis

I hereby duly affirmed with free consent and willingness declared that this said Project/Thesis shall be placed officially in the Centre for Academic Information Services with the abide interest and rights as follows:

- This Project/Thesis is the sole legal property of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS).
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to make copies of the Project/Thesis for academic and research purposes only and not for other purposes.
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to digitize the content to be uploaded into Local Content Database.
- The Centre for Academic Information Services has the lawful right to make copies of the Project/Thesis if required for use by other parties for academic purposes or by other Higher Learning Institutes.
- No dispute or any claim shall arise from the student himself / herself neither a third party on this Project/Thesis once it becomes the sole property of UNIMAS.
- This Project/Thesis or any material, data and information related to it shall not be distributed, published or disclosed to any party by the student himself/herself without first obtaining approval from UNIMAS.

Student's signature: Azzira  
Date: 11 JULY 2021

Supervisor's signature:  
Date: 15 July 2021



Current Address:

Notes: \* If the Project/Thesis is **CONFIDENTIAL** or **RESTRICTED**, please attach together as annexure a letter from the organisation with the date of restriction indicated, and the reasons for the confidentiality and restriction.

**PEDAGOGICAL PARTNERSHIP IN AN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT  
DURING COVID-19**

AZZIRA BINTI ABAS

This project is submitted  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
Bachelor of Science with Honours  
(Cognitive Science)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK  
(2021)

The project entitled ‘Pedagogical partnership in an online learning environment during COVID 19’ was prepared by Azzira Binti Abas and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Cognitive Science).

Received for examination by:



-----  
(PROF. DR. CHEN CHWEN JEN)

Date:

15 July 2021

<b>Grade</b>
--------------

<b>A</b>
----------

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost, I am very grateful to the almighty ALLAH S.W.T for letting me to finish my Final Year Project and giving me the strength and support especially during all the challenging moments in completing this project. I truly grateful for His unconditional affection and love and without His blessing this study would not have been completed successfully.

Behind the making of this Final year Project 1, I have received many help from other people who deserved my greatest gratitude. Firstly, I would like to express my heartiest appreciation to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. Chen Chwen Jen, for earnestly guide and watch my progress throughout numerous consultations. She is my backbone of this project by giving me tremendous advice as well as suggestions, constructive criticism and friendship throughout finishing this project. Thank you very much Prof. Dr. Chen Chwen Jen for trusting and supporting me during this entire journey.

Deepest appreciation and thanks to my beloved parents, Abas bin Jahamari and Uteh binti Sajon, for their support to finishing this report, from beginning till the end. They are willing to do all this solely to make me a better person. To my siblings, deepest thanks for giving me the motivation to finish this project. Hopefully, I have been an excellent role model for you.

I also offer my special thanks to my fellow classmates and beloved friends who were with me and gave some suggestions on this project. I also thank all those who have rendered their help directly or indirectly throughout the process of completing this study. This project can only be completed because of them and I am truly blessed to have all of you in my life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vi
ABSTRACT .....	vii - viii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1-8
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	9-15
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY .....	16-20
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULT .....	21-48
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION .....	49-58
REFERENCES .....	59-70

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Students demographic profile and their characteristics.....	19
Table 2 Positive learning experience encountered by students .....	21-24
Table 3 Negative learning experience encountered by students.....	26-28
Table 4 Students opinions about the WhatsApp platform .....	36-37
Table 5 Students' perceptions of online engagement in live classes .....	40
Table 6 Lack of attention in live classes encountered by students .....	42

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Research framework .....	6
Figure 2. Number of active students .....	31
Figure 3. Statistics of activities views and posts by students .....	32
Figure 4. Students' Participation in quiz after due date .....	34
Figure 5. Reminder from instructor .....	34
Figure 6. Participation students in quiz after reminder .....	35
Figure 7. Interaction between instructor and students .....	36
Figure 8. Activity logs before reminder .....	38
Figure 9. Reminder in WhatsApp by the instructor .....	38
Figure 10. Activity logs after reminder .....	39
Figure 11. Live session text-based interaction in Week 2 .....	44
Figure 12. Students actively asking questions in Week 4 .....	43
Figure 13. Students responded to the instructor's questions in Week 5 .....	44
Figure 14. Students responded to the instructor's questions in Week 6 .....	44
Figure 15. Students responded to the instructor's questions in Week 8 .....	45

## ABSTRACT

Pedagogical partnership refers to a curriculum formed together with various internal and external partners such as communities, industries, research institutes as well as students. This study focuses on the partnership with students, also known as student- as-a-friend, faculty-student or students-staff partnership. Most existing pedagogical partnership programmes focus on physical classroom learning. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, educational institutions around the world have decided to use the available technical resources to produce online learning materials for students from all academic fields. So, this study was conducted as not much is examined on how pedagogical partnership can inform online pedagogical practices to bring about a fairer and more inclusive learning environment. Focusing on a chosen online course, this study also reflected on appropriate strategies to improve students' online learning experiences in that particular course. This study employed both qualitative and quantitative data. The findings show both positive and negative learning behaviour plus learning experiences encountered by students. This study also shows the importance of a sense of presence and community, reliable technology, and students' personalities. The case study also offers valuable information on the role as a student partner in the partnership plus challenges faced. It also provides some research ideas and suggestions to obtain a deeper understanding of this pedagogical partnership approach.

*Key words:* Pedagogical partnership, online learning

## ABSTRAK

Perkongsian pedagogi merujuk kepada kurikulum yang dibentuk bersama dengan pelbagai rakan dalaman dan luaran seperti komuniti, industri, institusi penyelidikan dan juga pelajar. Kajian ini memberi tumpuan kepada perkongsian dengan pelajar, yang juga dikenali sebagai perkongsian pelajar-sebagai-rakan, fakulti-pelajar atau pelajar-staf. Sebilangan besar program perkongsian pedagogi yang ada tertumpu kepada pembelajaran bilik darjah fizikal sahaja. Sejak tercetusnya COVID-19, institusi pendidikan di seluruh dunia telah memutuskan untuk menggunakan sumber teknikal yang ada untuk menghasilkan bahan pembelajaran dalam talian untuk pelajar dari semua bidang akademik. Oleh itu, kajian ini dilakukan kerana tidak banyak yang dikaji mengenai bagaimana perkongsian pedagogi dapat memberitahu amalan pedagogi dalam talian untuk mewujudkan persekitaran pembelajaran yang lebih adil dan inklusif. Berfokus pada kursus dalam talian yang dipilih, kajian ini juga mencerminkan strategi yang sesuai untuk meningkatkan pengalaman pembelajaran pelajar dalam talian dalam kursus tersebut. Kajian ini menggunakan data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan tingkah laku pembelajaran positif dan negatif pelajar serta pengalaman belajar yang dihadapi oleh pelajar. Kajian ini juga menunjukkan pentingnya rasa kehadiran dan komuniti, teknologi yang boleh dipercayai, dan keperibadian pelajar. Kajian kes ini juga menawarkan maklumat berharga mengenai peranan sebagai rakan pelajar dalam perkongsian ditambah dengan cabaran yang dihadapi oleh rakan pelajar dalam perkongsian ini. Ini juga memberikan beberapa idea dan cadangan penyelidikan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai pendekatan perkongsian pedagogi ini.

*Kata kunci:* Perkongsian pedagogi, pembelajaran dalam talian

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction

This study examines the pedagogical partnership in an online learning environment during COVID 19. This chapter comprises eight components, namely the background of the study, the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, research framework, the definition of terms, the significance of the study, and the chapter summary.

#### Background of the study

Over the decades, pedagogical partnership in higher education, also known as student-as-a-friend, faculty-student, or student-staff partnership, has been increasingly adopted (Cook-Sather et al. 2019). According to Ostrowdun et al. (2020), the pedagogical partnership is fundamentally about learner-teacher relationships while according to Marquis et al (2020), the pedagogical partnership is a practice that can lead to fairer-minded post-secondary education. Numerous studies show that pedagogical partnerships have been significantly widespread in several public universities, and from across the world in Australia, New Zealand, England, Canada, Italy, Malaysia, Sweden, Scotland and the United States (Cook-Sather 2018). In addition, the Association of American Colleges and Universities also uses pedagogical partnerships to increase inclusivity in these colleges (Cook-Sather et al. 2019).

Researchers in pedagogical partnership such as Cook-Sather et al. (2014) have argued that pedagogical partnership can achieve a variety of benefits. According to Cook-

Sather et al. (2018), the pedagogical partnership can increase academics' confidence in their first year in a new institution. In addition, this pedagogical partnership also provides the way for partnerships to improve their pedagogical practice so that they build convergent thinking and be able to produce the learning strategies through partnerships to develop a comprehensive classroom (Kammerer, 2019). Thus, by employing pedagogical partnerships in institutions, it can transform the university into a more inclusive learning community (Cook-Sather et al. 2019).

The existing implementation of pedagogical partnership programmes have been placed more emphasis on classroom-based context (Cook -Sather 2016, Cook-Sather et al., 2019, Spendlove, Howes, & Wake, 2010). In addition to the pedagogical partnerships, some examples of pedagogical partnerships done for classroom teaching are through SaLT projects. For example, SaLT student consultants have partnered with access and support services on the Haverford and Bryn Mawr campuses to deepen the accessibility needs of students and faculty (Cook-Sather et. al., 2019). They launched the programme because of the request from faculty to make the classroom more inclusive and conveyed the desire of administrators to support this pedagogical reflection (Cook-Sather et. al., 2019).

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, educational institutions around the world have decided to use usable technical resources to produce online learning materials for students from all academic fields (Kaur, 2020). Online learning is a learning system conducted through media electronic (Soni, 2020) while according to Chai and Poh (2009), online learning is a distance learning that has evolved and has received special attention from public universities in conducting distance learning courses.

Apart from that, Malaysia has also been conducting full online learning since Malaysia has implemented the MCO on 18 March 2020 when positive cases were increasing. So, with the implementation of pedagogical partnership in online learning, it can inform a more conducive way of teaching in the online classroom. The findings study by Ouyang (2020), stated that the students and instructors will not only be active in the learning and teaching process, but they also will be active in interacting, communicating, and taking an action to build knowledge, plan and create a social learning environment. Therefore, the implementation of this pedagogical partnership will create a social community in online learning (Ouyang, 2020).

### **Problem Statement**

Pedagogical partnership programmes have mostly emphasized on physical classroom-learning where lecturer and student become partners, working together over time to analyse, validate and review face-to-face pedagogical approaches (Spendlove, Howes, & Wake, 2010). Cook-Sather et al. (2019) have also produced a comprehensive guide to implement pedagogical partnerships in the physical setting classroom. During the COVID 19 pandemic crisis, physical teaching and learning become unfeasible and online teaching and learning are opted by most education providers as an alternative delivery method. According to Kaur (2020), educational institutions around the world have decided to use the available technical resources to produce the online learning materials for students from all academic field. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, educational institutions from all around the world have moved from traditional learning methods to delivering education through online learning methods (Soni, 2020).

The online and physical learning environment differs greatly from several aspects

such as the visual cue afforded (Smith, Ferguson, & Caris, 2001), teaching method (Beebe, Vonderwell, and Boboc 2010), and student participation and behaviour that are observed through their interactions with several platforms in online learning and can be identified through online activity logs (Wang, 2017). The behaviour that is not physically displayed can encourage some students to speak up through online learning and provide a fair learning experience for those with physical disabilities. At the same time, this online method may also encourage negative student behaviours such as lack of focus during teaching sessions and low online retention rates (Russo-Gleicher, 2013). By taking part in pedagogical partnerships, it can enhance students' disciplinary processes in learning, form conversations, convey learning and teaching methods to students as well as approaches to developing institutions of higher learning by fostering a fairer and more inclusive learning environment (Jassie et al. 2019).

Universities in Malaysia have yet to adopt and explore the practice of pedagogical partnerships in online learning environments. Almost all the work that researchers have found on pedagogical partnership is reported by other countries, especially in the United States and England (Cook-Sather et al. 2019). In addition, they can focus mainly on partnerships for teaching and learning in physical learning environments (Cook -Sather 2016). Therefore, this study is conducted because not much is known about how pedagogical partnership can inform online pedagogical practices to improve students' online learning experiences.

## **Research objective**

### **General Objective**

The main objective of this study is to examine how pedagogical partnership can ignite reflections on strategies to improve students' online learning experience of a chosen course that is implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Specific Objective of the Study**

- To examine students' online learning experiences
- To examine students' online learning behaviour
- To reflect on appropriate strategies to improve students' online learning experiences
- To identify challenges faced during the partnership

### **Research Questions**

RQ1: What are students' online learning experiences?

RQ2: What is students' online learning behaviour?

RQ3: What are the appropriate strategies to improve students' online learning experiences?

RQ4: What are the challenges faced during the partnership?

## Research Framework

Figure 1 shows the research framework of this study. This study focuses on a full online courses in which the pedagogical partnership is between a student (the researcher serves this role in this study) and a instructor from the chosen course. This study is carried out to examine students' experiences and behaviour during online learning. The data are collected through observation during and/or after online synchronous and asynchronous classes. The reflection sessions are conducted biweekly and appropriate strategies are discussed between both partners to improve students' online learning experience and behaviour. Apart from that, challenges during the pedagogical partnership are will also recorded by the researcher to improve future implementation.

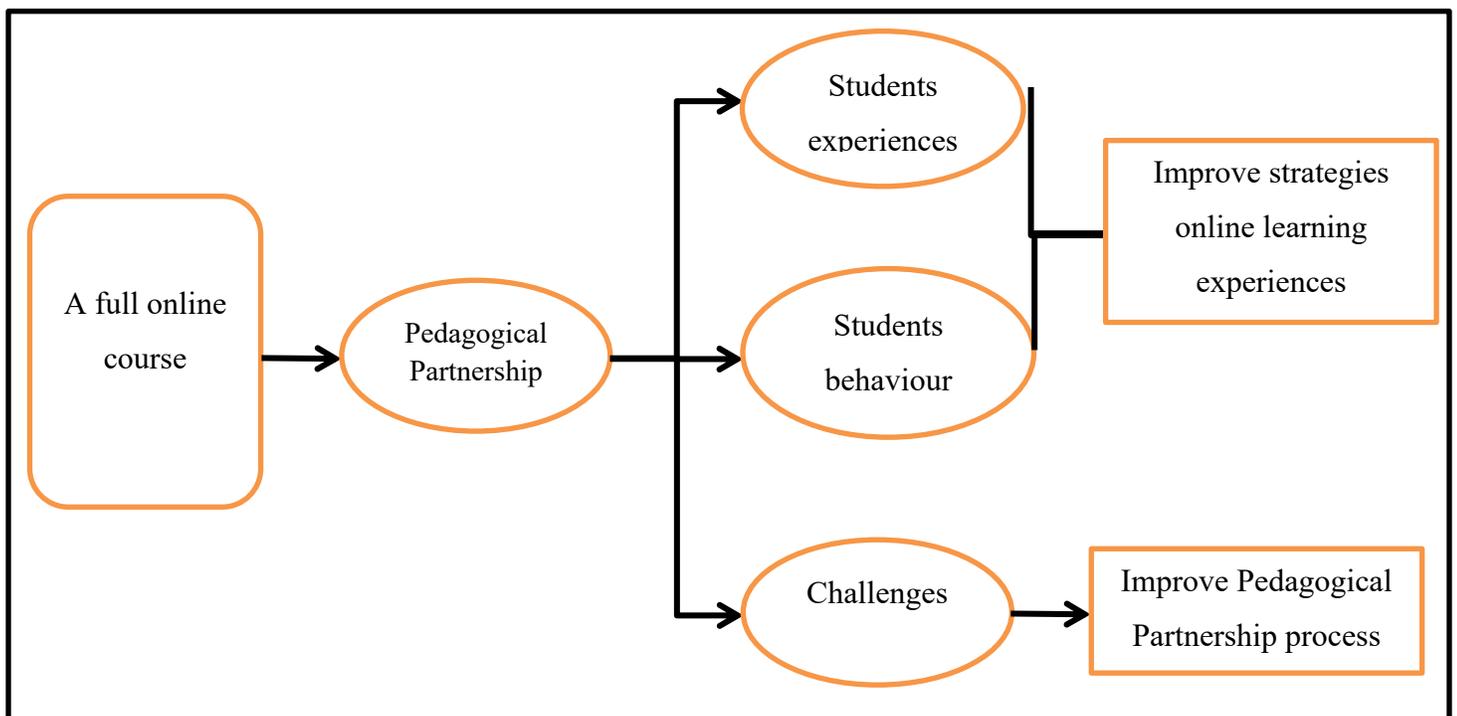


Figure 1: Research Framework

## **Conceptual & Operational Definition of Key Terms**

### **Pedagogical Partnership**

In this study, pedagogical partnership refers to the collaboration between an academic staff of a chosen course with a student partner, which aims to improve students' online learning experience of the course.

### **Significance of the Study**

From this study, students and educators especially lecturers in all universities who want to implement pedagogical partnership in an online learning environment will obtain practical information on how such pedagogical partnership can be implemented. In addition, from this research as well, it facilitates students and lecturers to generate insights on strategies to improve students' online learning experience in the future. The findings of this study also can generate insights into a good pedagogical partnership implementation model in an online learning context.

### **Scope of the study**

This study focuses on UNIMAS students and lecturers who are involved in a chosen course during COVID 19. The chosen course is implemented for one semester that takes up 14 weeks and all data from this study are be collected during the course implementation. In addition, student online log data are derived from the learning management system known as eLEAP and is subjected to the log data availability policy of the university. The number of students who enroll to the course is 76 and their experiences and behaviour are examined.

## Chapter Summary

This chapter describes the background of the research and the need for the research to be carried out. This chapter also sets out some objectives which are and then plotted into research questions as guidance in developing this study. The main aim of this study is to analyze the pedagogical partnership in an online learning environment during COVID 19.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the literature related to the topic. This chapter begins by discussing the aspects of pedagogical partnership that lead to effective learning. After that, discussions on pedagogical partnership will focus on its benefits to educators, students, faculties, and institutions. This chapter also discusses the past similarity findings in terms of the issues and theories that are related to the topic.

#### Pedagogical Partnership

The pedagogical partnerships that involves students partnering with academics are gaining increasing adoption (Cook-Sather, Bahti, & Ntem, 2019; Healey, Flint, & Harrington, 2014; Moore-Cherry, 2019). A lot of higher education intuitions especially from the United States, Canada, Australia even the newest United Kingdom have started adopting the pedagogical approach of students as partners in learning and teaching (Mercer-Mapstone et al., 2017). Healey et al. (2014), defined pedagogical partnerships as students partnering with academics to obtain a positive impact from the learning process and the collaboration. In addition, Bovill, Cook-Sather, and Felten (2014) also defined that partnerships between students and academics as a corresponding process in which both parties need to come up with ideas even though if not definitely in the same way for curriculum conceptualization, implementation, decision making, and analysis. Hence, to succeed in this pedagogical partnership, three principles namely a sense of shared responsibility, respect, and reciprocity in the learning process are required (Cook-Sather & Felten 2014). Researchers argue that these principles are to reshape the relationship between faculty and students.

Students and academics are viewed as peers and contribute to the learning and teaching process in their way (Cook-Sather 2014). A previous study from Elon University (2017), has used the Student as Partners (SaP) system to strengthen the partnership between students and faculty because both parties have something to learn and teach between each other and it is everyone's responsibility to change opinions and knowledge possessed by each individual. The SaP system gives learning and teaching responsibilities to students and faculty because students also need to make decisions about their learning styles. Thus, the SaP system can stabilise some aspects of the traditional way between students and faculty which refers to injustice in making unlimited decisions about curriculum development to the faculty rather than to the students (Elon University 2017).

A previous study by Ouyang et al. (2020), also supported that the partnership between students and instructors can transform education from traditional teaching to student-focused learning. The results of this previous study show that students and instructors are not only active in the teaching, learning, and social environment, but they also need to be active in communication interactions and work together to generate ideas, plan and facilitate discussions, and need to build a conducive learning environment (Ouyang 2020). Therefore, the findings of this study have given analytical, pedagogical, and theoretical implications to advance aspects in the practice of partnership between students and instructors (Ouyang 2020).

### **Benefits of pedagogical partnership**

Research across national institutions such as Cook-Sather, Bovill and Felten (2014) and; Harrington, Healey, and Flint (2014) and systematic reviews of the literature on partnership work (Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2017) have shown that pedagogical partnership

can bring various benefits. According to Cook-Sather, Bahti, and Ntem (2019), a convincing reason to develop a pedagogical partnership program is the potential participation in the programme to validate and empower all parties involved and support their development into their version. The partnership between students and academics who place students as consultants in the exploration of the pedagogical practice inspires and supports the involvement and responsibilities brought from the partnership into student participation in the class (Cook-Sather and Luz 2015). There are several benefits to participating in this pedagogical partnership with an academic partner, students partner, and educational institutions.

Firstly, to develop student learning involved through partnership in teaching and learning has shown to be beneficial for both students and instructors. Cook-Sather and Felten (2014) posit that, instructors and students as partners can produce more and meaningful learning and teaching ideas. The partnership between students and instructors also involves students cooperating with instructors to develop, explore and design new pedagogy (Cook-Sather 2014a). Dickerson, Jarvis, and Stockwell (2016), conclude that the partnership between instructor and students in learning and teaching has a significant impact on the development of teaching and learning, enhances the profile of research towards learning, and teaching and improves the skills and the nature of work.

Next, the benefit of the pedagogical partnership is able to foster deeper relationships and empathy for students, especially in terms of perspective, and cultural identity (Cook-Sather 2015). The partnership between academic and student partner can foster a sense of belonging, they can appreciate the experiences of students with the academic partner (Colón García, 2017; Cook-Sather & Felten, 2017), and enhance student learning as well

as provided information and faculty support in generative reflection on their teaching and learning to produce more inclusive learning and teaching environment (Cook-Sather et al., 2019). Students as partners describe how students and instructor worked together as partners to enhance their learning and teaching experience (Mercer-Mapstone et al. 2017).

The pedagogical partnership also helps to build a sense of community between students and instructors. Students' academic partners have blurred the boundaries between the role and identity of students and Instructors (Gough, Hession & Morris 2013; Vaughan & Williams, 2013). Student involvement in the university is for the development of an effective learning community where instructors and students as well as alumni can feel proud to be part of the university and feel appreciated for being able to contribute something meaningful to the university.

Lastly, the benefit of pedagogical partnership to educational institutions is this practice has the potential to become a practice that can provide more justice for the postsecondary education. A previous study by Marquis (2020), stated that some institutional programmes manage equity discussions, especially considering how students from marginalised groups engage in a pedagogical partnership. The findings of this previous study show the links on how participants understand the sociality of their location and in that way can influence the experience between students and instructors (Marquis, Guitman, Nguyen & Woolmer 2020).

### **How pedagogical partnership is implemented**

The implementation of pedagogical partnership programs shows our understanding of how learning should change. According to Cook-Sather et al. (2014), students and partners have

something to learn and be taught and this has become a shared responsibility to exchange knowledge between students and partners.

Although the instructor knows how to teach the students, students also know better how they learn something. Matthews (2016) has stated, putting students as a partner is good and sees students as partners is a process in getting involved rather than implementing it for students. Werder et al. (2012) posit that partnership doing the right thing, as it allows, students to begin to understand learning as a different experience of dialogue such implementation enables both partners to appreciate similarity in ideas and obtains diverse views in related decision-making process. With such, the tension between each other's opinions, which are from partners of different levels of education, is lessen as both partners share the similar, goal to ensure quality of education through continuous assessment.

### **Online learning**

Online learning is an education conducted using the internet or another term often referred to as "E-Learning" (Stern 2018). According to Al-Busaidi (2013), online learning is a method of delivering learning, using digital technology and the Internet. In addition, online learning also means distance learning that has evolved and received special attention from public universities in conducting distance learning courses (Chai & Poh, 2009). However, according to Stern (2018), online learning is just a type of “distance learning” that takes place remotely and not traditionally in the classroom (Stern 2018).

However, in general, there is powerful significance to suggest that online learning is just as efficient as traditional especially from literary bodies indicating that researchers must be far-sighted that nothing important about the differences between the two of them